

WESTERN HORT

March 2024 | PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042 | www.westernhort.org

MARCH 2024 MEETING

March 13th, 7:30pm

The March meeting will be an in-person meeting this month. Meetings are free for members, non-member attendees are \$10.00. The meeting room officially opens to members and the public at 7pm but if you can arrive by 6:30 pm to help with set-up, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Masks are recommended but optional. See page 7 of this newsletter for information about joining the Western Horticultural Society.

SPEAKER: LORI PALMQUIST

TOPIC: WATER IN YOUR GARDEN— TAKING CONTROL

California is currently down to stage 1 drought after two delightfully wet winters. However, it only takes one dry winter for local water districts to declare stage 2, bringing on restrictions, reductions, excessive-use penalties and drought surcharges. It's time for us to get our dry game up and running.

Join irrigation and water-efficiency expert Lori Palmquist as she gives you a veritable buffet of strategies for lowering your water use in the landscape. She'll provide a no-nonsense approach to using water wisely and responsibly. Lori will provide you with actionable steps and a checklist for watering your garden correctly and making your irrigation the best it can be. You'll come away with new tools for drought-proofing your landscape.

Get ready to rock your irrigation! Your garden will thank you, and our diminishing water supply will surely benefit.

The following topics will be covered:

- Why it is essential for us all to reduce the water we use in our landscapes
- Alternative sources for landscape water
- Seven strategies for reducing water use
- A checklist handout for assessing and optimizing your irrigation
- A resources handout for where to find assistance
- Instructions for programming your irrigation controllers



Example of line-source drip



Lori Palmquist is an irrigation expert who has designed, installed, repaired, maintained, and upgraded hundreds of irrigation systems in her 33-year career as a landscape professional. She has a fiery devotion to irrigation and water conservation and claims to have irrigation water running through her veins. As a water manager for several homeowners' associations and large residential landscapes in the Bay Area, she has been responsible for saving millions of gallons of water from being wasted in the landscape. In the past 15 years, Lori has given hundreds of talks, workshops, seminars and trainings to thousands of landscape professionals and the public. That's pretty good for someone who used to be terrified of public speaking.

FEBRUARY SPEAKER NOTES

Memories of an Extraordinary Garden

Presented by Jennifer Dungan

Our February meeting was treated to a wonderful talk and slideshow of Jennifer Dungan's parents' garden in Carmel. This was a story akin to the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly.

Having relocated to Carmel, California from New York in 1988, the family had to adapt to the drier almost desert-like climate. Helping moderate temperatures in the garden was the coastal fog belt. The house they purchased had uninspired landscaping including a front yard full of junipers. The front yard never changed over the years but the back yard and 50' deep canyon was transformed by Jen's mother, Claire, into a garden anyone would envy.

Claire, Jen's father and hired labor removed the lawn, built retaining walls and hauled in massive amounts of good soil to combat the rocky Carmel Valley ground. Irrigation was achieved with a half inch drip tubing system. Then Claire ranged far and wide to procure the plants for the North, East (also known as the kitchen garden), South and West perennial borders! As a UCSC Arboretum Board Member, a Western Hort member and a member of the Rose Society she was well connected to develop relationships with plantsmen and women from Southern California to Washington State. International visitors came to her garden which included roses (as many as 200 at one time, with a preference for heritage and single flowering varieties), lavenders, *Berberis*, variegated *Euphorbia*, *Geranium* 'Biokovo', ornamental *Oregano*, salvias (with a special shout out to the very tough *Salvia leucantha*), *Dianthus*, dwarf *Agapanthus*, *Teucrium*, *Phormium*, New Zealand Wind Grass (*Stipa arundinacea*), *Erysimum*, Cannas, *Melianthus major*, *Clematis* selections, *Cotinus*, hydrangeas, *Viburnum*, *Arctotis*, *Digitalis*, *Chionanthus retusus*, *Heuchera*, hellebores and much more. The only original plant to remain was a good old jade plant. All these plants were arranged to create a 'tailored' look to the garden. Preferring strong single-colored blooming plants helped to achieve this look.

In the North border, Claire found the poor soil there would not let anything grow. By transitioning this "boot hill" to a dry succulent garden scheme, with a mirror to extend the view, this border became a lovely focal point. The use of mirrors has carried on in all three of her daughters' own gardens. One year, a *Furcraea foetida* sent up its 15' foot high inflorescence in this bed.

After planting out the level part of the yard, this energetic woman turned her attention down the canyon hillside. With a series of terraces and stairs for access, the garden expanded to the bottom of the hill. Once the coyote brush was cleared, they discovered a live oak tree which thrived once the competition had been removed. Adding more Roses, *Ceanothus*, *Garrya elliptica* 'Eve Case,' several kinds of iris (Douglas, spurious, and bearded), *Homeria collina*, *Salvia sonomensis* and *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Irene' (now called *Salvia rosmarinus*) among others, this hillside created a breathtaking view and private sanctuary.

Original touches to the garden also included a Torii Gate to lead from the mundane to the spiritual as one passed through. The 'dog's area' had a glorious arbor of climbing roses and clematis over the fence and gate, and yet another gate had *Akebia* growing over it.

Sadly, the house and garden had to be sold in 2010, but Jennifer feels it is a "good meditation on the ephemerality of gardens" when she reflects on the cherished years spent with her mother Claire and all that she learned to love about gardening.

~ Kathy Anberg & Jen Dungan

Speaker Dinners have resumed! Come join our speakers for dinner at Chef Chu's before the meeting. This is an opportunity to talk more intimately with our speakers and ask any questions you might like about their field of expertise. If you would like to join us, please email Western Hort member Carol Dahout at: caroldahout@yahoo.com by the Monday before the meeting so we can make a reservation for the appropriate attendance. Dinner for March will start at 5:00pm. Chef Chu's is located at 1067 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*I'm a walking in the rain
To the bone I feel the pain
Wishing you were here by me
To end this misery*

*(Gardener looking for sprouted seeds in the rain)
From D.Shannon & B.Raitt*

As I was driving west into the SF Bay Area today (February 20) and slightly hydroplaning on highway 80, then 380, then 280, during the mid-day rain storm, the brain matter started wondering about raindrops falling onto soil horizons (aka layers) versus pooling on roadways. Intro soil classes list these layers from the top as (annotated from Wikipedia):

- O) **Organic surface layer:** **Plant litter** layer - the upper part is often relatively undecomposed, but the lower part may be strongly humified (made into humus).
- A) **Surface soil:** Layer of mineral soil with **organic matter** accumulation and **soil life**, created from **weathering** of rock by rain, sun, atmospheric gases (wind) and interaction with plant life (seeds, roots) and soil critters - **earthworms**, **nematodes**, **protozoa**, **bacteria**, **actinomycetes**, **fungi**, **algae**, **protozoa**, **arthropods**, some reptiles (such as **snakes**), and burrowing mammals.
- B) **Subsoil:** This layer has less organic matter than the A horizon, and consists of iron oxides and clay minerals accumulated as a result of weathering or leaching (**illuviation**) from the above topsoil layers.
- C) **Substratum:** Layer of non-consolidated, poorly weathered rocks.
- R) **Bedrock:** R horizons denote the layer of partially or not weathered bedrock at the base of the soil profile that cannot be excavated by hand.

Note how fundamental water is in the formation of horizons O, A and B. No water - no plants, no soil animals/fungi, and very reduced rock weathering - no soil. Further remarks: Soil moisture affects rainfall (feedback effect but complex because of heat, wind and topology), and soil pore space stores water for plant use after the rain. La lluvia!

~ Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

ROVING REPORTER

NorCal Trade Show

Our intrepid WHS member Judy Wong attended the NorCal Trade Show last month and wrote up this report for us. This trade show is primarily for wholesale vendors and growers to showcase their products to retailers and growers. It is fun for the backyard gardener to go see what is new and interesting as well.

“Horticultural vendors and blue skies gathered at the February Nor Cal Landscape and Garden Trade Show. It was my first visit and even with the interesting garden products and nursery plants, I most enjoyed chatting with gardening friends.

Some vendors and previous speakers to WHS were there including Wendy Proud from Mountain States Nursery, Monrovia Nurseries and Leonel Morales-Bajarano from Los Arroyos International Nursery who spoke to us about propagation. There were local nurseries, a Clematis nursery from Washington, E. B. Stone, Lyngso and Kellogg representatives to learn about soils and fertilizers. New, as well as familiar vendors for hardscape materials, garden decor, irrigation systems, pest management, professional landscaping organizations and business solutions as well as governmental agricultural agency representatives dotted the aisles.

I picked up some samples of a citrus acid based insecticide and fungicide. I hope it will work on russet mites on my tomatoes. There were some interesting new plant introductions as well as garden décor such as laser cut metal birds. That garden décor vendor plans to be at our April WHS meeting.

I learned that the corporate base for the Sunset Garden Collection is now in Alabama! I chatted with Randy Baldwin from San Marcos Growers and shared memories of Santa Barbara in yesteryears (my hometown). All in all a productive and enjoyable morning.

Now I have to think about need vs wanting a new product, an ECO-barrel, a soft sided, foldable rain barrel.”

~ Judy Wong

FEBRUARY PLANT SHARE

Judy Wong gardens in Menlo Park and shared:



Babiana odorata (commonly known in Afrikaans as stinkbobbejaantjie or little stink baboon)

A winter blooming, summer dormant bulb from South Africa with scented pale yellow flowers and contrasting blue anthers. Grows only to a height of three to six inches and requires a dry summer rest. They perform well in large deep pots (12 inches or more) and can make a wonderful addition to the garden in suitable climates. Plant the corms deep in the soil and give good drainage and sun. Babiana is in the family Iridaceae.



***Aeonium* ‘Starburst’ and *Aeonium* ‘Sunburst’**

Judy thought it would be interesting to compare two similar but different *Aeoniums*. Most are familiar with the ‘Starburst’ variety (on the right) but the ‘Sunburst’ variety is just different enough to add to any collection. This succulent is happy in full to partial sun growing in a well draining sandy soil. Needs only moderate water in the growing season and less in winter. Native to Madeira, the Canary Islands and North Africa it is a member of the *Crassulaceae* family. *Aeoniums* are monocarpic, which means they die after flowering. However, only the rosette that produced the flower will die so taking cuttings and propagating new plants is a good idea.

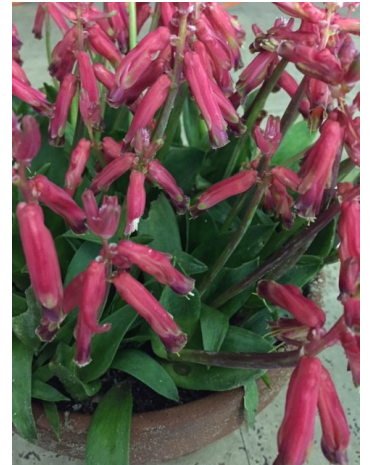
Janet Hoffmann from Campbell shared:



***Muscari armeniacum* - Grape Hyacinth**

A member of the Hyacinthaceae family, it is native to the Mediterranean and southwestern Asia. This bulb will produce clumps of grassy foliage and spikes of small bright blue flowers, growing six to eight inches tall. Give this long - lived bulb sun to part shade, allowing it to go dormant in the summer with watering in the winter only. Plant the bulbs two inches deep and three inches apart in early fall in well drained soil. Dig and divide when the clumps become crowded and they may even self sow in favorable conditions. (this is one of my favorite bulbs because it keeps coming back no matter how much abuse I give it! Editor)

***Lachenalia bulbifera* (L. pendula) - Cape Cowslip**
South African bulb in the Hyacinthaceae family, with tubular blossoms in late winter or early spring. Grows eight to ten inches tall. Plant bulbs in late summer in well-drained soil one and a half to two inches deep and three inches apart. Water sparingly until growth appears and then regularly. Once foliage yellows after bloom gradually let soil dry out and keep dry until fall.



Plunge Bed

Janet also shared her success with her new plunge bed for her South African and California native bulbs. It is a raised bed filled with sand and you simply bury the bottom of the pots in the sand. This accomplishes several things including keeping the critters from knocking your pots over and spilling soil and bulbs all over the place! It also keeps the bulbs cooler and reduces water needs. She put small mesh hardware cloth over the entire bed to keep the squirrels from digging and any other hungry critters from eating them.



Pat Ley gardens in Los Altos Hills and shared these:



Viburnum x bodnantense

Developed in Bodnant, Wales U.K. around 1935 by Charles Puddle, the head gardener at Bodnant Garden. This viburnum can grow to ten feet or more with six foot spread. Dark green leaves are deeply veined and one and a half to four inches long. Dark scarlet autumn color on this deciduous shrub gives way to an early spring flowering of very fragrant flower clusters. Named cultivars include 'Charles Lamont', 'Dawn' and 'Pink Dawn' which have slightly different characteristics on the foliage and flower color. Grow in full sun to part shade in well drained soil. Sunset zones 4 - 9 and 14 - 24.

Photo credit: Garden House, Brighton, U.K.



Oemleria cerasiformis - Osoberry or Indian Plum

The sole species in genus Oemleria. Native to the Pacific Coast and ranges of North America, from British Columbia, Canada to Santa Barbara County, California. Flowers and foliage emerge together very early spring on this suckering shrub that grows three to fifteen feet tall. The fruits of Osoberry are edible and resemble small plums. Indigenous peoples of the Americas include it in their diets, make tea of the bark, and chew its twigs to use as a mild



anesthetic and aphrodisiac. Male and female plants are required for pollination to get berries. This moderately easy native tolerates a variety of soils as long as adequate drainage is provided in part shade. Sunset zones 4 - 9 and 14 - 24. Photo credit: Calscape.org

Iris Lovers Alert!

Get out your calendars and put these dates for April in now:

Clara B. Rees Iris Society Potted Iris Sale on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at the Saratoga Farmer's Market, 14000 Fruitvale Ave., Saratoga. We will be selling tall bearded and medians, historic and recent introductions in 2 gallon pots for \$10. 8:30 am - 1 pm. Come early for best selection.

Clara B. Rees Spring Show, "A Rainbow of Iris", on Sunday, April 28, 2024 at the Joan Pisani Community Center, 19655 Allendale Ave., Saratoga. Free and open to the public 12 pm - 5 pm. This is an American Iris Society judged show. Horticulture and artistic displays. We will have our most beautiful specimens on display - Pacific Coast, tall bearded, intermediate, border bearded, space age, novelties and historic.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 10th: Documentary Movie Night– Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Ouldolf + plant & garden décor vendors

May 8th: Arvind Kumar, Gardening for Habitat with Native Plants

June Picnic: TBD

*** Don't forget that Cal Hort invites us to all their meetings as well. ***

March 18th, 6:30pm, Zoom meeting The Calochortus of California with Kipp McMichael. Kipp is an active contributor of the Pacific Bulb Society, hortiphile and software developer. He will orient Calochortus in the larger scheme of plant taxonomy, discuss the biogeography of the genus, present a photo tour and talk about more far-flung members of the genus outside California and the U.S. He will conclude with a discussion of the cultivation of this genus which are surprisingly easy to grow.

28 YEARS AGO

March 13, 1996 Western Hort met to hear *Native Bulbs* presented “by Jim Robinette, co-owner of West Coast Native Bulbs, in Sebastopol.”

The book sale in February “netted \$660, with approximately 240 books sold.”

An announcement about the upcoming Master Gardeners’ Spring Flea Market included directions for collecting the plants members had been growing, as well as old garden tools and the unsold books from the book sale, all of which WHS would be selling on March 30th.

Always an enticing topic, *New Plants for North American Gardens* a lecture by Bruce Macdonald, director of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, was to be co-sponsored by WHS at the Hall of Science in Golden Gate Park.

Somehow your absentminded correspondent missed the February Plant Notes, so let’s take a look now.

Lindy Kurle brought in *Senecio petasites*, (the name I first learned for this dramatic plant) now known as *Roldana petasitis*. “Lindy has found this plant to be very tough, resistant to drought, frost, neglect and the depredations of little boys.” Native to Mexico, *R. petasitis* makes a large, tropical looking shrub with big velvety leaves.

Dick Dunmire shared *Zygopetalum mackayi*, an epiphytic orchid which he grows under the same conditions as cymbidiums. Colors as described for the flowers: sepals and petals are yellow-green blotched purple-brown, the lip is white veined with branching purple lines. “All this sounds like a bizarre color combination but, as with so many orchids, produces an exotic and handsome effect.”

“John Hammerschmidt showed *Cestrum elegans* ‘Smithii’ a large, drought hardy, almost ever-blooming shrub.” Pink tubular flowers lead to red berries; hummingbirds and other birds are frequent visitors.

Bill Kurtz brought in several species of lachenalia which are native to South Africa and generally produce attractive, colorful flowers. *L. aloides* ‘Aurea’ (butterscotch yellow), *L. aloides* (yellow tipped with red and green), *L. aloides* ‘Nelsonii’ (green-tipped yellow segments), *L. namaquensis* (lavender-blue with maroon tips) and *L. mutabilis* (almost white buds open blue, turning mauve).

Ed Carman “identified the colorful euphorbia that he brought to the January meeting as *E. fulgens*.” He showed a six-year-old erica he grew from seed that came from South Africa, about 2 ½ feet tall, that was “profusely covered” with “pinky-lavender” flowers. He also shared a “strange yellow fruit with tapering finger-like projections, called Buddha’s Hand.” At the time it was identified as *Citrus citra*, but the taxonomists have had their way with it and it is now classified as *Citrus medica* v. *sarcodactylis*.

“Jean Fowkes recently bought *Dalbergaria sanguinea* ‘Orange King’ at the Strybing (San Francisco Botanical Garden) plant sale but was unable to get any information about it...” Eventually our plant note author Elizabeth Garbett (with the assistance of Don Mahoney) was able to track down that the correct name was *Columnnea sanguinea*.

~ Nancy Schramm

Favorite Seasonal Cues

Excerpt from *The Garden Maker’s Book of Wonder* by Allison Vallin Kostovick (Allison gardens in Gloucester, Maine)

- ◆ When forsythia blooms, plant peas and onions, and prune roses.
- ◆ Plant perennials when maple trees begin to leaf out. When the leaves unfurl, sow morning glories.
- ◆ Are dandelions and crocuses blooming? Start sowing carrots, lettuce, beets and spinach.
- ◆ When daylilies and lily of the valley start blooming and apple blossoms begin to drift to the ground, it’s time to plant tomatoes, pole beans, corn, and peppers.
- ◆ Peonies blossoming? That’s a green light to get melons in the ground.
- ◆ Plant corn when oak leaves are as big as a squirrel’s ears.

Thank you Judy Wong for sharing!

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS

Sonoma Botanical Garden Bonsai Exhibit, Living Sculptures: The Art & Science of Bonsai, This event is going on now until March 22nd. 12841 HWY 12 Glen Ellen, CA. 95442. Open 9am - 4 pm daily, except closed on Tuesdays. <https://sonomabg.org/visit/bonsai>

CNPS Native Plant Gardening Webinars, March 11 @ 7 pm - 8:30 pm Join CNPS to learn about the webinars to get you growing with California native plants! <https://www.cnps.org/gardening/webinars>

Start NOW to Create a Summer Vegetable Garden. Free event sponsored by UC Master Gardeners. **March 12, 6:30 -7:30 pm** at the Mountain View Public Library, First Floor Conference Room. Learn how to prepare your site or containers, positioning an irrigation system, planning what to grow, how to find seeds or seedlings and protecting your plants from pests and diseases. <https://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/events-calendar/?calitem=583033>

Dawn Gardens Open Garden Day, March 15, 9am - 5pm. Explore 8 acres of garden with 2 miles of paths. 50,000 daffodils as well as Camellias, Primroses, Hellebores and more. 14446 Perimeter Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949 dawn-gardens.com

March Events at your local Santa Clara County Library Too many to list so go to your SCCL websites recent newsletter events tab and see what is coming up this month. Examples of programs range from growing citrus to worm composting. Some require registration and fill up quickly. Libraries include Saratoga, Milpitas, Morgan Hill and Cupertino. <https://sccl.org/news/>

Coming up April 13 & 14 : Growing Natives Garden Tour. 10 am to 4 pm Free, self guided tours of gardens located throughout Sant Clara County and part of San Mateo County. <https://www.cnps.org/event/growing-natives-garden-tour-santa-clara-valley-chapter>

If you have never participated in this event I highly recommend it! Editor

STROLLING AROUND THE INTERNET

Laidback Gardener posted a story about how Russian Sage is Real Sage, but It's Not Russian!

<https://laidbackgardener.blog/2024/02/09/russian-sage-is-real-sage-but-its-not-russian/>

Officers and Board Members:

Co-Presidents: Grace Tsang & Meri-Beth Bird

Vice President: **Open Position**

Secretary : Jennifer Dungan

Corresponding Secretary: **Open Position**

Treasurer: Eva Huala

Other Board Members: Jim Salyards, Carol Dahout, **(Open Positions here)**

Volunteer Committees and Responsibilities:

Plant Sale Table: Carol Dahout

Email and website maintenance: Ursula Haschke

Membership: Ursula Haschke

Publicity and Outreach: Grace Tsang

Meeting Tech: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

Janet Hoffmann & John Hammerschmidt

Welcome Table: Meri-Beth Bird & Eva Huala

Speaker Program Committee: Leslie Dean (chair), Nancy Schramm, Judy Wong, Glenda Jones, Eva Huala & Meri-Beth Bird

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Anberg

Newsletter Contributors: Jennifer Dungan & Nancy Schramm

Scholarships: Grace Tsang, Jennifer Doniach,

About Membership in Western Hort:

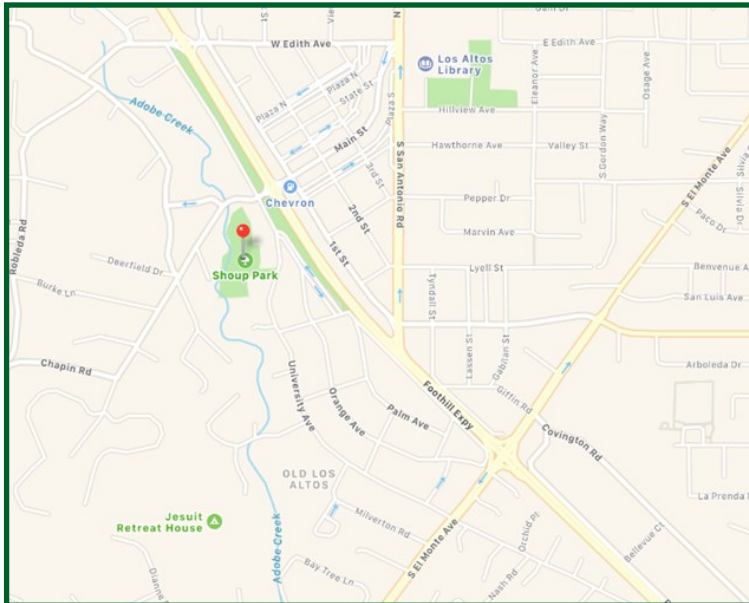
Membership Rates: A one-year membership (Sep-Aug) includes an e-mail copy of this newsletter and admittance to all of our monthly meetings. Regular membership is \$35, Family membership for two or more members at the same address is \$50, and a discounted rate for students is \$20. To receive a print copy of this newsletter by mail add \$10 to the membership fee listed above. Please visit the Pac Hort page for more information or to join Pacific Horticulture Society, for whom we are now a sponsoring organization, go to: pacifichorticulture.org.

To join or renew visit our website at: <https://www.westernhort.org/membership> You may pay online with a credit card or print form and mail with your check to the contact us address below.

To contact us: Please send email to: info@westernhort.org or snail mail to: PO Box 166, Mountain View, CA 94042



PO Box 166
Mountain View, CA 94042
First Class Mail
VISIT US AT WESTERNHORT.ORG



Meeting date & location : March 13th, 2024
In Person at Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos
(Masks optional)
Meeting starts at 7:30 pm.
Would you like to **sponsor a lecture** or suggest a speaker for the WHS that is of particular interest to you?
It would be much appreciated!
Please call Leslie Dean at 650-966-8364.

Newsletter Submissions
The newsletter publishes on the first of the month. **Note: deadline for submission for the next newsletter is the 20th of March.** Submissions after this date will likely appear in the next month's newsletter. Send submissions to: Kjanberg@gmail.com or snail mail to Kathy Anberg, 1332 Peggy Ct. Campbell, CA 95008-6342