

Oak Notes

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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Oak Notes

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Lynn Miller, Volunteer President

Happy New Year, Everyone!

It's a new year and a time for a fresh look at what lies ahead. I think January is the best month to be in California. It rarely rains on the Rose Parade, and that seems to foreshadow most of the month. It's often temperate and sunny, the air is clear, and the waning snow on the mountains shines in the distance. Rain is coming, but it usually waits a few weeks. For anyone who made a resolution to walk more, this is a gift.

As volunteers, I hope that more options to serve in the Garden open up so we can work together at CalBG.

Currently, the Garden is busy, and we had a good turnout at our Quarterly luncheon on the 16th of December. It was chilly, but our group of about forty bundled up and gathered for lunch while sipping hot apple cider, and eating cookies and brownies baked by our Hospitality Committee, chaired by the unstoppable Susan Starr. Thank you, all! Lucinda McDade updated us on the Forest Pavilion and plans for the new entry building. She said after the recent storm the drainage for the newly renovated California Courtyard worked because the run-off went into the plants and not down the driveway! Lucinda introduced Jennifer Scerra, our new Director of Visitor Experience and Education: we are happy to have her with us. The Board reports reflected how busy the Volunteer Organization has been. We ended with a fun note—door prizes! It was great to see so many of the volunteers again.

Luminaria Nights returned this year. Each night was beautiful, with soothing music, and highlighted by the Forest Pavilion. Three large, stunning wreaths created by Native Designs were focal points throughout, and visitors kept warm around a fire ring. Volunteers sold hot cider and cookies, and merchandise made by several of our gifted volunteers. This was a festive event made possible by you, the volunteers.

Thank you for your willingness to serve at CalBG, and I wish you a Happy, Healthy 2022!

—Lynn

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the February 2022 issue of OAK NOTES is **Saturday, January 15**. Thank you for your prompt submission!

Volgistics reminder:
Please submit your monthly volunteer hours to Volgistics. Every volunteer minute counts.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Lucinda McDade, CalBG
Executive Director**

Greetings Volunteers!

It has been so nice to see some degree of normal programming resuming. As I write, we are in the middle of Luminaria season (i.e., one weekend in the rearview mirror and one weekend ahead of us).

We could *not* do this event in this year's format without the help of volunteers! You are everywhere, helping with everything from setting up Luminaria to taking tickets to lighting Luminaria and then extinguishing them. You are also offering warm drinks and sweet treats to our guests with an eye to enhancing the volunteer organization's 'coffers.' Even if we are almost entirely still masked, it is very nice to see all of you! Your first back-in-person quarterly luncheon is also taking place. The format is a bit different and it is outdoors—despite quite cool weather—but it is in person for the first time in almost two years.

That said, we are also contemplating what the impact will be of the newly arrived Omicron variant of this tedious and deadly virus. Please be careful! Please get boosted whenever it is your turn! Please wear a mask whenever warranted—ample evidence now indicates that masks work. I don't know about you, but I've gotten pretty used to wearing one: keeps the face warm when the weather is chilly!

I hope that everyone got to see the Forest Pavilion deployed for the first time for a Garden event: Luminaria. The facility is magical in the evening with music flowing from it. It is wonderful that we are now able to use the Southern California Gardens area for public events. Between the lovely renovated garden areas, newly smooth pathways, restroom facility and the Forest Pavilion, that area is certainly going to assume its rightful place as a favorite of staff,

volunteers, school groups and visitors, and also for facilities rentals.

The Forest Pavilion is, of course, not quite done as many of you appreciate. We will be working hard on the landscaping in the next month or two. Of course, this includes the garden areas that will honor three celebrated volunteers: the Scaff Family Dry Arroyo Garden and the Sally & Skip Prussia Sun Garden. Together with the Faucett Family Shade Garden and the Claremont Community Foundation Rain Garden, these make up the Mary K. Pierson Center for Sustainable Gardening. I am going to love remembering—and celebrating—these very special volunteers at the Forest Pavilion.



We have just had more than two inches of rain here in Claremont which is another cause for celebration. Among other things, it gave staff the opportunity to view the newly renovated California Courtyard in "action," by which I mean responding to all of that rain hitting the hard surface. I am submitting an image that will show that water indeed flowed to the rain garden area that forms the south boundary of the Courtyard (the area with the palms, the oak and new plantings). Here is the part that really made me very, very happy: essentially NO water was running out of the Courtyard (eventually to pour down the driveway). All of that wonderful water was retained here on site to soak in, to rehydrate the soils of the south end of the mesa, to begin to form a moist reservoir for the next dry season. AND the weather forecast for the week before Christmas is calling

for more precipitation. Time will tell but we are all hoping for more of a spring this coming year!

Have wonderful holidays, dear volunteers, and also a safe holiday season! As horribly tedious as this is getting, we really must continue to be cognizant of the risks and vigilant for our own health and that of those around us. See you all in 2022!



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

**Jennifer Scerra, Visitor
Engagement**

(Re)place Workshops

You may have heard about the new *(Re)place* sculpture exhibit in the last Oak Notes, or even seen some of the sculptures scattered throughout the Garden. The original installation and exhibit opening took place back in early November, but the exhibit is actually still growing!



Left: before rain; Right: after rain. Photo by Patty Taylor.

A key concept of the *(Re)place* exhibit is that sculptures are placed together in groups, and though some are made from beautiful and resilient ceramic, others are made from unfired and unglazed clay. The hope is that these unglazed statues will start to fade into the soil as the winter rains pour down on them and the native Californian seeds that have been mixed in with the clay will begin to sprout new plants.

The exhibit artist, Brandon Lomax, made many of these statues himself, including the many tall pieces



featured throughout the Cultivar Garden on the Mesa. But he also envisioned that Garden visitors would actually help to grow one of the installations located far out near the center of the Communities section of the Garden (follow signs to make your way there!). That installation is made up of many small statues. We've now held five workshop sessions (three taught by the artist Brandon Lomax, and two by botany grad student Peri Lee Pipkin) where visitors have mixed, rolled, formed, and placed eight-inch-tall statues in that expanding assembly. We plan to continue to host these workshops about once a month



A Very Happy January Birthday to:

Katy Allen	Linda Prendergast
Shawal Bhalli	Ron Serven
John Bradley	Melissa Smith
Laura Burt	Paul Standerfer
Susan Gregory	Noelle Stewart
Patricia Hoppe	Katina Vlastos
Christine Langteau	Miles Wentworth
Beverly Pemberton	

for the next several months, so keep an eye out for those dates. And now that the rain has started, keep an eye out also for worn statues and sprouting plants!

MUSIC IN CELEBRATION AND CEREMONY

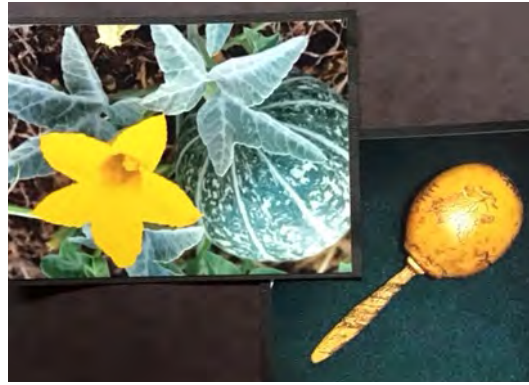
by Shaunna Gygli

Music had and still has a prominent place in Native American life, and singing is a very important part. It is a way to pass on feelings and stories from generation to generation.

Most of the time musical instruments accompany the dancing, singing, and prayers at ceremonies, gatherings, and celebrations. Musical instruments include clapping sticks, flutes, whistles, and rattles.



Elderberry trees (*Sambucus* sp.) are called singing trees, or music trees, because flutes, whistles, and clapping sticks are made from them. (During a tour a third-grader said she thought they were called singing trees because birds sang in them. I'm pretty sure that's another reason!). The pithy center of young growth would be removed to make a hollow tube. Holes would be drilled to create a flute or a whistle. A clapping stick was made by splitting an 18-inch, hollowed-out elderberry cylinder. The stick was held in one hand and struck on the palm of the other.



Various rattles were also used in ceremonies. Coyote gourds (*Cucurbita palmata*) were dried, filled with pebbles, and a handle was attached using plant fibers and asphaltum.



The Ceanothus moth lays its eggs on the Ceanothus. The caterpillar spins a large 3- to 4-inch cocoon. The cocoons were filled with seeds or small rocks and attached to a handle.

Rattles were also made from sea urchins, turtle shells, mussels, clams, and dew claws (the extra claw found on the back of the ankle of animals such as deer or elk).



At our Acorn Festival many of you have seen the Tongva using some of these instruments to accompany their dancing and singing. They always invite us to join them in a dance. Hopefully, next year we can join them again.

ASTERACEAE: STARS OF THE PLANT WORLD—PERENNIALS

by Steve Bryant



Artemisia californica and *A. tridentata* (Sagebrush): To >3 m tall × >2 m wide. Silvery foliage, especially in spring, but unkempt, brownish foliage in fall unless watered. Tiny flowers. Very fragrant. Not what most people think of as the sunflower family.



Bebbia juncea (Sweetbush): Large bush with a profusion of fragrant yellow flowers; up to 2 × 2 m; seeds freely even in light soils. Very attractive to butterflies and bees.

Dieteria canescens and *D. asteroides* (Hoary-aster): Tall (1–2 m), narrow (<1 m) shrubs, seed freely even in light soils. Royal purple and gold flowers up to 3 cm across; foliage tends to be brown in fall. Sometimes an annual. May need support.



Encelia farinosa (Brittlebush): To 2 × 2 m with yellow, 4–5 cm, daisy-like flowers, especially in spring; coastal form taller, desert form a ~1 m hemisphere. *E. farinosa* var. *phenicodonta* has brownish-purple disk flowers and very silvery foliage, with an unpleasant odor to some when crushed.

Ericameria (*Chrysothamnus*) *nauseosa* (Goldenbush, Rabbitbrush): 2–3 × 2–3 m shrub. If you need a late-fall, yellow-blooming shrub, this is for you. Crushed foliage scented, but to me far from nauseating. Many related shrubs.

Erigeron glaucus (Seaside Daisy): To 30 cm tall, 1 m wide; purplish ray flowers and yellow disk flowers generally 4–5 cm wide. Spreads slowly, needs water inland.



Helianthus annuus and *H. gracilentus* (Sunflower): To 3 m tall with flowers up to 10 cm across. *H. gracilentus* may live longer. Yellow ray flowers, yellow or dark-colored disk flowers.



Leptosyne gigantea (Giant Coreopsis): Rapid growth to 2 m, thick stems and branches, yellow 4 cm flowers, seemingly short-lived (2–5 yrs.) away from coast; dormant in late summer.

Pluchea sericea (Arrow-weed) To 5 m tall with straight stems the diameter of an arrow or thicker. Invasive in heavy soils. Reddish flowers.

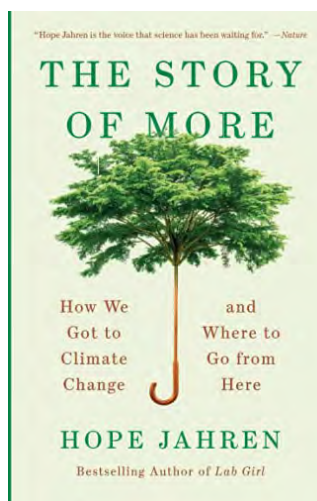


Xylorhiza tortifolia (Mojave-Aster): Generally, <1 × 1 m. Large (~7 cm) flowers with lavender ray flowers and yellow disk flowers.

Cultivation and acquisition: All are easy except *Xylorhiza*. Often available from specialists who may carry other species of the above genera.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Chris Ilgen, Volunteer Library Committee



The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here by Hope Jahren. NY, Vintage Books division of Random House, 2020. Paperback, 208 pp.

Hope Jahren is regarded as a brilliant teacher and communicator by her peers. She is an award-winning scientist on her scientific merits, clearly

demonstrating that she understands the intricacies of global warming. She has dedicated *The Story of More* to her mother, “because of her father.” During her childhood—recounted in an earlier book titled *Lab Girl*—she grew up immersed in the science in her father’s laboratory. Her vast knowledge in many fields, especially paleobiology, is evident in numerous honors, including three Fulbright awards and several

academic positions. She is currently a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, though Oslo is a long way from Minnesota, where she began her scientific inquiries. Because of her comprehensive knowledge, curiosity, and intellectual clarity, Jahren has become the expert on climate change.

The Story of More does not begin billions of years ago or with arguments based on geologic rock plugs. It begins when she was born, in 1967. Two years later, the Norwegian explorer Bernt Balchen discovered that ice covering the North Pole was thinning. Events since then demonstrated that our world is changing, and changing during Jahren's lifetime. Global temperatures are rising, glaciers melting, and record-setting storms have led to flooding. Elsewhere, the world is burning up and it snowed in Hawaii

in December, 2021. Everywhere, there is hunger and vast percentages of plants and animals are now extinct. We waste enough food to feed the starving.

There is a single reason for unnatural manifestations on our planet: we are far more than replacing ourselves with each successive generation, and our precious planet is overpopulated.

If she were not the lucid and amazingly organized writer that she is, we would miss Jahren's unique insight into what we have done to our natural resources and, importantly, what we can do about it. The book is organized in five main sections, from part 1, titled "Life" to the final, "The Story of Less." Each part has several chapters, including Making Sugar and Throwing it All Away.

GARDEN GUIDES PREPARE FOR NEWLY ADAPTED SCHOOL TOURS

Photos by Marla White



LUMINARIA NIGHTS

Below, top to bottom: On the Way to Percy Everett Garden; Phoebe Madison, Harpist; (photos by Lucinda McDade)

Right, top to bottom: Windsong; Members enjoying the evening; Lights around the Garden (photos by Mike Tschudi); Windsong (photo by Lucinda McDade).)

