

Bloomers History presented at Blackhawk Bloomers 20th Anniversary Celebration

December 13, 2017

Presented by Kim Chandler, Blackhawk Bloomers President 2017-2018

An anniversary celebration is not complete without a walk down memory lane. Before I begin I want to thank Shirley Pfenndt because she provided early history background and she connected with all of our charter members and past president. These highlights from our history have been provided by Shirley, and from emails and phone calls that I had with other past Presidents and from the scrapbooks and the website.

To truly enjoy the history of Blackhawk Bloomers Garden Club we are going to begin with some history of garden clubs in Blackhawk. In 1992 a group of ladies formed what was then called Blackhawk Garden Club, it had 16 members and Shirley Pfenndt and Janice George who are both here today were members. The group was originally established to be a small group activity so that members could meet in homes and actually use each other's gardens to learn and also for members to get to know each other in a more intimate setting. Members could bring guests if there was room at the hosting home and there was a waiting list to become a member. There were two ladies who started this group Jan Oddy and Sarita Simmons. In 1996 one of the younger Blackhawk Garden Club members decided that it would be nice to have a larger Garden Club. When she approached the board of Blackhawk Garden Club with the idea there was some dissention. Some of the Board felt that the Blackhawk Garden Club would lose its original purpose to be able to host in the home and use the garden as a learning tool. In 1997 the young member—Janice George called on four other members to meet at the Starbucks by McDonald's to consider forming another garden club. Present at that meeting were Janice George, Marty Drevlow, Jane Mowry, Susan Mann and Shirley Pfenndt...our five Charter Members! They decided to put together a letter expressing their concerns and the need for a larger group activity. The letter was sent to the Blackhawk Garden Club board, debated and a decision was made by the board that they did not want to become larger. They had no objection if a new garden club would be formed-thus became Blackhawk Bloomers Garden Club. In 1997 Jan Mowry became the first President of the new club. Many of the new Bloomers Garden Club members originally continued to belong to both clubs.

Highlights and memories by the Presidents:

1997-1998 Jane Mowry currently lives in Sonoma was planning to be her today but her husband is very ill and in the hospital. She is 86 and her husband is 93. They lived in Kona for 23 years after leaving Blackhawk and returned to Sonoma several years ago.

- “Rebel” Group of 5
- 9-26-97 Informational Coffee at 9:30 a.m.
- Quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow-“In all places then, and in all seasons, Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings, Teaching us, by the most persuasive reasons, How akin they are to human things”
- 20+ women joined initially
- Original Bylaws were based on Discovery Bay Garden Club Bylaws

Charter Member Susan Mann in Scottsdale also contacted me and sends her best wishes to all, she has company in this week and could not attend. She continues to be in contact with current Bloomer Terri Waterman.

1998-1999 Janice George here today lives in Westlake Village, CA (traveled the furthest), brought scrapbooks and sent pictures that are in the slide show

- Club album from 1997-2001
- Janice George was very active in the new club and with her magnetic personality she helped attract more and more members that became active in Bloomers. Long time friendships formed...as an example Janice and Shirley...Janice had her first child in the beginning years of Bloomers...she and her family moved to Southern CA but Shirley and Janice have always stayed in touch...Shirley and her husband traveled to Southern CA to attend the high school graduation of that child several years ago and as you can see Janice is here today with Shirley!

1999-2000 Shirley Pfendt

Shirley's email to Kim Chandler: As one of the five Founders and the third President of Bloomers Garden Club, I have been able to watch the birth and growth of our garden club through the years. Being the third President provided me with the unique ability to see the hard work that went into building the club from five persons through the first stage of growth lead by a dedicated Jane Mowry (1997-1998) to the second year of growth and spreading our wings lead by Janice George(1998-1999) and then to my year 1999-2000. By the time we reached the third year we had gotten “our walking legs” and were off and running.

I thrive in organization, so this was what I hoped to bring to my year as President. Since we were still a young club (40 members) we did not have the funds to provide for lots of extras, so all members were dedicated to providing skills and volunteering their time, which they did quite freely and generously. Up until this time we had 8-1/2x11 sheets of printed rosters, so with the help of my computer and JoAnn Schultz as cover artist we put together our first hard cover directory. Next we tackled a monthly Newsletter which included articles from Heather Farms, Tips of the Month, and information about future meetings and programs and special events. We also had a “White Flower Table” which was set up for members to bring any plants, flowerpots or vases that they would like to donate to the table for sale. The price tags were always very low and all proceeds benefited our club.

But we were not all about organization – we were full of fun and social events. Our first big event was a first ever Holiday House Tour. We had five member's homes – Quackenbush, Poulton, Cosgrove, and Pfendt and then on to Janis George's home where we enjoyed a holiday potluck for 40 and a gift exchange. Next we decided to have a first ever Garden Tour and Progressive Tea in the Spring. This required participation of all members and the viewing of 6 homes. All gardens we toured were not homes of Bloomer members, but each home had a Bloomers hostess and helpers who provided the coffee, tea, pastries, tea sandwiches, veggies, quiches, and desserts. And, we did this in style – with silver tea services and china. We decided to sell tickets for \$10 each and hoped to sell 100 tickets to Blackhawk friends. We were sold out in less than a week and had a lengthy waiting list. This was not only a wonderful event, but it showed how well we all worked together and of course our coffers benefited too so we could do more fun events in the future.

There are other special times and tours I could relate, but in closing I must say I loved my term as President and our Bloomers team spirit was exceptional! Every member worked hard, thoroughly enjoyed themselves and we made many friendships that have lasted through the years – 20 to be exact- and I am happy to have been a part of this wonderful group for so many years. HAPPY ANNIVERSARY BLACKHAWK BLOOMERS!

2000-2001 Marty Burt

- Marty passed away on April 2, 2017. She was President of the Bloomers twice, the first time in 2000 and the second time in 2004. She also served as Treasurer, Penny Pines, Sunshine and the Floral Committee. When she was on the Sunshine committee, she would make floral arrangements from the beauty that she cultivated in her own garden and then deliver it to the Bloomer who was experiencing illness or a family loss. Marty's contagious smile, generous and lovely spirit is missed.
- Directory covers were designed by Joanne Sharps beginning in 2001-2008

2001-2002 Sue Banducci (prior commitment and regrets she can't attend) lives in Blackhawk

- Blackhawk Bloomers lifetime memberships for Jane Mowry and Janice George
- Member of Diablo Women's Garden Club (DWGC) and club liaison with Bloomers
- Shared that Marty Burt's daughter Dena has started to attend DWGC and taken up flower arranging

2002-2003 Julie Dormandy (prior commitment and regrets she can't attend) lives in Blackhawk

- She always enjoyed the gift exchange, historically it has been a source of great entertainment

- Great fondness for Bloomers and wish the membership all the best for the holidays
- Organization has come a long way since she participated on the Board and she is delighted with all the progress that has been made to include many more members and multiple activities. It is a credit to all past and present serving Board members that the Bloomers has continue to happily thrive.

2003-2004 JoAnn Schultz lives in Austin TX. *From email JoAnn sent to Kim:*

- Annie's Annuals of Oakland, she was a favorite speaker and I still order plants online.
- Favorite program was the Holiday Table settings with members doing a table for the December meeting along with the gift exchange
- Started the year with a garden rummage sale, buying and selling each other's pots, plants and tools at Elaine Willman's home
- After visiting Bouquet to Arts in past years we had our own this year!

2004-2005 Marty Burt

2005-2006 Lotty Graham lives in Lafayette and has joined us today!

2006-2007 Sharon Jones

- Membership was still limited to 45 members and since meetings were no longer in homes it was time to expand so as many women as possible would be able to learn and enjoy Bloomers. The bylaws were changed to no longer limit the number of Bloomer members. Today we have 134 members!
- She was the California Garden Club representative for Bloomers for the first 2-3 years.
- Queen of Daffodil Hills! Began in 2013 and continues! This Monday she led a group of 11 Bloomers and her husband Lee. They planted 1500 bulbs in 1 hour and 50 minutes in two locations; both sides of the outside entrance to the Main Gate, two bench areas of the east side of Blackhawk Drive...along the wall from the bench area to Liquid Amber. Thank you to:
 - Eileen Rice
 - Theresa Pecoraro
 - Kim Modersbach
 - Kathy Fox
 - Kathleen Gibbons
 - Tracey Lauer
 - Lorrie Harris
 - Jeanie Egan
 - Paula Hamra
 - Joanne Knapp
 - Mary Maag (Friend of Sharon's)
- This was done with the help of 6 Blackhawk gardeners digging holes!

2007-2008 Elaine Willman is in Houston TX to be with family, her husband is ill. Still has a home in Danville and when people ask where she is from she says "Paradise in Blackhawk, Danville. *From email Elaine to Kim:*

My fond memories take me to our trips, programs, garden projects, and house tours. Thanks to all that have worked on these activities. My wish is that the garden of your lives thrive and bloom beautifully through the years. Pencil in my address in your directory, and remember us if you are ever in the area.

- 10 year anniversary celebrated on 9-26-2007

2008-2009 Jody Morgan lives in Avon, CT and is currently the President of the Garden Club of Avon. She will be back in Danville in March. She sends her best wishes to all and is thinking about us and shared the following in an email to Kim:

- One of my favorite memories of my presidency was working with Bobbi Bach on the monthly newsletter. I enjoyed writing seasonal garden notes so much that when the monthly Danville News Today newspaper was launched, I offered to write a garden column. In 2011, I began writing front page features about someone or some organization doing good things for the community. Bloomers Past President Sharon Jones and her work with Chemo Angels was the subject of my first feature.
- Supported Save Mount Diablo and a Girl Scout Gold Award Project
- Donated 2 benches at Eagle's Nest Park
- Prior to the holiday luncheons, toured local homes decorated for the season and Ann Taylor graciously invited us to admire her decorations this year
- Joined CGCI and Diablo Foothill District
- Bloomers' member Mary Noel Clark became the artist for the directory cover

2009-2010 Diane Israel- lives in Brentwood and is with us today!

- Bloomers hosted Diablo Foothills District meeting of the CGCI for the first time
- First year Floral Design committee held floral arrangement workshops for members
- Held 'Come Fly with Bloomers" Wines of the World/Food Paring event for members and significant others

2010-2011 Barbara Wilson

- 6 years as an elected officer-President, VP of Programs, Treasurer for 2 years and VP Membership for 2 years....every Executive Board position but Secretary
- Honored to have been elected and served Bloomers in these positions
- Loves all her time with Bloomers, grateful for all Bloomers the entire membership of Bloomers has accomplished together
- Membership Directory artwork changed to our current cyclamen logo which was created by Mary Noel Clark
- Carol Nothern became Diablo Foothill District Bloomers representative and she has continued to serve in that role since 2010.

2011-2013 Eileen Rice (2 years)

- Started Bloomers Socials-hosted the first two at her home
- Put Photos in the directory when she was VP Membership
- Started emailing the newsletters and the website with her son Patrick
- Started Tassajara Hills School Garden – Dig in the Dirt August 2013

2013-2014 Shirley Lowes

- Continued growth in Bloomers Membership
- Bloomers recognized for the first time as Blue Ribbon accredited with the CGCI/DFD
- Changed the Garden Tour Party to a dinner at the Club with entertainment
- Eileen Rice was nominated and chosen Navelets Gardener of the Year—great honor for her and for Bloomers

2014-2015 Sharon Jones-stepped up to replace Shirley due to Shirley's husband's illness for which Shirley continues to be grateful and thankful. At the end of Sharon's term in 2015 Bloomers had 82 members.

2015-2017 Marcia Beersdorf

- Bloomers membership increased to be 128 by the end of her term
- Encouraged the "Team Concept" approach for menus and table décor be coordinated with the programs
- Two additions to our Community Projects: 2015 added Turner Schools under Theresa Pecoraro's leadership and in 2016 added Bounty Gardens under Claudia Merritt's and Judi Magee's oversight
- Extensive use of our flower logo-cyclamen with our colors of magenta and green
- Liaison with Diablo Women's Garden Club which has created the opportunity for Bloomers to have more garden education learning activities

Wow, 20 years of highlights and memories! There were many Day Aways and activities that I did not mention but are well documented in the scrapbooks and on our website. Blackhawk Bloomers has a wonderful rich history which continues this year and into the future.