



# *The Spindrifter*

March, 2021  
Volume 47, Issue 7



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**General Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 25**  
Via Zoom  
Business meeting: 10:00  
Program: 10:30



**Naomi Fraga, PhD**

**Floristic Discoveries and  
Plant Conservation  
Amargosa River Basin,  
Inyo County, California**



**Kurt Leuschner, M.S.,**

**Wildlife Ecology,  
Professor of Natural  
Resources  
College of the Desert**

## ~~From the Co-Presidents' Desk~~

### MARCH PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Spring is a joyful season of expectations and new beginnings. Our gardens are full of possibilities and the future is bright. The daffodil is the birth flower of March and should be poking its head up out of the ground by now.



Our February speaker, Kelly Norris, gave us a perfect taste of spring as he inspired us with photographs of his beautiful gardens and his discussion of New Naturalism. On his website Kelly said, "I would love to look back on my career, and the careers of my contemporaries, and know that we changed the way society viewed gardeners." If you have not had the opportunity to view his presentation, we encourage you to go to <https://www.vgclj.com/monthlyprograms>  
**The password is 20vgclj21**

Speaking of the future and new beginnings, at the March meeting Penelope West and Bonnie Sipe will be presenting the proposed slate of officers who have been nominated to lead our club in 2021-2022. The new leadership will depend on strong membership renewals and new member applications to carry us into the coming year. Please renew your membership now and consider sponsoring a new active member.

We want to thank you in advance for participating in the Membership Survey that will be emailed to you randomly in the coming weeks. The survey is an opportunity for you to reflect on your experiences of the past year and provide your thoughts and feelings about how we move into the future. **Your** voice matters to our success.

At our March meeting we will extend a warm welcome to Shane Looper, President of California Garden Clubs, Inc., who will be joining us. Shane is one busy lady as CGCI is the largest non-profit volunteer gardening organization in California with over 350 garden clubs, plant societies, affiliates, and youth groups representing 21,000 members. We are honored to have her join us.

It has been one year since we met in person. We are so appreciative of your support during this very different year. It is you who kept the "spring" in our steps and we are sincerely grateful.

Sue and Sue / Sue <sup>2</sup>



## Speakers (cont'd)

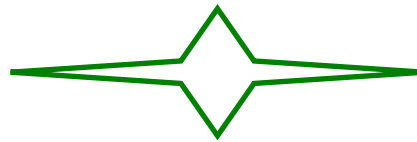


Dr. Naomi Fraga  
Director of Conservation Programs  
Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

Dr. Naomi Fraga is the Director of Conservation Programs at the California Botanical Garden and a Research Assistant Professor of Botany at the Claremont Graduate University. Dr. Fraga graduated from California Polytechnic University with a BS in Biology and Botany and then earned an MS and PhD in Botany from Claremont Graduate School. Her work focuses on rare and endangered plants in the western United States and has been recognized with several awards and fellowships, including the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation Fellowship for leadership in environmental conservation.

Dr. Fraga describes herself as a botanist focused on plant conservation with a primary research concentration on plant conservation, rarity and endemism, plant systematics (Phrymaceae), floristics, and pollination biology. She works primarily in the Mojave Desert, Transverse Ranges, and southern Sierra Nevada in California, leading teams of researchers in the exploration of rare flora such as monkey flowers. Dr. Fraga also provides programmatic leadership and management to the plant conservation programs at the California Botanical Garden. She is responsible for preparing contract and grant proposals, planning and conducting fieldwork, preparing reports, managing budgets, supervising staff and interns, disseminating research, and coordinating and collaborating with other agencies.

You may read more about her work on her website <http://monkeyflower.org>.



Kurt Leuschner will talk to us about creating a habitat in our backyards to attract birds, native species both rare and common, and how to spot them.



Leuschner, M.S., is a Wildlife Ecology Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert. Leuschner's specialties include ornithology, entomology, and desert ecology. He has led hundreds of field trips, both locally and as far afield as Africa. He teaches natural history courses and leads field trips for the Desert Institute, the Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx, the Living Desert, the Desert Cities Bird Club, Western Field Ornithologists, UCR Extension, California State Parks, the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, and many other conservation organizations.



Susan Harris  
Sheryl Lester



## Expressions in Art and Flowers

We are honored to announce that René van Rems, a world-renowned ambassador of the floral industry and one of the founders of San Diego's Art Alive, will present at our April meeting.

Born in Amsterdam, René learned classical floral design in the Netherlands. He brought those skills to San Diego 40 years ago, introducing San Diego to the luxury of European floral design.

Beginning with his floral, event, and design school business, Bloemen International, he has gone on to represent the California Cut Flower Commission for many years, speaking nationally and internationally. He has spoken at both the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the Minneapolis Art Institute. His work has been featured in numerous magazines and on HGTV. René has received the Poetker Award from the American Horticultural Society, recognizing his significant contribution to floral design, as well as the American Institute of Floral Designers Award for Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry. He was also the recipient of the first annual René van Rems Award for excellence in design education from the Los Angeles Flower Market.

We are delighted to have René speak to us about interpreting art through flowers. Along with Adrienne Greene, our Village Garden Club founder, René helped establish Art Alive at the San Diego Museum of Art. He has been honored to design the showpiece of Art Alive, the Rotunda, seven times!. René is an excellent teacher. He will cover the basics of floral design; what to think about when interpreting a piece of art; and mechanical tricks for achieving good results.

With René as your guide, we know more members will be looking forward to entering their own expression of art in flowers next year.

During the filming of René's presentation we will select three winners of the opportunity drawing. We thank you for supporting our Schoolyard Gardens project.

Bonnie Sipe  
Janet Evans



"Yellow Bird" – Wendy Watson-Diedrich  
Acrylic, 18 x 24



"Gears" – Elaine Butz  
Assemblage of recycled materials, 10 X 15

The 3 lucky winners will be chosen by Rene Van Rems during filming in late March or early April and will be phoned immediately. All proceeds from our opportunity drawing go to the Schoolyard Gardens Fund.

## OPPORTUNITY DRAWING

3 exciting arrangements interpreting these Expressions in Art and Flowers entries will be created by the incomparable

**RENE VAN REMS, AIFD**

during filming in advance of our April 22, 2021 meeting. They will be delivered to each winner's front door.

**\$20 PER CHANCE**

SEND AS MANY ENTRIES AS YOU LIKE

Make your check payable to VGCLJ and mail to Janet Evans, 6641 Avenida Mirala, La Jolla CA 92037  
Your entry will be confirmed by Janet.



"Summertime" – Paige Perkins  
Oil, 24 x 29



## WE NEED YOU!!

We are so fortunate to live in San Diego surrounded by such natural beauty. For our March and May meetings, we hope you will share what inspires you in your yard or on a walk. You may even have a flower arrangement to share. Your photos will be used for a PowerPoint slide presentation during our general meeting in either March or May.

Please send your pictures to [suekinlj@yahoo.com](mailto:suekinlj@yahoo.com)

So, keep your camera handy.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Sue's/Sue<sup>2</sup>





**Let's Go to the Movies!!!**



**During our February meeting, Devonna shared that Master Gardeners of San Diego have a Zoom Movie Group that meets regularly on Zoom to discuss a garden-related movie that members have watched in advance. What a great idea for our Club!**

**There are wonderful documentaries and movies with garden themes. For example, Meg, on her Farm Coast blog, said the following about "*Dare to be Wild*":**

**"As one of the only modern-day garden movies as of late, this movie can currently be found on Netflix and is the true story of garden designer Mary Reynolds and her designs for the Chelsea Flower Show. If sweeping landscapes, lovely gardens and a little bit of a love story is your thing, you are bound to watch this at least once."**

**The list of documentaries is more extensive. For example, our guest speaker slated for May 2020 was Joy Joyce from Apricot Lane Farms, the subject of the award-winning film, "*The Biggest Little Farm*." This film is also on Netflix. Wouldn't it be fun to watch these movies, then share our thoughts?**

**If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please let either Devonna or the Sue's know. We would need a committee to select the movie, handle sign-ups, and organize the discussion. Our Club has a Zoom account, and Sue K. is happy to facilitate setting up the meeting.**



## MARCH 2021 CALENDAR



San Diego remains at the Purple Level with zoos, parks, and outdoor dining open and following COVID-19 precautions. Famous San Diego Tourist attractions are now open but MOST REQUIRE RESERVATIONS. Depending on the rate of infection, San Diego can be moved back to a more restrictive level. Please keep that in mind and check with the venues.

### PLACES TO GO

**San Diego Zoo and Safari Park** - For reservations, tickets, and more information:

<http://www.SanDiegoZoo.org/Reservations> and  
<http://www.SDZSafariPark.org/Reservations/org>.

**Sea World** - For reservations, tickets, and more information: <http://www.Seaworld.com>

**San Diego Botanic Garden** - Open Wed – Sun. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. For reservations, tickets, and more info: <http://www.sdbgarden.org>

**San Diego Japanese Friendship Garden** - Daily 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Please review reopening policies regarding COVID-19 restrictions at: <http://www.niwa.org>

### ACTIVITIES

Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and selected dates, March 5 – May 2. **Seven Seas Food Festival** Sea World Park - admission - 11:00 a.m. to Park Close. Food and Beverage Sampler Tasting Lanyards: 10 samples \$60; 15 samples \$75. More info: <http://www.Seaworld.com>

Saturday, March 6, **Water Conservation Garden Tour**. Docent led tour begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. in the plaza. Tours are for limited capacity with safe, social-distancing measures. No reservations are required for same household groups. 12122 Cuyamaca College Dr. West. More information: <http://www.thegarden.org>

Thursday, March 11, 10 a.m. Day San Diego Floral Association: **Zoom Dale Rekus Demonstration on Making Spring Floral Design**. He will show how to modify the design for St. Patrick's Day, May Day, Cinco de Mayo, or Mother's Day. **FREE** Class but **MUST BE PREREGISTERED**. To register send class name/date /and your contact information to: [infosdfloral@gmail.com](mailto:infosdfloral@gmail.com). You will be sent a link.

Saturday, March 20 to Sunday March 28. **Master Gardeners of San Diego's Virtual Spring Seminar**. Thirteen classes and three workshops are pre-recorded and available online 24 hours a day of the entire week for the low cost of \$35. Register at <http://mastergardenersd.org>

Saturday, April 3, **Water Conservation Garden Tour**. Docent led tour begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. (see March 6).

Calendar (cont'd)

## ORGANIZATION WEBSITES TO INVESTIGATE

[San Diego Epiphyllum Society](https://www.sandiegoepi.org) <https://www.sandiegoepi.org>

[San Diego Botanic Garden](http://www.sdbgarden.org) <http://www.sdbgarden.org>

[San Diego Bonsai Club](https://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com) <https://www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com>

[San Diego County Orchid Society](http://sdorchids.com) <http://sdorchids.com>

[California Native Plant Society, San Diego Chapter](http://cnpsd.org) <http://cnpsd.org>

[San Diego Floral Association](http://sdfloral.org) <http://sdfloral.org>

[Friendship Garden of San Diego](http://niwa.org) <http://niwa.org>

[San Diego Rose Society](http://sdrosesociety.org) <http://sdrosesociety.org>

[Ikebana International Chapter 119 of San Diego](http://ikebanasandiego.org) <http://ikebanasandiego.org>

[San Diego Bromeliad Society](http://sandiegobromeliadsociety.org) <http://sandiegobromeliadsociety.org>

[San Diego Master Gardener Association](http://mastergardenersd.org) <http://mastergardenersd.org>

Patricia Parks



### MARCH KUDOS

To our loyal Membership Chair, Dodie Williams, who planned to step down last year after serving in this position for the past eight years. However, due to the challenges of the pandemic, a new chairperson wasn't found. Dodie cheerfully continued her support by supervising membership throughout the year AND agreed to see the club through renewals and new member applications for a ninth year. Dodie is the perfect example of a team-oriented club member who dependably serves the best interests of VGCLJ. Thank you, Dodie, for embracing the philosophy of YES.





### **Bouquet of Thanks Update**

As I write this, our signature Tillandsia Project is almost upon us. Annette Ritchie-Buis is chairing the effort to create about 135 arrangements featuring Tillandsias (air plants), shells, driftwood, moss, etc. The project will be staged on March 10<sup>th</sup> at Annette's house with the option of working there outside or collecting materials to work on at home. When completed, the creations will be delivered to the La Jolla VA Hospital for the enjoyment of the patients, their families, and staff. When we still had the chance to deliver arrangements inside the hospital, we would occasionally see Tillandsias from prior years, a testament to their longevity and popularity.

In May, we will do a final project using baskets lined with floral mesh, filled with brightly colored Kalanchoes and decorated with flags and pinwheels. The Kalanchoe baskets have proven popular as easy-care, long-lasting gifts to our veterans.

We appreciate the generous donations earmarked for the Bouquet of Thanks committee during the past and upcoming annual membership renewals. Most of the funding for our four to five projects each year comes from our new and returning club members. In addition, we are also grateful for the many talented club members who have supported this committee despite the COVID19 pandemic. We have worked hard to plan our projects so that our volunteers can work safely and still deliver beautiful floral gifts to the VA Hospital to our deserving veterans.

Thank you!  
Julia Sheldon, Chair





### *Mary Rogondino*

Mary Rogondino was born and grew up in Hollywood and then moved to West Los Angeles with her family and 2 siblings. Mother Stella and Father Eddie owned a French seafood restaurant, The BelleVue French Restaurant, for 25 years in Santa Monica,.

Mary met her husband Patrick on a blind date the same week she was hired by American Airlines. Mary was a flight attendant for 40 years and has been married to Patrick for 51 years. The Rogondinos have two sons, Mark, 47, a radio and TV sports announcer, married to Tiffany with two children, Averi, 10, and Colton, 7. Tony, 44, is in residential real estate in Manhattan Beach and has a daughter Emilie, 11.

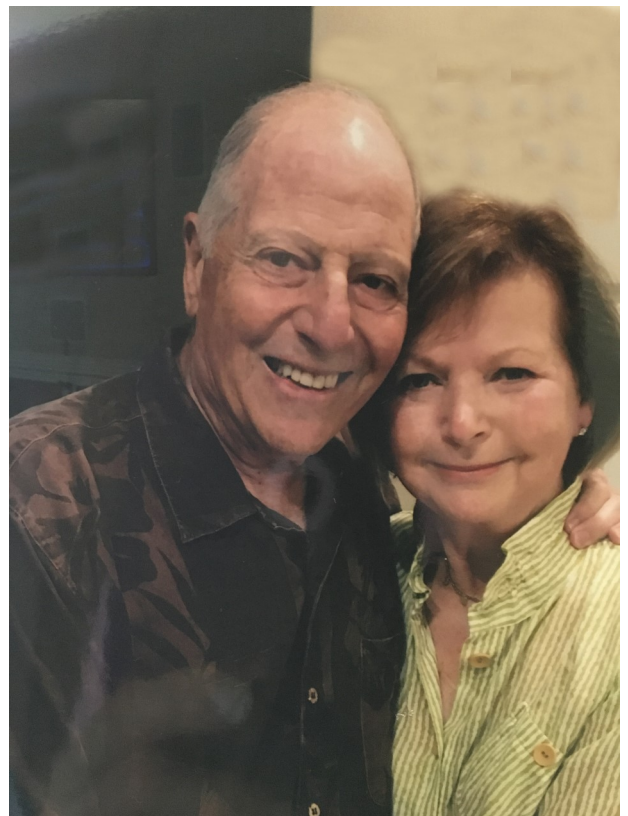
The Rogondino family has enjoyed owning condominiums in Mammoth Lakes and Lake Tahoe. They have also had a 48 foot sail boat and now a Duffy boat on which they cruise San Diego Bay.

The Rogondinos have traveled to many destinations in the USA, Mexico, Africa, Australia, Turkey, Asia, as well as most of Europe. They have enjoyed bare boat chartering in Greece, France, Turkey and the Caribbean and have enjoyed many family Catalina trips and cruises through the Panama Canal and Alaska.

Mary joined the Garden Club in 2015. She has served on numerous committees, including hospitality and setup with Susan Maggio, and is currently on the Schoolyard Garden Committee which is her favorite committee because it empowers young children to learn healthy food choices at the same time as they see the fruits of their efforts.

Mary is currently a member of the Thursday Club and Dana Unit of Rady's Children's Hospital and past associations with Makua, Juniors of Social Service, and Children's Home Society where she was a liaison at meetings interacting with women who were giving their child up for adoption and adoptive parents.

Mary enjoys meeting people and cooking and sharing meals with her friends. Playing bridge and cooking have helped her through this challenging time.





## GROWING EDIBLES ON THE COAST

### AN UPDATE ON EGGPLANTS

I have written twice before on eggplants, most recently five years ago, and each time on a discouraging note. Relative success required an unusually warm summer and, even then, the plants were short-lived, quickly succumbing to soil-borne fungus disease. None of the several varieties that we tried had sufficient disease-resistance to survive in beds that were replanted two or three times per year with no consistent rotation.

That dismal picture has completely altered in the last few years, probably as a result of several factors, notably climate change, choosing a different variety, and no longer using home-made compost in our vegetable beds. I'll have more to say about the last point in a future article. As I write in early March, we are harvesting fruit from Black Bell eggplants started from seed a year ago. Evidently, with the right conditions, eggplant can be grown as a perennial in Zone 24. Our plants survived a near-fatal gopher attack last June and have continued to flower and to produce fruit of acceptable quality through the winter.

Black Bell closely resembles the familiar variety, Black Beauty. Most of the seed catalogues have nothing to say about the disease resistance of their vegetable varieties, perhaps not wanting to suggest that lack of resistance is a problem with their other offerings. However, when resistance is discussed, Black Bell is the variety most commonly recommended. It was developed for resistance to tobacco mosaic virus but is described as "highly resistant" in many articles, with no specification of the disease. From the symptoms I've observed, I believe that our troubles with the Solanaceae are mainly due to *Verticellium dahliae*, and Black Bell has fared much better than any variety we have grown previously. *V. dahliae* can persist in the soil for years and has many hosts. Therefore, crop rotation is not a very effective countermeasure. Surprisingly, broccoli can suppress the fungus in the soil, most likely by producing the inhibitory substance, allyl isothiocyanate. I say "surprising" because cabbage and Brussels sprouts, members of the same species, are susceptible hosts. In the future I'll try to plant eggplant in a spot where I've recently grown broccoli.

Black Bell will be joining the list of varieties that I grow every year. I rely on them to provide a backup crop when my experiments with new varieties lead to failure, which they often do. I'll still keep planting favorites like Rosa Bianca for its beautiful fruit and the white Casper for its wonderful creamy texture when deep fried.

Arthur Dawson



## TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

We have good news to report about the Paradise Hills Community Garden where our Club donated six Englemann Oak trees. When the trees were originally planted, the irrigation consisted of two dedicated Master Gardeners hand carrying water to the trees. They were doing a good job, but now the City of San Diego has installed irrigation which will ensure that the trees will continue to thrive.

The four Western Redbuds we planted at the same park are growing quickly. We hear that a Say's Phoebe spends a lot of time in and around the young trees, thus proving the proverb, "Keep a green tree in your heart and perhaps the singing bird will come."

The 21 Jacaranda trees planted on Pearl Street in December are also doing well. The timing was perfect for them to establish their roots during the spring weather. We can't wait to see Pearl Street in May when the trees are in bloom.



Unfortunately, the recent windstorm of January 25 destroyed a magnificent ficus tree in the joint-use park at Bird Rock Elementary School.

A concerned parent, knowing about our Club's tree planting program, has approached us to discuss how we might help them replace the tree in the now ugly bare spot. It is a perfect place for a large habitat tree that will spread and provide year round shade. Of course, it will take time, but the title of a recent workshop on trees makes the important point: "The Trees for Tomorrow Start Today." We hope to see a tree in that spot—a tree that will become another beautiful landmark in Bird Rock, benefitting the school children, the community, and the environment.








We're all looking for good news in this pandemic, so if you have a special occasion to celebrate or would like to help with the Bird Rock project, please consider donating a tree as a permanent memory of the occasion.

Finally, the importance of our tree planting project was brought home to Devonna recently when she received a flyer saying, "For every pair of sneakers you purchase, we will plant two trees"!! Even the sneaker companies are using trees in their marketing!

Co-chairs Devonna Hall and Penelope West



# Please Renew your Membership - May 1<sup>st</sup> Deadline

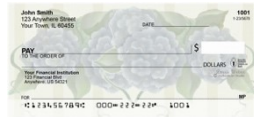
MAY	2021					
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					

*To thank you for your loyalty and support during this unprecedented year, there is a one-time active member dues reduction of \$22 for 2021-22*

**Your Active Member dues for next year are \$58.**

Membership renewal forms, Committee Descriptions, Committee Choice Forms, and New Member Application Forms are available on our website [vgclj.com](http://vgclj.com) or at the homes of Sue Kalish and Dodie Williams.

## Payment Options:



- Print and pay by check
- Submit and pay electronically through our website [www.vgclj.com](http://www.vgclj.com)
- Pick up and drop off forms at the home of either Dodie Williams (**5908 La Jolla Corona Dr**) or Sue Kalish (**8641 Nottingham Place**)

Questions? Call either Sue Kalish, Sue Miller, or Dodie Williams.

## Deadline for Renewal & New Member Applications

**MAY**

