

President's Report 2018-2020

In 2017 Dede Petri, the President of the Garden Club of America adopted as the GCA theme for 2017-2019, "Make it Simpler, Make it Better"! In light of the devastating debris flow in Montecito in January 2018 and the desire to help heal our community and renew our spirit of camaraderie, for our 2018 theme the GCSB added "Make it Fun" as we "Function in Disaster and Finish in Style"! With that in mind, every committee planned amazing events that would delight, educate and unite us. In addition, following the example of GCA, we instituted the use of "PowerPoint" for our meetings. Slides illustrated committee reports, and pictures enabled members to visually appreciate all events, even ones they were unable to attend.

We opened the 2018 year in September with a beautiful cocktail party at the home of Susie and Riley Bechtel. Our meetings began in October and were held in old, familiar locations as well as new ones which included the Rosewood Miramar Resort, Direct Relief International and the Cate School. We had very clever programs that addressed Floral Design, Horticulture and Conservation, and we hosted authors, environmentalist, floral designers and style-setters. Members and guests were invited to lunch on two occasions following meetings, one a box lunch at the Music Academy of the West and another at the Little Town Club; and member "pop-up" luncheons followed the December and March meetings. The Horticulture Committee took on the renovation of the Arizona Garden at the Casa del Herrero as a year-long project. Upon completion in June 2019, they held a celebratory afternoon party. The Floral Design Committee held workshops most months the Friday before the general meeting. Members learned and practiced designs and their arrangements were displayed at the meetings. Contributions to our projects continued to grow from past years with a donation of \$44,726 to 7 organizations. The Visiting Garden Committee planned a delightful trip to Palm Springs, and at our annual meeting, we welcomed five new Provisionals and an Honorary member. We also continued our support of the Cancer Center, PATH and the Friendship House with weekly and monthly floral arrangements.

Two other outstanding events completed our 2018-2019 year. In March 2019, as a gift to the community, we hosted 250 guests from all vocations at Westmont College to hear internationally renowned landscape architect Thomas Woltz speak on healing damaged landscape. Our Communications Chair did an outstanding job of publicizing the evening with newspaper articles and even a radio interview. This occasion brought not only hope and healing to attendees but also greater recognition of the efforts of our club in Santa Barbara.

Our other major event was our largest ever fundraiser in May, "The Garden Club of Santa Barbara Entertains with Charlotte Moss." Almost 400 guests enjoyed tablescapes designed to honor many of the projects of The Garden Club of Santa Barbara as well as a delicious luncheon

at the Miramar Resort and a talk by acclaimed interior and garden designer Charlotte Moss. This event raised over \$60,000 for our projects. We did indeed finish the year “in style”.

During the summer of 2019, our board updated our Standing Rules. It was decided, too, that we return to our “notebook directory” and include By-laws and Standing Rules as well as other items that had been posted on our website but missed “in print” by members.

Also, in the late summer, the 2nd Vice President held a very informative workshop for Provisionals followed by a luncheon.

The GCA theme for 2019- 2020 was “Garden, Create, Advocate”. With that in mind, our idea for the year was “Oh, the Places You’ll Go – Back to the Future/Back to Our Roots” as we gardened, created and advocated.

Our program committee again planned very interesting and educational meetings going back to our roots at the Botanic Garden and “Florestal” and back to the future with tech talks and planned C-change conversations. We were both entertained and informed at each meeting by reports from our Garden History and Design Committee on old Santa Barbara estates, and “pop-up” visits were arranged to several of these properties for the club. The committee also hosted luncheons at the Little Town Club and the Valley Club with talks on Garden History and Design.

In November, after seven years of working with the city, the 100-year-old Memorial Olive Grove Restoration was completed. We marked the occasion with a ceremony and a viewing of the newly planted trees followed by a board meeting and luncheon.

At the December meeting we brought back the “White Elephant Sale” raising over \$1500 followed by another “pop-up” Christmas luncheon. The Ways and Means Committee finished the year with a fundraising party and greenery sale held at and hosted by Field+Fort. A fabulous time was had by all who attended and over \$5500 was raised that evening.

Also, in December, the Conservation Committee arranged a trip for members to visit the Dangermond Preserve (formally the Cojo/Jalama Ranch) now owned by the Nature Conservancy. This very special tour, followed by lunch at the Jalama Beach Café, was a highlight of an already exciting year.

The Horticulture Committee took us on tours to Folded Hills Vineyard and had workshops and workdays to teach and encourage us.

2020 began with several wonderful events planned as well as our Visiting Garden trip to northern California. Lotusland hosted a “pop-up” party for us to bid farewell to the large euphorbia near the front door as well as to see the restored Japanese Garden. Both of those are projects sponsored by our club. At the March meeting, we voted to raise the dues for the first time since 2011 (from \$190 to \$225). Shortly after that meeting, however, the Corona

virus caused a shut-down of our country, and we were all quarantined through May/June. Therefore, we did not have an April, May or June meeting. There was no board meeting in March but in April and May the board met by ZOOM and business and voting were completed on-line. Included in that business were the grants of \$27,282 to 5 projects and the election of the 2020-2022 Board of Directors. Distribution of the Budding News also continued to keep members informed during these months.

In the end our theme became “Oh, the Places You’ll Stay” as you “Keep Calm and Garden On”. In spite of the abbreviated second year, it was a wonderful and successful two years. So many thanks go to the Board for their inspirational leadership and also to each and every member for their enthusiasm and participation in everything the club did in 2018-2020.

Anne Rhett Merrill
President
2018-2020