



Riviera Garden Club

Sea Breeze

COSTA VERDE DISTRICT, CGCI, PACIFIC REGION, NGC

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FROM OUR PRESIDENTS



Gloria Balcom and Linda Rosenfeld

Congratulations on being living examples of this year’s motto: **“Cultivating Gardens, Friendships and Community”**. Our February 27 special event at the Mary and Joseph Retreat Center was a wonderful tribute to RGC multi-tasking. Surrounded by beautiful **gardens** and good **friends** (old and new) we learned about the fascinating history of farming in Los Angeles from amazing author/historian Judy Gerber. We also enjoyed wonderful food – followed by an exciting hail storm for those of us who stayed late. **HAIL** 1:30 p.m. on Marilyn Rubin’s car.



This leads us to **COMMUNITY**.

The proceeds from these past and the upcoming activities support our important community outreach goals.

1. **March 22 fashion show at Talbots;**
2. **April 25 excursion to
Huntington Library & Gardens;**
3. **April 7 Garden Sale at
Charlie Sappington’s**

We continue to be inspired by your generosity, and by the people who put our donations to such incredible use in our community. We hope you will feel the same satisfaction as you read the Gifting article. We feel honored to represent you and amazed by what we can accomplish together.

Linda and Gloria

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MEMBER NEWS AND TIDBITS

GET WELL WISHES TO:

Sheila Kutkus and **Judy Unrine**

WELCOME NEW RGC MEMBERS!

New Honorary Member

Jay Spradlin-El Retiro Children's Librarian

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RGC FRIENDS!

MARCH

Cecilia Ceasar	1
Marlene Ennis	18
Toni Sargent	20
Brenda Holcomb	23
Alberta Brice	26
Eunice Hargrove	28
Carole Lefevre	31

APRIL

Alison Jones	4
Carolyn Bazak	7
Joani Thompson	9
Madelyn Wilson	10
Pam Barrett-Hill	11
Betty Moye	19
Susan Tyree	23
Phyllis Roth	27

REMEMBERING LOU ATHA

Riviera Garden Club founding member Lou Atha died January 16, 2018 at the age of 91. Lou met her husband Bob at Michigan State. After the Korean War, Lou and Bob moved to the upper Riviera where they raised four children. Lou was a young mother when she became involved with the

Riviera Garden Club in the 1950's. She told former RGC President Karen Lent in a 2008 interview that she remembered when *"Rocketship Park was just a sand pile left by the housing tract developer. Riviera Garden Club got together with the Kiwanas and the City of Torrance. With landscape designer, Richard Gawney, the group worked the sand pile into a park, keeping the sand from blowing into the Riviera Elementary school rooms."* Lou was also involved with the local Torrance PTAs and many community projects. She told Karen how the Riviera Garden Club was a "working club" in those early years. She remembered gathering after RGC projects to have parties in each other's homes or garages and the good neighborly feel of touring each other's newly remodeled homes and gardens.

In 1977 Lou Atha started her own very successful accounting firm which she continued to run until her death. Sometime after husband Bob died in the late 2000's, Lou became reacquainted with a childhood sweetheart, Joseph Marriot. Lou and Joe were married in 2009. Lou Atha will be missed by RGC members who knew her.



Lou Atha (right) at the 2005 Mad Hatter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 7 Wednesday Costa Verde District meeting. S.C. Botanic Garden 10 a.m. \$2

March 20 Tuesday RGC board at the home of Charlie Sappington 310-991-2687 9:30 am

March 22 Thursday Fashion Show Talbots Manhattan B. \$20 10 a.m. Food/drink
Contact Linda Rosenfeld 310-600-6067

March 27 Tuesday RGC General meeting
Torrance Airport 9:30 a.m.
TREES by Louis Gamino

April 4 Costa Verde Dist. Bus tour \$30
Gardens of the World Thousand Oaks
Contact Ruth Brooker 310-831-3566 for reservation. Only 30 participants.

April 4-6 Garden Sale **Delivery of items**
10 am-12 noon to Charlie Sappington
5025 Lee Torrance 310-991-2687

April 7 Saturday Garden Sale at the home of Charlie Sappington 5025 Lee St. Torrance

April 20 Tuesday RGC board at the home of Marilyn Rubin 310-375-4483 9:30 am

April 27 WEDNESDAY (NOT Tuesday)
Bus trip: The Huntington Library/Gardens
Meet at Lago Seco Park 8:45 am (Ocean Ave and 238th parking lot.) **\$30** Private tour
Contact Marie Hoffman 310-710-1934
Lunch on your own.



Pat Heilmann
created this
LOVELY
arrangement
Mary & Joseph
Retreat Feb. 27
Luncheon

GIFTING COMMITTEE by Gloria Balcom

Our Gifting Committee is pleased to report that once again RGC is making a positive impact within our community. So far, we have distributed donations to: the El Retiro Youth Library (for books on gardening, nature & ecology); The South Coast Botanic Garden Kids Club, sponsoring an April 22 Wonderland Tea Party; Seed to Plate to replace their aging cleaning station and make other needed upgrades; and to Tree People to help replace trees and care for our urban forest and local mountains.

The Gifting Committee is still working on additional projects such as selecting the students for our three scholarships and developing plans to partner with a local elementary school in their ambitious program to encourage ecology and instill a love of gardening in the students.

PHOTOS OF PAST RGC EVENTS

Pati Johnson and **Geneva Martin** direct parking in the rain at the M. and J. Retreat Feb. 27 RGC luncheon meeting



TORRANCE CITY TREE

By Marilyn Rubin

“What is the official Torrance city tree?” If you were asked that last week, could you have answered, **“CORK OAK”**? In 1964 the Torrance City Council officially adopted the cork oak (*Quercus suber*) as our city tree. I do not know WHY the cork oak tree was designated the official Torrance city tree over 54 years ago, as almost none are used as street trees here. Cork oak trees do give shade and are evergreen but because they are so slow growing, they are not usually planted by homeowners. One must look carefully to find the few cork oak specimens in Torrance. A large cork oak is in front of the basketball court at Lago Seco park where RGC meets for bus excursions. Another nice tree is on Torrance Blvd in a planter in front of the Katy Geissert Library. Farther down on Torrance Blvd in old downtown Torrance are three venerable cork oak specimens near Sartori. Mayor Furey said that 18 cork oak trees were planted in 2007 along Crenshaw Blvd between 177th and 180th streets by the Northwest Torrance Homeowners Association. A few cork oak trees are at Torrance Park, Wilson Park, Hickory Park and Alta Loma Park.

What is unique about the cork oak tree? Not only is it a good shade tree but its bark can be harvested. The first harvestable cork, virgin cork, is not usually taken until the tree is over 25 years old. Then the cork layer of the bark will be harvested by hand by trained workers with small axes every 7-10 years. Harvesting cork does not harm the tree. Once the precious cork is carefully removed, the tree regrows a new layer of its corky bark. The trees are never cut down to obtain cork. Therefore, cork is a renewable resource. Natural cork is used worldwide for wine bottle stoppers, flooring, insulation tiles, sound proofing, fishing rod handles, handicrafts, cricket balls, badminton shuttlecocks, paper and other artistic uses. Worldwide the cork oak tree grows in a Mediterranean climate such as Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, parts of Africa and, of course, our own Southern California in USDA planting zones 9 and 10. Next time you are at one of the parks that have a cork oak tree, take a walk around the grounds to see if you can find it. You will know when you have located our official Torrance city tree because when you touch its trunk the bark will be soft and spongy. Let’s all have a fun treasure hunt looking for the cork oak trees in Torrance!



cork oak in front of Katy Geissert Library
Torrance Blvd.



cork oak on Torrance Blvd and Sartori



cork oak acorns

RIGHT cork oak at Lago Seco Park

Source of information about cork oak trees:
[Wikipedia](#) and [Torrance Historical Society](#) websites

Sea Breeze Editor Marilyn Rubin

Riviera Garden Club

Check out our website at

www.rivieragardenclub.org



Email to:

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cross section of cork oak bark

