



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2009

Volunteers In The Garden

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2009 **DORRANCE HALL**

9:30 a.m. - Social Hour 10 a.m. - Business Meeting 10:15 a.m. - Program

Dr. Shannon Fehlberg **DBG Conservation Biologist**

WILL PRESENT

"USING GENETIC TOOLS TO STUDY PLANTS IN SOUTHWESTERN DESERTS"

(TYPES OF INSIGHTS THAT GENETIC DATA CAN PROVIDE IN OUR QUEST TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DESERT PLANTS AND HER RESEARCH ON ENCELIA FARINOSA AND PHLOX AMABILIS)



Phlox amabilis, Photo by Ted Niehaus, Smithsonian Institution

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

Can you believe it's February already? Two more months and my term of office as your president will be over and I'll be passing the VIG gavel to your new president. When I started this article, I had no idea that this would be my topic this month. I had thought this might be something to write about for the April *Gatherings* -- evidently I was wrong and now is the time.

My time as your president has been a period of growth - for the DBG, for the VIG. and most of all for me. The Garden has added two new major attractions: The Sybil B. Harrington Cactus and Succulent Galleries and the Ottosen Entry Garden. It has created a twenty year plan for growth (thanks to a very dedicated group of our volunteers and our Board of Trustees) and hired additional staff in almost all departments. We are gaining national recognition and increasing local visitation as a result of this growth.

Our VIG celebrated twenty-five years of service to the Garden in April 08! And what a celebration it was with a pictorial history prepared by the planning committee, wonderful decorations utilizing desert plants provided by MARY COCHRAN'S Desert Designers. Mary also prepared a written history so we would all have a reminder of our growth over the years. MARILYN SHOMER prepared a photographic history which was available at cost. We invited all the past presidents and as many as were able attended. We ended the day with a group picture that became the cover of the June issue of the Sonoran Quarterly. What a wonderful celebration!!!

In addition to our anniversary, the VIG helped staff in all areas of the Garden to complete the tasks necessary to the operation of DBG. They led tours, assisted in the planting of the new exhibits, and assisted in day to day maintenance. They also assisted in our fall and spring plant sales, sold memberships daily and during special programming, and helped with Music in the Garden and all of the Garden's special events.

There is one more volunteer group that I want to highlight. We now have a TEEN volunteer program and what a great group of young people they are! They are willing to take on any project presented to them and some members of the group have taken interpreter training so they can assist with tours. If you look at the April SQ cover shot, you'll notice a group in blue tee shirts in front on the left side of the picture.

Yes, they're our TEEN members of the VIG and the future of our VIG.

And now, what have I gained from this experience? I've had a great opportunity to practice flexibility and to recognize that just because I think it's important for someone to change their opinion doesn't mean they will or even wish to make a change. I also now have a much better understanding of the reasons for making some of the changes that have gone on in the operation of the Garden. I've learned to respect the opinions of others, even if I don't agree. I've also learned that working with a volunteer organization is an extremely rewarding experience. I'll never forget it.

Thank you for all you do and for all you have given to me.

ANN YOUNGER

PRESIDENT, VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN

VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT
SECRETARY
TREASURER

ANN YOUNGER
DAWN GOLDMAN
JUDY THOMPSON
SHIRLEY BEKEY

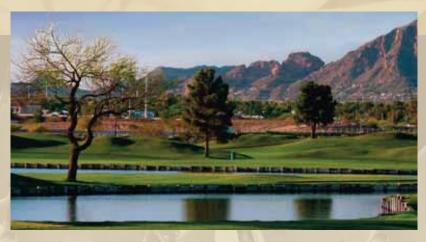
A monthly newsletter for and by the volunteers of the Desert Botanical Garden

EDITOR/LAYOUT
PROOFING EDITOR
STAFF LIAISON

NANCY WALKER ELAINE GRUBER PAM LEVIN

YOU'VE GOT A GOLF DATE!

The VIGs are gearing up to put on their Second Annual Golfin' in the Desert Charity Golf Tournament on-Saturday, May 30 at Karsten Golf Course. We'll have the advantage of cooler weather in May. The response to last year's tournament was fantastic and we fully anticipate an event which surpasses last year's.



At the VIG meeting January 12, Lowell Bailey Jr., Golf Committee Chair, presented a check to the DBG in the amount of \$12,000 to be used to fund educational activities here at the Garden for the underserved Title One children in the Valley. Marilyn Shomer, Golf Committee Member, presented the "Change for Children" monthly raffle guidelines - an

invitation to all volunteers to empty their pockets of their change into a huge receptacle and fill out a chit entitling them to a chance to win the monthly raffle prize. Funds accumulated will be added to the tournament proceeds.

The 2008 event was a huge success - reviews by the players were very complimentary. They loved the course, thought the organization was great, and they gave high marks to the barbecue and raffle prizes. Everyone had a wonderful time.



MaryLynn Mack, Tina Wilson and Lowell Bailey Jr., Photo by Gene Almendinger



Terry Uffelman, Barbara Miller, Nancy White and Imogene Bennett, Photo by Gene Almendinger

Cost to play will remain the same as last year - \$100 which includes practice balls, 2 raffle tickets, cart and a marvelous barbecue lunch. Registration forms for the tournament will be available in the Marley Education Bldg, and on the DBG website.

NANCY WALKER
GOLF COMMITTEE MEMBER

envoy heads up

KUDOS TO ENVOYS

January mailings were sent to forty-seven *Envoys* alerting them to take heed of what they had accomplished in December at the Kiosk! **Over 500** memberships sold - 390 of them new members. This translates to Envoys having helped the Garden bring in over \$40,000 in memberships.

During December, *Envoys* sold an average of 13+ new memberships a day! Three Boojum Tree Club and an Ocotillo Club membership included which bring in higher income. Impressive numbers! *Envoys* can be assured that their involvement in the everyday activities of the Garden is making an impression.

Manager HALEE LYNCH thanks everyone for being so flexible during that busy month - for being so wonderful through it all.

We have had special assistance during this time with added staff: MICHAEL MCKENZIE, JENNY SOMMERFELD, TERESA LITTLEFIELD, SUE LANKER, and CATHIE SMITH. They are with us many hours covering various shifts during the Chihuly Exhibit.

Special Events Chair, MARILYN WOLFE, had an added event- Target Free Weekend. Target bought out the entire 3 day weekend, allowing all who made reservations to attend free! During that time, a \$10 discount was offered on memberships, so many *Envoys* were needed to gather names for a raffle in order to win a free membership.

2009 is here and we are ready for the Challenge. If you think you might enjoy working with *Envoys*, please contact HALEE LYNCH at 480-481-8194.

SIDNEY ALLEN
ENVOY CHAIR



Let's all go!

DBG/VIG TRIP - LA POSADA INN TUESDAY - THURSDAY, MAY 5 – 7

The Trip Committee presents our end of the season trip to the LA POSADA INN located up north in Winslow. The trip fee of \$70.00 will include a Cinco de Mayo social hour and dinner at the Inn. Wednesday we will tour a rock art site on an historic ranch and enjoy a special evening of Western fun, food and socializing. Thursday morning we will carpool to Homolovi State Park to visit the ruins with a park ranger.

There will also be plenty of time for exploring this beautiful area of Arizona on your own. The Trip Committee will have suggestions and information available.

We have reserved most of the rooms at this historic inn, designed by Mary Colter and recently refurbished. Because this inn has unique rooms, you will be able to choose from a range of costs (\$99.37 - \$149.61 per night, tax included). With the help of Eric Garton and Linda Hairston, our staff support, we now have registration forms and a sign up system in place to make this easy and informative. Please pick up the registration forms by the VIG computer table at the entrance to the Marley Education building. Make your room choice for the two nights and add the trip fee. See all the trip details on the registration form.

Be sure to turn your completed forms in to Linda or IRENE DOODY during office hours or, on weekends, to NANCY WHITE. This will insure that your payments are correctly credited to our volunteer activity.

Plan to register soon and join us May 5 – 7 for another great, not to be missed, adventure.

KEITH LONGPRE, LOWELL BAILEY, FRANCES COLLEY, JUDI IRONS
VIG TRIP COMMITTEE

THE GARDEN CORNER

COWBIRDS - POOR PARENTING OR GENETIC INGENUITY?

In 1974 the first known nest of a chubby, quail-sized seabird called the Marbled Murrelet was found 150 feet up in a Douglas Fir tree in California's Santa Cruz Mountains, south of San Francisco. With that discovery, the nests of almost all of the species of birds known to breed in North America had been documented. You may be surprised to learn that two of the species with still undiscovered nests are summer residents right here at the Garden.

Technically, the nests of two of the Garden's breeding birds, the 7.5 inch-long Brown-headed Cowbird and slightly larger Bronzed Cowbird, have never been found anywhere. That's because they don't build nests, never incubate eggs and don't feed or care for their young. You may be wondering how they persist as species. Actually they do reproduce quite well here at the Garden and elsewhere. They have evolved to parasitize other birds' nests and let other species ranging in size from gnatcatchers to cardinals do all of the parenting work for them. Female cowbirds literally stalk the females of other songbirds and, once they discover their nests, they sneak in and either add one of their own eggs or remove one of the host's eggs and replace it with one their own. Cowbird eggs often hatch before the eggs of most other songbirds so their young get a head start and outcompete the host's young for food. The songbird stepparents unwittingly feed the largest mouth in the nest bowl, which is usually that of the baby cowbird.

Since female cowbirds can lay 40 eggs in a season, they can seriously reduce the reproductive rates of other native songbirds. If a species is already rare due to habitat loss, cowbirds can push it toward extinction. For this reason, most bird-watchers despise cowbirds; but let's take a closer look at how and why this seemingly despicable behavior evolved. Most ornithologists believe that Brown-headed Cowbirds probably did not seriously affect the populations of most songbird host species before Europeans showed up here with herds of sedentary livestock. It turns out the cowbirds developed their breeding strategy while following the large herds of bison that once roamed the west. The seed-eating cowbirds (formerly called "Buffalo Birds") would also eat

grasshoppers and other insects stirred up by the bison. However, the bison never stayed in one place long enough for the cowbird to complete a nesting cycle. Hence the development of nest parasitism behavior was necessary so they could reproduce without being left behind by their mobile food source, the migrating bison. And the cowbirds never remained in one place long enough to seriously impact local songbird populations.

All that changed when the sedentary herds of domestic livestock arrived, and the cowbirds switched from following the roaming bison to hanging out around cattle pens. Cowbird nest parasitism then increased and became concentrated in one place for so long that it began to affect local populations of songbirds. Even in the absence of cows, the supplemental food provided by birdfeeders and agricultural fields can also result in unnaturally high levels of cowbirds. Sometimes, in areas of high cattle concentrations where impacts from cowbirds are serious, wildlife officials need to trap and remove cowbirds to lessen their impact on endangered songbird species such as the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher that nests along rivers here in the southwest.

So it turns out that the seemingly wayward parent cowbird is actually genetically "hardwired" to do what is in the best interest of its offspring's survival, as any good parent would do.

TOM GATZTHE GARDEN CORNER



Photo caption: Carefree parents, a female Brown-headed Cowbird appears to be giving a male suitor the "cold shoulder". Photo by Rich Ditch

Hort Aide Cuttings

HORTICULTURE CONTINUING EDUCATION CALENDAR

February 13 - Horticulture Department Volunteer
Pot Luck / Program, BRANDI EIDE will report on her trip
to the Utah - Arizona border, "On the Road with
Research". Place - Webster Auditorium, 10:00 a.m.

March 27 - Hort Aide Field Trip to the Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch, 2757 E. Guadalupe Road, Gilbert, AZ. The facility is available for a variety of public programs so the activities will be decided when contact is made. If you have any specific interests, let LARRIE BATES know (480-314-9204) and he will request a tour that includes information about the subject. The meeting place for carpooling to the Preserve will be announced later. Website - www.riparianinstitute.org

You do not have to be a Hort Aide to attend our continuing education programs. In the case of field trips, we need to know you will attend and there are sign up sheets for each activity in the Horticulture Department's break room.

SPRING IS AROUND THE CORNER

I am writing this article a few days after New Years Day and probably like you, I have been resting up a bit from the holiday turmoil and the many nights of Luminaria. Thanks to all of the Hort Aides who helped with Luminaria and also those of you who have been volunteering as Chihuly Hosts through December and into January. Judy and I will have our first turn as Chihuly Hosts at the end of this week, and we are looking forward to the experience. We have heard that the attendance numbers are up and everyone who has come to the exhibit has enjoyed it and all of our new galleries and gardens. We anticipate being very proud of the Garden and having fun meeting and helping new people. I hope that most of the Horticulture Department volunteers can find time to be Chihuly Hosts at least several times because so many are needed each day. The DBG will be truly grateful for your service.

Spring comes early in the desert southwest and we are lucky to enjoy many blooming trees and shrubs while most of the U.S. is shoveling snow and getting through ice storms. It will be interesting to see how the plants in all of our new galleries and gardens fare during the winter, and we hope that there is not a hard freeze until all of the plants are acclimated. I don't know what chores the new venues will provide for us this spring but we will, as usual, step up to the tasks and have fun doing it.

We look forward to the Butterfly Exhibit, the ongoing Chihuly exhibit, the Spring Plant Sale and all of the other activities that make spring in the desert so enjoyable. I hope to see you all on the trails, at the Pot Lucks and on the field trips. I think we will all enjoy the planned activities and most importantly we will be doing everything together!

LARRIE BATES.
HORT AIDE CHAIR



Photo by Charlie Cobeen

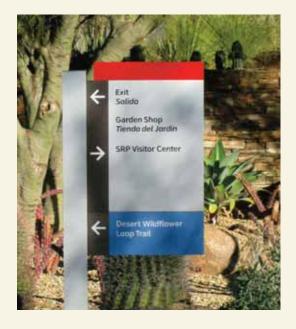
New wayfinding in the Garden

One of the key initiatives in the Tending the Garden Campaign was to install a new wayfinding system in the Garden for both pedestrians and vehicles. Evaluation and observation from staff, volunteers and visitors confirmed that the existing wayfinding was difficult to see because it blended into our environment so well. This summer a committee of staff and volunteers was formed to implement the new wayfinding system.

The committee selected JRC Design, based in Phoenix, to design the new wayfinding system. JRC Design has worked with the Garden on numerous projects, including the design for the new sign furniture seen on *The Plants and People of the Sonoran Desert* Trail.

Incorporating rusted metal, brushed aluminum and bursts of color, the new wayfinding signage gives the Garden an updated, modern look. The colors seen on the signage correlate with specific trails within the Garden: the Desert Discovery Trail, or Main Trail, is red; *Plants and People of the Sonoran Desert* Trail is green; Sonoran Desert Nature Trail is orange; Center for Desert Living Trail is purple and the Harriet K. Maxwell Desert Wildflower Trail is blue. In addition to being on the wayfinding signage, these colors are also on the new trail map and the new trailhead signs.

By repeating these colors throughout the wayfinding, visitors will be able to navigate throughout the Garden with ease.



The new wayfinding signage is also modular, which will allow us to modify and change the signs as the Garden grows throughout the 20 year master plan. We hope you enjoy the new signs and look forward to your feedback.

MELANIE DAY

EXHIBIT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

DBG BOOK CLUB ~ COME AND JOIN US!!!

We would like to add a few new members to the Book Club. It meets once a month, on the **third Monday of the month** (except July, August and December) from noon to 2 p.m. in the Library Conference Room. Each member chooses a book and leads a discussion about the author and the content of the book once during the year (but new members have a pass until at least October). It is fun to share books we have enjoyed, we have a wide range of interests, and the group reads both fiction and non-fiction. Titles from last year included <u>Out Stealing Horses</u> (Petterson), <u>A Country Year</u> (Hubbell), and <u>Beyond the Hundredth Meridian</u> (Stegner).

For this year, we read <u>Dreams From My Father</u> (Obama) for January and will be reading <u>Stallion Gate</u> (Smith) for February. Please contact me at sdyoder@cox.net for more information.

SYLVIA YODER

VOLUNTEER

seedlings

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS GROWING

NEW K-12 PROGRAM MANAGER

Please join us in welcoming JONATHAN ZUCKER. He comes to us with much experience in environmental education and great enthusiasm for children's programming. For the past two years he has been working as senior

scientist and marketing specialist for Mad Science of El Paso. Texas. Mad Science is a leading science enrichment program provider delivering unique, hands-on science experiences for children. Before this. he had two years of experience as a camp program manager at the Saint Louis Science Center and five years working for the Missouri Botanical



Jonathan Zucker, Photo by Shannon Wheeler

Garden as science outreach instructor. He has a BS degree in Resource Management with an environmental education emphasis from the University of Wisconsin.

BROWNIE GIRL SCOUTS

The Brownie Scout program began in December and has been a big hit filling all the classes offered. Through this program the Scouts learn about the unique relationship between hummingbirds and the plants they visit while earning a special desert discovery patch. Our Seedling volunteers have been helping with this program.



OUTREACH

Our preschool outreach program is underway with a visit in November to the Children's Museum in Phoenix. Families participated in a lesson exploring seeds and their needs. Participants observed that seeds are all different colors, shapes and sizes. Each child planted seeds to take home to care for and watch grow. Three of our Seedling volunteers traveled downtown and aided Shannon in this program. Our outreach program will continue throughout this spring with several visits to eight Booker T. Washington Childhood Development Center Head Start classrooms.

SPRING BREAK CLASSES

We are offering a one day class during the three weeks of the various spring breaks on discovering how the desert mesquite tree sounds, feels, looks and tastes. Participants will act out how the mesquite tree gets water, pound mesquite beans to make flour, and learn about the mysterious little holes in the bean pods, and the many uses of mesquite.

SEEDLINGS

Seedlings finished their fall session with a lesson on Sun and Shadows. On the nature walk for that week students were given time in a sunny spot to explore with their shadows. Two little girls discovered that their shadow would have four arms



Photo by Barbara Peters

if they stood one behind the other. While exploring, one little boy exclaimed, "My shadow is walking and I can't even step on it." Much appreciation was expressed by the caregivers as they enjoyed discovering alongside their children. One mother stated in amazement "I learned as much as the children." The winter session started the week of January 26th with many classes filled.

BARBARA PETERS

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS CHAIR

DOCENT UPDATES

GROW YOUR OWN PIZZA GARDEN

If I were still living in the Midwest, at this time of year garden catalogs would be arriving in the mail, particularly ones about herbs, but now I live in the Valley of the Sun. Each time I come to the Garden, I try to walk through the Herb Garden, where my senses teem with the scents of herbs. It is a pleasure and delight to look about the Garden and breathe in the herbs. I make a mental list of what I can add to my own garden and what herbs I can use in my recipes.

One of my favorite ways of using herbs is in making pizza from scratch. I grew up in Chicago and making pizza was a favorite family activity. Pizza is easy to make, but the secret to excellent pizza is in the herbs used in the recipe.

Did you know that you can grow your own pizza herb garden? It is easy and fun, and the best herbs are fresh and home-grown. A small, round pizza garden usually involves five common herbs and one vegetable: basil, Greek oregano, fennel, marjoram, parsley, and green onions. I suggest that you make a plan for your pizza garden before actually planting it outdoors. Make six slices (as in a pie) for the five kinds of herbs and green onions. Two or three plants of each herb should be enough for a small garden.

Most of us know sweet basil, but I suggest small leafed types such as 'Spicy Globe' which will last longer than common sweet basil. Also, since common oregano doesn't have the distinct flavor of Greek oregano used in making pizza, try growing the Greek variety. Next, I suggest dried seeds of fennel. One of Phoenix's famous pizza places uses fennel seeds in its own Italian sausage. Sprinkle the dried seeds on top of the soil, along with the fresh basil, marjoram, and parsley.

Lastly, follow these steps for tending your pizza garden:

Keep the basil flowers picked off since you want the plant to produce leaves not blossoms.

Keep your pizza garden weeded so the plants can grow without being smothered.

Water your plants as needed.

Dry the fennel by picking sprigs, tie them into a bunch, and place them upside down in a small paper bag. (This will keep the dust off.) Dry for two to three weeks. Bon Appetite!

JUDITH ROBINS

ASSISTANT DOCENT CHAIR



anotherl herb garden design

Volunteer DATELINE

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES

Sundays, Noon to 2:00 p.m. Music in the Garden, Ullman Patio

Mondays, 8:00 a.m. Bird walks - Meet at Admissions

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00 p.m. Yoga classes, Classroom A, Weisz Learning Center

JANUARY

Friday, January 23, Meet at 8:45 a.m. at the entrance to the castle site: 5041 E Van Buren St.

Docent Tour of Tovrea Castle / Carraro Cactus Garden begins 9:00 a.m.

FEBRUARY

Monday, February 2
Deadline for submitting articles for March Gatherings

Monday, February 9, 9:30 a.m. Volunteers in the Garden Meeting, Dorrance Hall

Friday, February 13, 10:00 a.m. Hort Aide Potluck Luncheon, Webster Auditorium

Monday, February 16, noon to 2:00 p.m. DBG Book Club, Library Conference Room

Tuesday, February 17, 1:00 p.m.

Docent Continuing Education, Webster Auditorium

MARCH

Monday, March 2
Deadline for submitting articles for April Gatherings

Monday, March 9, 9:30 a.m. Volunteers in the Garden Meeting, Dorrance Hall

Monday, March 16, noon to 2:00 p.m. DBG Book Club, Library Conference Room

Friday, March 27 Hort Aide trip to Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch

MAY

Tuesday through Thursday, May 5 - 7 VIG "El Norte" trip to La Posada Inn in Winslow, AZ

AUGUST

August 27 – September 8 African Safari with Ken Schutz