

Welcome Winter Edition



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Photo by Jean Hurst



Hollies are Seasonal

Contributed by Sue Abzinger

The holly collection at VanDusen Garden has importance due both to its historical links with the Garden and its variety (140, forming one of the official holly arboretums in North America). At the same time its continued existence is constantly threatened for several reasons: the unsuitability of the location of many specimens in a damp, but prominent garden area, and the invasiveness of some species, especially English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

One of our own guides, Penny Koch, who is also a master gardener, presented a most interesting continuing education session to the guides last January because she feels the holly collection is a true treasure for the Garden and deserves both to be better known and preserved.

It was one of the coldest and snowiest days of the winter when Penny shared with a select few (because most guides did not want to venture out that day) her knowledge and enthusiasm for the hollies. She did an in-depth presentation about the history, mythology and botany of the holly family and then identified many hollies both of the holly lawn area and the holly trail in the Garden.

Following the indoor presentation the few hardy souls present donned their warmest outdoor gear and followed Penny on a tour of the holly lawn, where snow and grey skies made the leaves and berries extra vivid to our eyes.

Penny's presentation notes have been available in the yellow binder on the deck but the good news is that Penny has agreed to do her presentation again, for the guide continuing education session in February 2008. We're hoping for better weather so that we can spend more time outdoors, visiting the holly trail, which we did not get to before, as well as the holly lawn. So mark your calendars for February 21st and augment your knowledge, and your enthusiasm, for this somewhat neglected (and maligned) part of the Garden.

Sue Abzinger is a member of the Guide Education Working Party.

Notes From Guide Council Chair And Volunteer Services Director



Congratulations! We survived a most challenging and unusual year! 2007 came in with wind and snow, settled down into a calmer wet spring, spiraled into a dramatic Garden closure and finished the Guiding season with more wind and rain. Through it all we carried on and thrived.

We participated and we learned. The Garden's 2007 education theme was conservation. Our workshops echoed this sentiment; first with succession planning and throughout the year with our speaker topics and our continuing education offerings. Many thanks to the newly formed Guide Education working group for all their efforts in procuring an eclectic and stimulating series of sessions this past year.

2008 promises to be another year chalk-a-block full of learning opportunities, camaraderie and stimulating experiences in our ever-changing Garden. Hopefully with a whole less of weather drama.

In keeping with the Garden's education theme for 2008, Connecting People and Plants, our annual leadership workshops will focus on diversity - - multi-cultural and multi-generational diversity in people. Just like in the natural world, diversity indicates the health of the environment. Diversity in our population provides for a healthy, sustainable Garden community. We are committed to continuing to build an environment of mutual acceptance, sharing of common Garden experiences and enthusiasm for guiding.

Your enthusiasm as Guides is vital. Tell your friends know about guiding and our need to for more guides. Consider leadership opportunities or participate in the many guiding learning and social events. Let us know what training and learning topics are of interest to you. Only with your active participation can we continue to build.

Thank you for your support in 2007. We wish you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season. We look forward working together in 2008!

*"The great thing in this world is not
so much where we are,
But in what direction we are moving."
Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Claire Kermacks, Guide Council Chair
Judy Aird, Volunteer Services Director

Guide Calendar

November 15, 2007

Guide Continuing Education

Speaker: Lindsey Coulter - David Suzuki Foundation

Topic: TBA

January 10, 2008

General Guide Meeting

Speaker: Marie Bruce

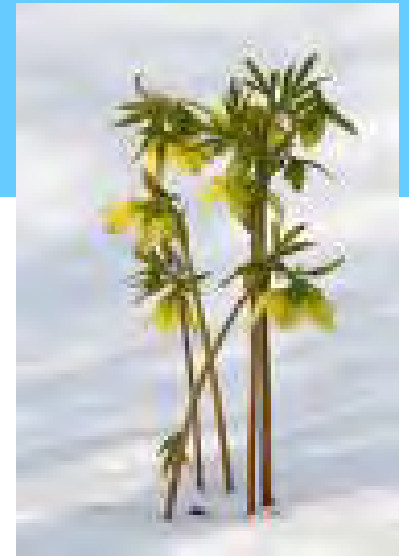
Topic: Wild Flowers of Greece

February 21, 2008

Guide Continuing Education

Speaker: Penny Koch

Topic: Hollies are Hot



Vibrant Vi Bennet

In September we lost a well loved guide, Vi Bennet, who passed away at the age of 89. Vi took her training in 1976 and was an active guide for 30 years. She was in the school program under Jennifer Sherlock and on the phoning committee, as well as being a walking guide. In 1990, she joined the Sunday team on the Information Booth and came regularly twice a month until last year, when she was only able to make the trip from New Westminster once a month.

Vi was very unassuming and a very friendly and warm person. Her interests ranged from the Natural History Society to the Vancouver Symphony. She was fun. She was always learning and would challenge her fellow guides by asking questions and encouraging research. She had an enquiring mind, an excellent memory, a joy for life and was an inspiration to us all.

Get Ready for Christmas!

Shop in the Garden

Discount shopping for Members takes place on November 21 & 22 – ALL DAY – not just the evening! Find that unique and special gift for your gardening friends!

Enjoy!

These recipes are suggested by Vivien Clarke



Photo by Patti Lazzarini

CRANBERRY-PEAR RELISH

- 1 bag (12 oz./340g) cranberries
(about 3 ½ cups or 875 mL)
- 1 ¼ cups (300 mL) brown sugar
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup (125 mL) water
- 1 large, ripe pear peeled, cored and diced

In a 3 quart (3-L) saucepan, combine cranberries, brown sugar, vinegar and water; bring to a boil over high heat, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Add pear to saucepan, cover and cook an additional 3 minutes. Transfer to bowl. Cover and refrigerate for about 4 hours or until chilled. (Cranberry relish can be kept in tightly covered container in refrigerator for up to 2 days.) Makes about 3 cups (750 mL).

CRANBERRY CHUTNEY

(this recipe is from Better Homes and Gardens, November, 1979)

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2 small tomatoes, peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped (¾ cup)
- ½ cup light raisins
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground cloves

In a 3-quart saucepan combine cranberries, tomatoes, ¾ cup water, raisins, onion and salt. Bring to boiling. Simmer, covered, 15 minutes or till cranberries pop. Stir in brown sugar, vinegar, ginger and cloves, and ½ tsp. pepper. Cover; cook 35 to 40 minutes or till the consistency of relish, stirring occasionally. Ladle into jars or freezer containers. Refrigerate or freeze. Makes 2 2/3 cups.

Winter in VanDusen Garden

Contributed by Joan Baker

Following the theme of biodiversity and conservation (discussed by Rosemary Murray in previous newsletters and Patrick Mooney at the September guide meeting), what do we look for in VanDusen during the winter season?

We learned that birds are indicators of biodiversity and VanDusen has a large range of species in limited numbers. Their requirements in winter are food and shelter. Park Board policy on pesticides ensures safe forage for insect eaters. Flocks of bushtits and chickadees can be seen daily working over the upper levels. Ground feeders like the towhee rummage through the leaf mulches for grubs, including vine weevils. How many weevil bites do you see on our rhododendrons? Watch tree trunks for the nuthatch brown creeper. We do not often attract woodpeckers because, unlike UBC, we do not leave dead trees standing.

VanDusen has a large selection of berries. Apparently those with a high sugar content are more appealing and eaten first. The most nutritious berries last until late winter when they are needed most. It is interesting to watch which go first. Mountain ash berries are high on the robin's wish list, but they do not eat the white ones. *Callicarpas* berries were not touched the first few years, but the deciduous holly berries were so popular they had to be covered with netting to save them for the Festival of Lights.

Our lakes attract winter migrants as well as the local ducks. Check out the Shaughnessy Lake for wintering buffleheads that dive for insects and plant materials. While you are up there, keep your ear cocked for a ghostly croak. VanDusen is the best place in the city to see ravens. The adjacent wild area provides the best shelter in the garden as it has not been opened up to create vistas.

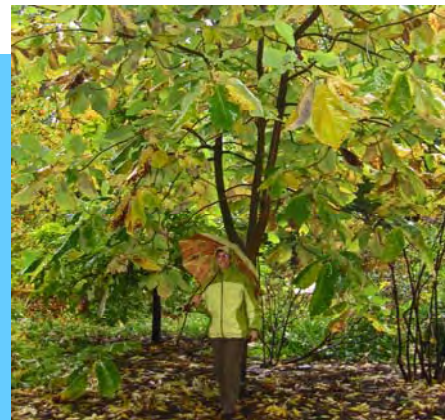
If you prefer leaves to feathers, give a thought to the endangered species which receive protection here. The Conservation Data Centre lists the plants of BC into three levels of vulnerability. In the Red list are species listed under the Wildlife Act as Endangered, Threatened or Extirpated. In the Western North American Garden, do you find anything on the Red list? (www.env.gov.bc.ca)

Going onto the Eastern North American Garden, admire the American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), which is decimated by the chestnut blight in its native habitat. Some plants are numerous elsewhere but rare in other areas. There are a number of plants in the Carolinian flora that reach into southern Ontario and are there considered to be Rare or Threatened. The Cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*) was abundant near St Catherines and now only three woodlots remain. The Kentucky Coffee tree (*Gymnocladus*) and Kentucky Yellowwood (*Cladrastis*) are also threatened in the U.S., as is the *Rhododendron minus* Var *chapmanii*, growing with sable plants in boggy grounds in Florida.

American Chestnut seed pod



Magnolia Acuminata
(Cucumber Tree)



We all know about the discovery of the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), which has become a street tree in Vancouver. It was named after the Chinese Swamp Cypress (*Glyptostrobus*) which is very rare and can be found in the Sino-Himalayan garden. By the zigzag bridge is the Umbrella Pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*) from Japan. It is slow growing and very long-lived – one temple tree has been worshipped locally since 1310. The spicy scented, water resistant wood is highly valued for boat building, resulting in overlogging. It is on the Red List of the World Conservation Union.

Across the Sea of Japan, in a remote corner of Eastern Siberia, the Russian Cypress (*Microbiota decussate*) was discovered in 1921 and introduced into cultivation in 1957. Its native range is very limited and it is on the RED list for Russia.

For those of us who enjoy a bit of detective research, the possibilities at VanDusen are endless.

To quote Caleb Thredkeldd (1727) –

“Botanic studies have a native tendency to the Support, Comfort and Delight of Mankind.”

And summer or winter it is always a joy to be out in VanDusen Botanical Garden!

Joan Baker is Captain of the Sunday walking guides, who lead tours all winter. She wishes to thank the guides and Jeremy Gordon for their information.

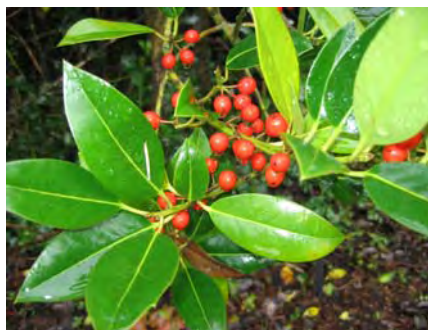
Photos for this article by Joan Baker & Cindy Swoveland



Dawn Redwood



Umbrella Pine with Japanese maples



Red holly berries

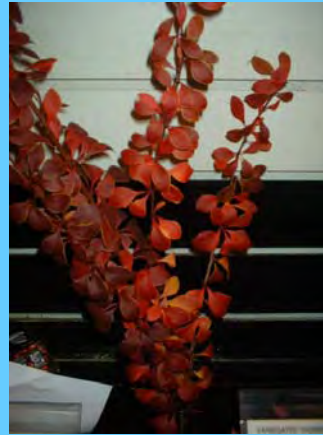


Yellow Mountain Ash berries

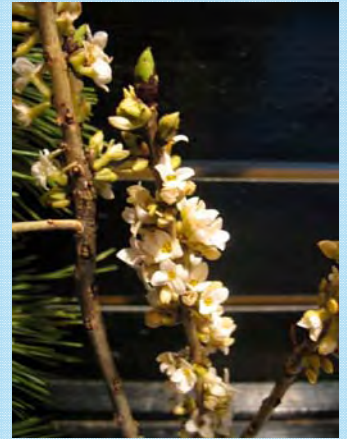
Plants to See this Winter

Midge Oke has highlighted some great plants to see over winter at VanDusen – *Berberis thunbergii*, *Daphne mezereum alba* and the Himalayan Honeysuckle – an exotic sounding trio! A perfect way to refresh our senses during our West Coast winter.

Himalayan Honeysuckle



Berberis thunbergii,



Daphne mezereum alba



Pernettya
(*Gaultheria mucronata rosea*)

Winterberry
(*Ilex verticillata*)



Snowdrop
(*Galanthus ikariae*);

Princess tree
(*Paulownia tomentosa*)
(Lily-of-the Valley bush)



Witchhazel Hybrid
(*Hamamelis x intermedia*)



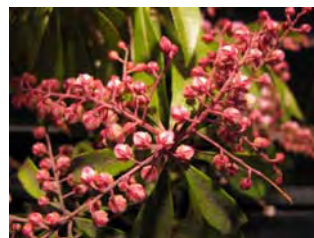
Viburnum bodnantense



Winter Aconite
(*Eranthis hemalis*);



Whitewash Bramble
(*Rubus cockburnianus*)



Pieris japonica
'Valley Valentine'
(Lily-of-the Valley bush)



Choisya ternata 'Sundance'
(Mexican Mock Orange)



Greetings from “Down Under”

Contributed by Janelle Hartley

It's hard to believe that it's almost five months since my visit to Vancouver and to your wonderful Van Dusen Botanic Garden. It was good to meet so many staff and volunteer guides and to share ideas about delivering successful community education programs.

I was delighted to see the “Plants to See” display in your Visitor Centre and recalled taking a slide of it when I attended the AABGA conference in 1999. Really good ideas stand the test of time as this photo shows!

I hope to copy this great idea in our Sydney gardens some day. Until then visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney can pick up a monthly 'Must See in the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney as recommended by our Volunteer Guides' or download it from our website at

http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/87225/Must_See_-_October.pdf

You might enjoy taking a virtual visit to our gardens via our recently revamped website. I wish you all the best for the coming seasons and I hope to visit again when I come over to North America for skiing in February.

*Janelle Hartley is the Manager of Community Education
at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.*

My Garden Roots

Contributed by Bill Addison

Some forty miles east of Vancouver, the Ruskin Dam and hydro-electric power plant is situated on the Stave River. Here on a wooded hillside overlooking the river the BC Power Corporation established the small community of company houses that would be my boyhood home.

In those arguably simpler times of sixty and more years ago, as I recall, most of the adults of the community were ardent gardeners and my parents no less so. To a young boy, however, playing and exploring in our bountiful natural surroundings was paramount. While I have memories of domestic gardening, my garden roots were nourished by the wealth of native plants that grew around us in the wild.

Second growth specimens of Douglas fir, hemlock, and western red cedar lent their protection to underbrush that included salal and mahonia. Below that, sword fern, trillium and bleeding heart could be found as part of the ground cover. Vine maples and cascara trees grew in hillside ravines a stone's throw from our house.

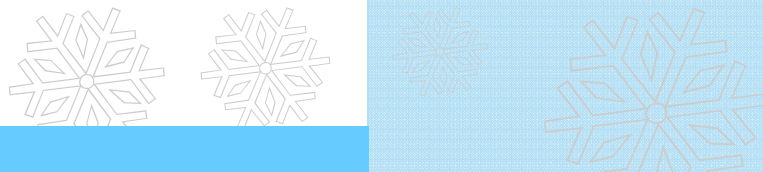
The harvesting of cascara bark was an early money-making venture when it was sold to Buckerfields, an intermediary of the pharmaceutical industry. Paper birch and bitter cherry also grew in the neighborhood. Close to the river, red alder and black cottonwoods were found. Big leaf maples presented the intriguing sight of licorice ferns growing high in the tree branches. Close to our own back-door, red huckleberries and salmonberries could be picked and eaten. When I was about seven years old, a black bear surprised me when it came picking at the same time! From a nearby stream, I remember gathering watercress that my mother incorporated in my school lunch sandwiches. The waterways and bogs also fostered a profusion of skunk cabbage.

Frequent encounters with stinging nettle were an ongoing annoyance, while the dreaded devil's club grew in the dankest parts of the woods. From an early age I understood its toxicity and knew not to touch. I also heard admonitions against disturbing trillium or cutting down dogwood.

An early introduction to an invasive was my observation that scotch broom had overtaken an uncultivated plot near our house. Nevertheless, the broom provided cover for boys' warlike games, while bulrushes collected along the river made imaginary spears. In our own backyard a small black locust tree was a favorite of my brother and me to climb, while avoiding its thorns presented a challenge.

The Second World War years encouraged a child's participation in the planting of "Victory Gardens", and I thereupon assisted my father in the carrot and radish rows of his vegetable patch. I remember plants in my mother's flowerbeds included gladiolas, pinks and sweet william. I also admired the large garden surrounding the company guesthouse with its tall conifers, expansive lawn and plantings of rhododendrons.





During our years in the country, the family made periodic visits to my father's "hobby farm". On ten acres of still largely wooded land, situated off the Dewdney Trunk Road, a fragrant bower of honeysuckle framed the front doorway of a three-room cottage. The agricultural plantings included raspberry, currant, and gooseberry bushes. A row of small fruit trees bordered the driveway, and perhaps with prescience for that coming day of extensive suburban subdivisions, a hedge and even a lawn had been planted. In time I reached an age when I could be expected to contribute some help to their upkeep. To my youthful spirit, however, I was still in a woodsy setting, and in retrospect I wonder how some of my father's work was accomplished, when in contrast to our company house, the "farm" was without electricity and running water.

Eventually, when I was a teenager, we moved back into the city and Dunbar. Here my parents cultivated the very roses, hydrangeas, rhododendrons, mock orange, flowering quince, lilac, boxwood, laurel, forsythia, sword fern, and kerria that I still enjoy today.

Despite the passage of time, my early years in the Fraser Valley have heightened my appreciation for the native plantings of the Northwest area at VanDusen Garden. The stream and lush ravine just outside the volunteer lounge also provide fond service to my memories.

Bill Addison is the Captain of the Wednesday cart driving team.

Little Bill working on the 'farm'



In the Library with Marina Princz

I am very pleased to be composing this submission on the first day that the staff 'family' is back together after the Garden closure. The Garden will soon be open again, and the extended family of guides and other volunteers will be on the deck and visitors back in the Garden. It feels good to know that the beauty and teaching that this Garden has to offer will be appreciated once more.

With fall moving towards winter again, there is an urge to go inward and begin read and dream about the possibilities of new life in the spring garden.

The following are a few of the new books that you will notice on the VanDusen Library shelves:

- *Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns* by Sue Olsen. Published in 2007 by Timber Press. SB429 .O47 2007
- *Gardening with heirloom seeds: tried-and-true flowers, fruits, and vegetables for a new generation* by Lynn Coulter. Published in 2007 by Fitzhenry & Whiteside. SB117 .C74 2007
- *Green city: people, nature, and urban places* by Mary Soderstrom. Published in 2006 by Véhicule Press. HT241 .S62 2006
- *Pacific Northwest insect management handbook* edited by Craig S. Hollingsworth and published in 2007 by the Oregon State University Extension Service. SB951 .P28 2007
- *Pacific Northwest plant disease management handbook* edited by Jay W. Pscheidt and Cynthis M Ocamb and published in 2007 by the Oregon State University Extension Service.. SB603.5 .P33 2007
- *Pacific Northwest weed management handbook* compiled by Ed Peachey and published in 2007 by the Oregon State University Extension Service.. SB611 .P25 2007
- *Planting Design: Gardens in Time and Space* by Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury. Published in 2006 by Timber Press. SB472 .83 2006
- *Teaming with microbes : a gardener's guide to the soil food web* by Jeff Lowenfels & Wayne Lewis. Published in 2006 by Timber Press. S591.L59 2006
- *Vista: the culture and politics of gardens* edited by Noel Kingsbury and Tim Richardson. Published in 2005 by Frances Lincoln. SB454.3.P45V57 2005

Library Hours:

Tuesday to Friday -- 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wednesday evening – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sunday Afternoon – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Donations of used books and magazines are gladly accepted!

“When guiding, what is a normal day?”

Contributed by Brian Clark

I am beginning to realize that a VanDusen Guide can never know what to expect when putting in their day in the garden.

July 7th seemed a normal day, just taking half of a group of 15 Americans for a tour. The number in my share eventually became just three tree enthusiasts, as the others fell behind taking pictures. I quickly adapted my plan to focus on trees. One thing I learned is that the bed 70 unlabeled, said to be *Amabilis* fir, is most certainly not. Perhaps it is *Abies koreana*, but our guest's belief still needs to be confirmed. Then we need a label! Late in the day, three people asked for a tour, so off I went, knowing this would take some “overtime”. Introductions and chat led to the information that one of my guests was the Conservative Party Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Orleans. Keeping in mind the need for Federal Government participation in the capital campaign, I am hoping I was able to give these visitors a very good impression of the garden. Possibly some information I passed along to Mary Butterfield might prove to be useful in the future.

July 14th seemed to be a quiet day without anything beyond the norm arising. That appearance ended at 3:30 pm when a visitor asked me to guide 10 visitors from Thailand. Once again off I went to quickly discover that this youthful group was hardly normal. They wanted to see as many North American native species as possible and presented me with a three-page spreadsheet that outlined their interest. Too bad Chris Woods wasn't in sight, or that I had no warning! We spent two and a half hours looking around the garden. Who knows how much or indeed if any of the spreadsheet was covered? The group included several very high achieving students and accompanying adults representing Thailand, enroute to The University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) to compete in the 2007 International Biology Olympiad. The Olympiad is an annual event, held since 1990, that has attracted competitors from as many as 50 countries each year. If I had looked at a sample of the written exam competitors will face (in addition to practical testing) at the Olympiad, as I did later on the internet, I would have most certainly asked for help doing this particular tour.

These two “ordinary” Saturdays certainly reveal that VanDusen Guides can never be certain just what their guiding day will bring them!

Brian Clark is a volunteer guide and a VBGA board member.



Seasons in the Garden



Photos by Claire Kermacks



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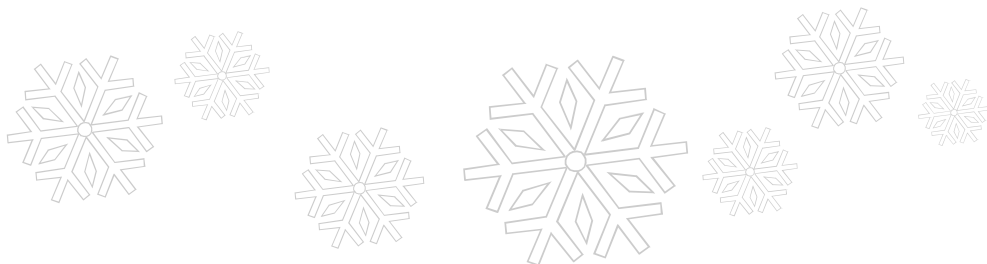
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This is your Newsletter, thank you for making it successful with your contributions!

This year, we would like to thank the following for their contributions and assistance with the production and distribution of the Guide Newsletter during the 2007 season:

Sue Abzinger, Bill Addison, Judy Aird, Joan Baker, Beatrice Carlani, Brian Clark, Vivien Clarke, Cindy Delmonico, Erica Dunn, Louise Dyer, Janelle Hatherly, Peggy Heath, Jean Hurst, Claire Kermacks, Betty Lofthouse, Sally Maclachlan, Rosemary Murray, Midge Oke, Judy Osburn, Gloria Paulsen, Marina Prinz, Anne Roburn, Cindy Swoveland, Sheila Veugar, Chris Woods and Rosemary Yip.

Thank you!

Patti Lazzerini, Newsletter Coordinator

("Say, that would make a great article . . .")

Dolores Martin, Layout & Design

("I'm still tweeking Patti – you'll get it soon . . .")