



Fall 2014 Issue

LDEI-SF Newsletter

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Tanya Holland



Amy Hoopes

Dear San Francisco Dames,

Fall back! Not us! Fall ahead! I can't believe it's that time of year already and I know so many of us are getting busier and busier. Despite our busy schedules, we just had several opportunities to connect and connect we did.

Many of you have attended the wonderful events organized by Event Chair Kathleen Hill. I'm still hearing rave reviews of the visit to the Fig Germplasm Repository. Who knew that figs could be so complex and interesting? In planning the events for 2015, Kathleen will be joined by Eileen Spitalny, who transferred from the Phoenix chapter two years ago.

The visit to McEvoy ranch let us see olives hanging on the trees and the machinery that turns them into oil before we lunched on sandwiches and salads from Della Fattoria and sipped McEvoy wine.

Celebrating our Chapter's Twenty-fifth Anniversary at Cakebread Cellars with Grand Dame Dolores Cakebread was a special treat. About twenty of us enjoyed a delicious luncheon in a lovely setting. Great food, great wines, great company...what more do you need?

Past Events:

[Art of Eating](#)
[Olive Oil Tasting](#)
[Noe Valley Bakery](#)
[Fig Day](#)
[Induction Dinner](#)
[Fellowship Award](#)
[McEvoy Tour](#)
[Chapter Anniversary](#)
[New Members Brunch](#)

And then there was the new member's brunch at the home of Jerry DiVecchio. Sixteen of us gathered to welcome Lane Giguere, of Matchbox Winery, who was the only new member who could make it. It's a wonderful time, much like the Ancestral Potluck, where we all go around and tell our personal herstory and really get to know one another better.

Upcoming Events

[Ancestral Potluck](#)
[Art of Eating](#)

We have an amazing, dynamic group and we should be proud! Cathrine Sneed of The Garden Project related the history of this special program and gave suggestions on how Les Dames can support this noble cause. See more about it in Dame News.

I (Tanya) just returned from the LDEI International conference in Boston that regretfully Amy couldn't attend this year, but we had seven members present- a nice representation considering that the location was 3000 plus miles away. It was yet another inspiring gathering of some of the most influential women in our industry. I can't encourage all of you enough to plan to attend a conference in the near future. Next year's location is Charleston, SC and Washington, DC in 2016. They promise to bring it back West in 2017, but it's always worth the trip. It's part vacation, part education, and all fun! I have the photos to prove it next time I see you!

If at any time you have an idea for an event, please don't hesitate to suggest it. We truly want to make this organization work for you. In other news, we're diligently working on establishing more scholarships...some for cooks, some for sommeliers or aspiring sommeliers and we're open to suggestions. The more membership participation, the better.

Happy last six weeks of the year! Yikes!

Warm regards,

Tanya and Amy

Letter from the Editor

Dear Sister Dames,

Many thanks to all the Dames who sent me news (theirs as well as other Dames). Thanks as well to those who chronicled past events with stories and photos. It helps make this newsletter lively and current.

I want to make a pitch for the Ancestral Pot-Luck Recipe



Collection. The first recipes were published as part of the Summer, 2011, Potage. Subsequent additions went out under separate cover in the springs of 2013 and 2014. We now have about forty recipes. Dames Celia Sack, Penni Wisner, and Elaine Corn have joined me to curate the collection. We will be posting recipes on the San Francisco Les Dames website (www.lesdamesf.org), AND there is the possibility of a digital or a fine-print edition of selected recipes in the future.

This year may be the last year of the Pot-Luck Dinner, so this is your chance to share those heirloom treasures.

Here are a few pointers to help your Ancestral Recipe contribution shine:

The recipe should be original: something handed down from your mother, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, whoever, or adapted by them from one of their favorite cookbooks. If you have hand-written recipe cards or notes written by them, please scan them and send them along with the recipe.

Stories matter. Please include any memories or anecdotes about the recipe-rituals surrounding its making, arguments connected with its preparation, anything that makes the recipe come alive for the person who will make it.

If there are specific serving platters or utensils that are part of your memory of the dish, please bring them to the Pot Luck dinner. If they are fragile family heirlooms that you would rather not transport, please consider making the dish, taking a photo, and sending it along with your recipe.

Try to write the recipe so that someone who has never made or tasted the dish can reproduce it.

Please send an electronic copy of the recipe and any other scans or photos to me: fran@frangage.com.

Fran Gage

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

Linda Anusasananan was on the panel "Can We Reset the Family Table" for the 2014 Domino Foods, Inc. Culinaria Query & Lecture Series hosted by the SoFAB Institute, in cooperation with Culinary Historians of Northern California. The event was on Sunday, October 26, at 4:00 p.m. at Biscuits & Blues, the Southern eatery and live music club in San Francisco's Theater District.



Georgeanne Brennan has launched a new line of culinary and garden products called La Vie Rustic. The collection includes fruit-infused salts, seeds for French lettuces and chicory, fig trees that are cuttings of a special variety from Georgeanne's orchard, and a *Jambon Cru* DIY kit. Go to www.lavierustic.com for more information.



Linda Carucci

Hello to all! I'm sorry to have missed several LDE events this past year, but it sounds like the group has been having fun. As some of you know, I was in hibernation for a spell, recovering from a concussion, and have had to limit my activities over the past year.

Now that I'm feeling 100 percent again and back in the saddle, I've been doing what I love most: teaching cooking classes and testing recipes for a series of Weber cookbooks.

I conducted a free, public class entitled



"Seasoning to Taste" at the Rockridge library on November 8th. It was a fun, interactive tasting experience geared to adults, tasting samples included.

This summer I launched a Chef Tribute Series at Draeger's Culinary Center in San Mateo.

These cooking demonstrations feature a three-course menu and spirited conversation about culinarians whose work has had an impact on my teaching, writing, and cooking. Thus far, tribute classes featuring Julia Child, Judy Rodgers, and Charlie Trotter have been well received and it's been a rich experience for me to delve into and present the work of these late, great colleagues. On February 19, 2015 we'll pay tribute to Marcella Hazan, followed by Marion Cunningham on April 23, 2015. For further information or to sign up: www.cookingschool@draegers.com

Piedmont High School has a stunning new student center and cafe where I'll be teaching Culinary Knife Skills, Thanksgiving 101, and *Primi Piatti*: Risotto, Gnocchi, and Pasta as part of the offerings of the Piedmont Adult School program. These classes are open to the general public and I'd be glad to provide dates and menus. If you're interested, please email LindaCarucci@gmail.com

Finally, I was quite humbled and honored to be recognized with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the **San Francisco Professional Food Society** at their annual BBO on September 6. You'll recognize some other Dames' names among the previous recipients of this award: Joyce Jue and Weezie Mott. And like Joyce and Weezie, I've still got a few more good projects in me. Stay tuned.

Sue Conley and Peggy Smith



The co-founders of Cowgirl Creamery won a Women in Business: Leaders, Innovators, Visionaries award from the North Bay Business Journal at their fourteenth awards dinner and reception in June, 2014. Seventeen women were chosen from fifty nominations based on many factors, including leadership roles, business innovations, vision, and community involvement.

Jeannette Ferrary

"Everything Reminds Me of Sex" was the title of my presentation about the humor of M. F. K. Fisher at the San Francisco Book Club of California's Symposium on Gastronomy and Fine Print in October. It was my pleasure to revisit her writings, both published and in my decade-and-a-half correspondence with her, to show how her elegiac words on food and her stint as a gag writer for Paramount pictures were in no way incongruous!

An exhibit of my street photography, "Flowers in Our Hair: from the Streets of San Francisco," is featured this fall, October 24 to December 5, at the gallery of the San Mateo Library.

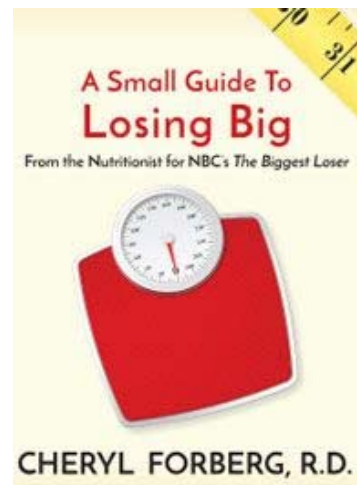


Janet Fletcher announces the debut of *Planet Cheese*, a weekly e-mail newsletter devoted to her favorite food group. Read about new cheeses, new shops, cheese-focused travel, and cheese trends. Subscriptions are complimentary and Janet invites all Dames to subscribe at www.janetfletcher.com



Cheryl Forberg has been the nutritionist for the NBC reality series *The Biggest Loser* for fifteen seasons. She is also the nutritionist for Omni Hotels & Resorts.

Her new book, *A Small Guide to Losing Big* will be self-published in January 2015. She will be promoting her book at several Omni properties next year beginning with a Weight Loss Weekend in January at LaCosta followed by a class at Los Angeles Dame Zov Karamardian's restaurant in Tustin, Zov's Bistro.



Mary Gassen



Everyone knows me from the bakery, but I want the Dames to know about my consulting business as well. I provide financial consulting to culinary businesses through my company called Launch <http://sflaunch.com>. I can now add Kickstarter campaigns to my consulting skills since I am doing a crowd-funding campaign on Kickstarter for the bakery. It will run from October 15, 2014 until November 18, 2014.

I am conducting a workshop entitled "Start Where You Are" on December 2nd at the Hivery in Sausalito. The program provides the fundamentals, need-to-knows, and to-do checklists for ensuring success as a new business entity, or as a business looking to get better organized. Here is a link: <http://www.thehivery.com/start-where-you-are-a-business-primer-12214.html>

Suzette Gresham

Acquerello, Suzette's restaurant, received two stars from the latest Michelin Guide that was released in October. She is one of only three women in the country with this distinction. What a perfect gift for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the restaurant. Congratulations!



Arnell Hinkle

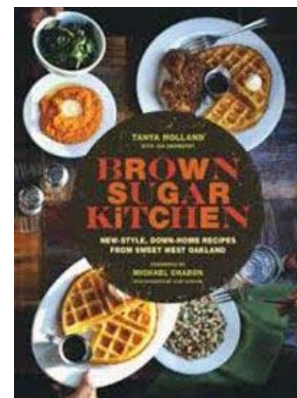
The Fulbright Scholar Program has selected **Arnell**, executive director of CANFIT, to serve as a Fulbright specialist in public/global health for a five-year term. The Fulbright Specialist Program awards grants to US Scholars and professionals to engage in short-term, collaborative projects at institutions and universities in over 140 countries. Her experience will be matched with an overseas host institution, where she will work on a cross-national topic that aims to strengthen institutional development needs.

Through this opportunity, Arnell will work internationally with institutions that want to use her twenty-five years of experience educating youth, adult providers, and university students; and collaboratively strategizing effective community nutrition and physical activity solutions that take youth culture, race, culture, and socio-economic status into account. For link on Fulbright Specialist Program <http://www.cies.org/program/fulbright-specialist-program#discipline>

Tanya Holland

Tanya is busy signing her book, *Brown Sugar Kitchen: Recipes and Stories From Everyone's Favorite Soul Food Restaurant* (Chronicle Books) at many venues. Go to www.tanyaholland.com for a schedule of appearances. Adding to the buzz, Michael Chabon's foreward to the book was recently published in *The New York Review of Books*.

On November 16, Tanya will be the Honorary Chef Chair for Taste of the Nation, East Bay, an event that raises money for No Kid Hungry.





Amy Hoopes

Our co-president was the recipient of a Forty Under Forty Award announced by Direct Marketing News in October. The organization calls the winners "a group of young, standout marketers whose work has already left an indelible mark on their organizations, clients, and the industry as a whole." More than 200 email nominations were received, all with glowing words of praise. Amy traveled to New York City to accept her award.

Sibella Kraus

On May 14, 2014, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Berkeley Food Institute named the winners of their sixth annual Growing Green Awards, who were chosen from hundreds of nominations from across the country. Congratulations to Sibella, president of Sustainable Agriculture Education, who won the Regional Food Leader award.



In a piece published in *OnEarth* magazine, Sibella said, "Bay Area farms and rangelands cover 1.87 million acres and produce almost enough food to feed all Bay Area residents. For a fraction of the money running through the virtual-tech world these working

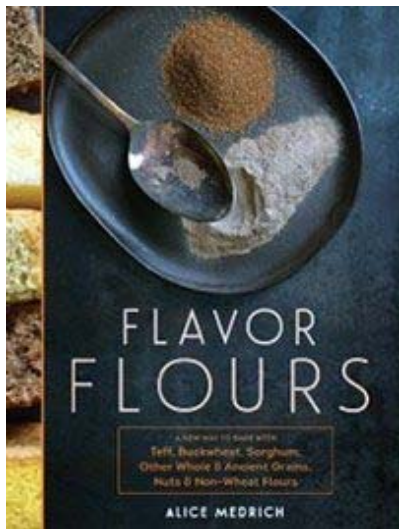
landscapes could be protected. The time has come to make investments in agricultural resources and local food systems synonymous with regional sustainability planning."

Emily Luchetti

Emily, whose long career spans Stars, Farallon since 1987, and Waterbar since 2008, is now the "Chief Pastry Officer" (her words), for the Park Tavern group, which operates Marlowe, Park Tavern, and the Cavalier.



She started on September 1st and will work to upgrade the pastries at all three restaurants.



Alice Medrich

My new book will be at the end of October. I am very excited about this book. *Flavor Flours* is meant for everyone who bakes at home as well as professionally, not just for those living or working gluten free. These "flavor flours" (I call them) are full of untapped possibility, they deserve to be treated as heroes- flavor ingredients-rather than mere "substitutions" for wheat! My co-author, Maya Klein, and I have taken a huge new step.

Flavor Flours: A New Way to Bake with Teff, Buckwheat, Sorghum, Other Wholes & Ancient Grains, Nuts and Non-Wheat Flours (Artisan).

By Alice Medrich with Maya Klein

Patricia Rain

As part of her One Percent Solution campaign for pure vanilla, Dame Patricia Rain (Vanilla Queen) joined Janet Sawyer, CEO, of Little Pod, for England's first National Real Vanilla Day, held at Bickleigh Castle in Devon. She also spoke at the Powderham Food Festival and Michael Caine's Culinary Academy at Exeter College. As a new generation of imitation vanilla comes into the marketplace, Patricia encourages you to join her in promoting pure vanilla, not only for our enjoyment, but to keep the vanilla industry alive.



Additionally, at the tenth anniversary of the Global Women's Leadership Network held October 26th, Patricia accepted the Leader of Impact Award on behalf of the Ugandan chapter of the Regional Alliance of East and South African Women Leaders, which she helped to create in 2013.

Deborah Rogers



Deborah was recently nominated to the board of directors of the Olive Oil Commission of California. She will also serve on the Communications and Outreach sub-committee. The newly formed Olive Oil Commission consists of ten members, including two producers and one handler from each of the three primary olive oil producing districts in California and a public member. Deborah is the only woman currently serving on the board.

The Commission's goal is to improve the state's competitiveness in the global olive oil industry, and its primary strategy to reach that goal will be to set meaningful and mandatory olive oil standards. On September 26, 2014 the California Department of Food and Agriculture successfully adopted most of the standards proposed by the Olive

Oil Commission of California.

Renee Shepherd

Renee was a presenter at the annual California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, held in Santa Cruz in October. Santa Cruz County is the smallest agriculture-producing county in the state in land mass and one of the most diverse, producing such crops as cut flowers, strawberries, artichokes, and timber. Two hundred twenty California educators heard ideas to enhance their curriculums with scenarios about food. California Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross, welcomed the group.



Cathrine Sneed

SF-LDEI first encountered Cathrine Sneed and The Garden Project in 1992 when we held a meeting, organized by Dame Sibella Kraus, at the Carroll Street Garden in the Bayview district of San Francisco. We were inspired by the work in progress.

The Garden Project involvement in organic food production and nutrition work made them a fit for our support. (For additional background, visit their website www.gardenproject.org.)

As a result, SF Dames have worked with The Garden Project (TGP) as part of Green Tables. SF and national LDEI have used Cathrine's help for Green Tables since it was initiated. Dame Renee Shepherd (Renee's Garden Seeds) has provided seed to TGP for some years. Through SF Dames, Cathrine received the MFK Fisher Award in 1994 (prior to the shift to writers). Dames and TGP have a long history together. And Cathrine has been a member of the SF Dames.

Roots of The Garden Project date to 1982 when Cathrine Sneed developed a horticultural rehabilitation program on the twelve-acre farm at the San Francisco County Jail with Sheriff Michael Hennessey. In 1992, TGP then offered structure and support to former offenders through job training in gardening, counseling, and assistance in continuing education. The program's success was measured not only by the community support it provided, but by the dramatically reduced recidivism of the participants. Soon TGP also included environmentally-based job training for low-income people to impact low-income communities through environmental and nutrition education programming.

For over twenty years, TGP has helped low-income people find a way out of the cycle of crime and poverty; it has transformed urban communities through greening projects; and it has directly impacted the lives of the poor through donations of organic vegetables. TGP has gained international attention and reputation as a model for crime prevention, urban agriculture, and job training.

Now, TGP includes teenagers and young adults, called Earth Stewards, who come from crime prevention programs for at-risk individuals. Stewards learn job skills through work on a variety of environmental projects. TGP workers also get paid.

Job Training and Workforce Development:

The Garden Project offers environmentally based job training for at-risk populations in order to prevent crime, improve economic situations, and to address chronic unemployment and underemployment among specific populations. TGP hosts a summer program for low-income high school students, over 300 participated this year. For young adults, TGP is year round. In addition to career-building and counseling programs, the TGP also helps their employees attain their GED and attend courses at local community colleges.

Food Production:

Project participants cultivate organic vegetables and herbs to support food pantries, health initiatives, and nutrition education for low-income, low-mobility families and seniors in order to improve food access and address high rates of disease related to diet. Last year, TGP grew and distributed over 65,000 tons of organic vegetables for thirty-five community food pantries.

Vegetation Management:

Project participants work on invasive weed management of public properties and cultivation of California native plants in order to support the local ecology. Participants work over 1,400 acres in San Francisco, in addition to work in the Crystal Springs Reservoir in San Mateo County, and at Hetch Hetchy in the Yosemite Valley.

Environmental Learning:

At the Project Farm, TGP hosts environmental-learning activities for children, and environmental-therapy programming for low-income adults and children to foster environmental awareness and improved health. Each year, hundreds of elementary school children participate in farm programming.

This project is housed within the SF Sheriff's Department and has but one paid employee, former Dame Cathrine. The rest of their budget is just over \$2 million, from the SF Public Utilities Commission to landscape and maintain a number of SF water reservoirs and to grow street trees for the City to plant.

Cathrine shared with us that The Garden Project faced loss of funding and possible land use. Negotiations with the city have resulted in promise of support, but nothing is signed off yet. One goal is to get the land at the jail designated as a city garden, not just as property of the jail lands. That said, the Garden Project (City Garden) is still not out of the woods, since they face many resource shortfalls. As one example of the commitment of staff, they forgo fringe benefits such as a pension, in order to plow as many funds as possible into maintaining the program. They also don't have a budget for capital improvements, such as replacing equipment that reaches its useful lifespan, resulting in the need to hand clear many acres, in order to do their fall planting.

What can SF Dames do if they'd like to help The Garden Project?

First: Cathrine' prime request is for press. Stories about TCP in any media. Stories generate contributions. Funding is always short.

A contract from the PUC has come to an end. An RFP was issued, and the TGP was designated the recipient of the contract, which will go into effect November 1st. Those of you who write or do PR will have suggestions.

Second: Cathrine is seeking to help create awareness about the need for the farm to be designated a City resource with city funding. This will require letter writing, and raising awareness among legislators, neighborhood associations, and San Franciscans. She has a list of names and addresses available and Dames may have additional suggestions.

The Garden Project also has a wish list (on the website under donations). Easily suited to Dames:

Donate your time: teach a workshop or lead a demonstration.

For cooking, there is a kitchen at the jail farm. But other locations are possible. And we have more to teach and share, too. She is particularly interested in having these lessons on YouTube or some social media thing the kids relate to.

Donate products for the meals served to students at the farm:

spices, flour, butter, etc. Do any of you have clients who would like recognition for such help?

Donate cooking supplies (pots) and equipment (refrigerator, freezer). Changing restaurant equipment, clearing out your kitchen? Getting a new model of something? TGP might be able to use your no longer useful items.

It is clear that the Garden Project has numerous assets, including the inspired leadership and commitment of former Dame Cathrine, as well as many boosters and supporters, such as local and national leaders. This would be a great project for our chapter that encompasses the Green Tables initiative. It offers exposure for Garden Project youth to the many vocational possibilities in food, wine and hospitality. Hosting a fundraising small plate, wine, and silent auction event that highlights the creativity of our chapter chefs and other members, without requiring a large time or financial outlay by our chapter, at the home of one of these leaders is a possibility.

Our creative and committed members began putting forward their desire to be a resource to Cathrine and the Garden Project and to figure out collectively how to bring more needed resources to ensure that this visionary and much needed project grows and thrives. Some of these commitments included Dame Lisa Klinck-Shea, with an interest in developing a media strategy, Dame Kathleen Hill, who has founded and supports a youth-led gardening project in Sonoma, Dame Laura Brainin-Rodriguez who has provided nutrition education resources and who can also contribute a nutrition and cooking train-the-trainer eight-week series for the youth through her project. Dame Elaine Corn offered to help as she could. Dame Renee Shepherd already supports The Garden Project with seed donations. Happily many more Dames have come forward expressing interest in being involved since our new members brunch.

Carolyn Wente

The Wine Institute, an association that represents almost 1,000 California wineries, announced the results of its Board elections in September, 2014, and Carolyn is the 2014-2015 Board Chairperson. She is the fifth Wente member to serve as a Wine Institute chairman. For eighty years the Institute has worked to protect and promote the interest of California wine by supporting export growth, direct-to-consumer shipping,



and sustainable winegrowing. "I am honored to chair this vital work with my fellow vintners," said Carolyn.

Frankie Whitman

I just started working with a small, premium, artisan maple syrup company. The syrup is produced on small family farms in the southern Berkshires. The company is called Mead & Mead. Winter Mead, the founder, was raised on a maple farm in northwest Connecticut. We are just beginning distribution in the Bay Area and are focusing on foodservice-chefs, pastry chefs, bartenders, and bakers.



Please contact me (frankiewhitman@gmail.com) if you would like a sample.



Dana Woldow

Dana, a school food advocate since 2002, is a contributor to the online publication, *Beyond Chron The Voice of the Rest*. Go to <http://beyondchron.org/schools-ban-hot-dogs/> to read one of her recent posts.

Past Events

The Art of Eating, a Tribute to MFK Fisher

May 18, 2014

Bouverie Preserve of Audubon Canyon Ranch

13935 Sonoma Highway 12

Glen Ellen, California

By Jerry Di Vecchio



It was a truly beautiful afternoon for the MFK Fisher Art of Eating event on Sunday, May 19, 2014, at the Audubon Canyon Ranch Bouverie Preserve in Glen Ellen.

LDEI-SF has supported this annual event since its inception in 2011; our purpose is to preserve Last House, the final home of MFK Fisher, for cultural use.

Shortly, members of the LDEI-SF board and directors at ACR will meet to create specific objectives pertaining to Last House.

This year, ACR sold more tickets and revenue was greater than for 2013. They raised \$123,000, nearly \$30,000 in the fund-a-need. ACR said that underwriting wasn't as strong as hoped, but there were some personal shifts at ACR that contributed to that problem.

The preliminary walk around of nibbling and sipping gave guests time to examine and bid for the marvelous choices of silent auction items, richly enhanced by donations from SF Dames Rosemary O'Connell, Sue Conley, Peggy Smith, Joanne Weir, Tina Salter, Debbie Zachareas, Mary Constant, Paige Poulos, Linda Carruci, Joyce Goldstein, Janet Fletcher, Marsha McBride, Hannah Rahill, Gail Pirie, Linda Anusasananan, Amaryll Schwertner, Amy Hoopes, Lori Regis, Marie Simmons, Margaret Fox, Alice Waters, Tanya Holland, Patricia Unterman, Alice Medrich, Debby Fortune, Eileen Spitalny, Kathleen Hill, Dru Rivers, Flo Braker, Emily Luchetti, and possibly more! Some details slipped by me.

SF Dames truly rallied to set the table for the delicious picnic lunch with wines. It was a Dames meal all the way. The program clearly credited SF Dames and their participating companies: Cowgirl Creamery, Laura Chenel Cheese, Marin French Cheese, Noe Valley Bakery, Rivoli Restaurant, Brown Sugar Kitchen, Taste Catering, Boncara Biscoti, Fairy Tale Brownies, Fat Belly Farms, Wenté Vineyards.

ACR live auction went very well with great thanks to the enthusiastic support of the auctioneer by co-host Dame Leslie Sbrocco. SF Dames-Paige Poulos, Tanya Holland, Tina Salter, Joanne Weir- donated four of the ten big money makers.

Randy Tarpey-Schwed's impressive exhibit of Mary Frances' works in the Bouverie House emphasized the significance of her presence.

J. Scott Feierabend, Executive Director, ACR, (and event host along with Leslie) was lavish in his onstage praise of the SF-LDEI support.

The event program lists San Francisco Les Dames d'Escoffier as the Honorary Committee. Kathleen Hill and I are on the AOE Committee.

Two people were specially honored at the event. One was Dr. Marty Griffin, founder of ACR, the other was our own Dame Carolyn Wenté for her significant contributions and commitment.

Thanks, also, to Dames who just came to help or enjoy the day--Beverly Soules, Margo True, and others.

ACR's Trisha Fontan was our action coordinator, and she wants you to know: "The most important thing to pass along is we couldn't do it without your support, and honestly I am not sure we would even try at this point."

As you may know, the ACR event supports their children's education programs on their preserves. Our goal, as SF Dames, is to turn MFK's Last House into a historical site of some sort. ACR now understands how important the MFK's on-site heritage is for their fund raising, and discussion is ongoing on how to use the house effectively.

Seriously considered is Last House as home for Randy Tarpey-Schwed's amazing collection of MFK materials, and also for nature materials that pertain to the Preserve. The ranch manager, currently living in Last House, is nearing retirement and the use of

the house is finally open for planning.

So, not so briefly, the AOE was a good day's work thanks to the tremendous turnout and support by SF Dames, and a huge step forward for our chapter.

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil Tasting and Reception

June 26, 2014

SD26 Restaurant

19 East 26th Street, New York

By Nancy Ash

On a beautiful summer's day in Manhattan, Dames and others from the West and East coasts gathered at the venerable SD26 restaurant for a California Extra Virgin Olive Oil Tasting. A collaboration of both the San Francisco and New York chapters, this event was co-sponsored by the California Olive Oil Council (COOC).



Five olive oils, all certified extra virgin by the California Olive Oil Council, were sampled by forty-five attendees as the panel of presenters discussed the history of the California olive oil industry and its expansive growth over the past twenty years. The panel included San Francisco Dames Patricia Darragh, Sara Wilson, and Nancy Ash (myself), as well as renowned restaurateur Tony May (co-owner of SD26 with his daughter Dame Marissa May). Dame Nancy Wall Hopkins, senior deputy editor, food for *Better Homes and Gardens*, a member of both the New York and Chicago chapters, moderated the lively panel discussion.



Each panelist offered her/his unique insights on olive oil. As executive director of the COOC for seventeen years, Patricia has witnessed the industry growing from a small number of boutique brands to production volumes that surpass the country of France. As the managing partner of Pasta Shop (as well as a group of family-owned food businesses),

Sara Wilson commented that in the mid-80s there were only three extra-virgin olive oils offered in her store ("and they weren't even very good!"), compared with fifty-plus oils today. Tony May, who champions Italian products, found the range of flavors in the California oils quite interesting yet different from the Italian oils used in his restaurant. And I observed (as education coordinator for the COOC and president of Strictly Olive Oil) that more and more consumers now understand what the phrase "extra-virgin" actually means. Following the tasting, SD26's Executive Chef Matteo Bergamini described how he approached pairing these California oils in recipes as we sampled five delicious dishes; Watermelon & Beet Salad, Mint, Ricotta Salata with ENZO Bold; Sorana Beans with Sicilian Shrimp, Parsley & Rosemary with Lucero Ascolano; Chilled Tomato Soup, Burrata & Celery Sprouts with Frantoio Grove; Fassone Beef Tartare, Olive Oil Mascarpone Mayo & Summer Truffle with Pasolivo Signature Blend; and Wild Bass Carpaccio, Lime, Cucumbers & Fennel Pollen with Séka Hills Arbequina. The Séka Hills oil was also used in the gelato and cookies served as dessert. Wente Vineyards and Tres Sabores, courtesy of Dames Carolyn Wente, Amy Hoopes, and Julie Johnson, donated the wines poured during this event.

Kudos to the organizers, Dames Roberta Klugman (SF) and Joyce Appelman (NY), for envisioning and executing an exciting program that brought members of both chapters together for an educational afternoon. I look forward to future collaborations, meeting more Dames from other chapters, and especially my next meal at SD26 the next time I visit Manhattan.

Thanks to Gennaro Pecchia for sharing images of this event.



Noe Valley Bakery Tour
July 24, 2014
4073 24th St., San Francisco
By Janet Griggs

Seven members joined Dame Mary Gassen at her Noe Valley Bakery for a tour of the bakery Thursday, July 24. Mary, and husband, Michael, gave the group a history of their business from wholesale artisan bakery to the purchase and renovation of Noe Valley Bakery in 1995 and the evolution of being business owners in San Francisco for the last nineteen years. In that time, Mary and Michael expanded their wholesale/retail bakery business to include a separate wholesale bakery facility and a bakery café in Albany. Over time, they came to the realization that Noe Valley Bakery was the heart of their operation and their interest and decided to focus on this small but very successful iconic neighborhood bakery.

The most recent change for the bakery was this month's complete re-do of the front of the house which has drawn praise from their customers. Other changes have been the expansion of their product line to include the *macarons* and *petits gateaux* produced by Tout Sweet Patisserie, another artisan pastry operation owned by Dame Janet Griggs. Throughout the tour the group observed the bakery in action with bread (the star of the bakery) and cookies in various stages of hand-made artisan production.

The group then adjourned to the Fresca Restaurant a couple of blocks away for a tasty Peruvian lunch. Mary continued her discussion of the current plight of Noe Valley Bakery which is not small enough to be exempt from the health legislation of San Francisco (but would be under the federal Affordable Care Act) but is also not large enough to be able to absorb these significant increased labor costs which are likely to include increases in minimum wage over the next two years. To help defray these expenses, Noe Valley Bakery has placed a new surcharge on their products, which they will watch closely to see how the market reacts. As Mary and Janet pointed out, the future of small artisan shops is in question with San Francisco placing much higher costs on businesses within the city limits while their competition just outside the City can

produce and transport product at a cost advantage. They worry about the future and what this will do to the character of San Francisco and the City's artisan food reputation as the politicians focus their attention on recruiting high-tech companies to the City. The next few years will be an important period for determining the health and feasibility of the non-tech business community in San Francisco.

Fig Day

August 16, 2014

Wolfskill Germplasm Repository, Winters, California

By Fran Gage

The Wolfskill facility, part of the USDA Agricultural Research Service, collects, preserves, evaluates, and distributes certain crops so that they will be available for future generations and for plant research.



Its focus includes kiwis, persimmons, figs, walnuts, almonds, olives, mulberries, pistachios, stone fruit, pomegranates, and grapes. Staggering varieties of each of these crops are maintained.



Our group, thirty-five or so Dames and their invit ees, were interested in the figs. We boarded a bus in the nearby town of Winters on a sunny morning for the short ride to the research facility. Once there, we gathered around John Preece, the research leader, at the end of a long all e of olive trees planted in 1859 by John Wolfskill, the original owner of the property. He gave us a brief description of his group's fascinating work. (One colleague was off in Azerbaijan collecting new specimens.)

Then, back on the bus, we headed to the fig orchards, John pointing out various trees of note, such as an apricot that produced fruit with sun-kissed skin and deep orange flesh. Although the fruit would win an apricot beauty contest, the taste was another matter. It was not sweet at all. "If someone could successfully cross this with a sweet apricot, it would be a big seller," he said.

When we arrived at the fig trees, we trooped off the bus and fanned out among the tall trees, tasting different varieties. Most of these aren't found in stores; they are varieties that need to be pollinated by wasps and are generally sweeter and crisper than so-called common figs that don't need such pollination.

After thirty minutes of tasting as many figs as we could muster, we returned to the bus with sticky fingers and layers of figs stuck to the bottom of our shoes to return to Winters where we had a fig-centric lunch at Preserve.



The meal started with four *canapés*, each with a different type of fig, then segued into a salad of figs, blackberries, *prosciutto*, blue cheese, and extra-virgin olive oil. The main course was a fig-glazed rolled pork roast, reminiscent of a *porchetta*, that was made with an estate-raised, almond-finished suckling pig served on a bed of roasted figs and Padron peppers. We finished with a fig *panna cotta* topped with brandied figs.

Completely sated, we slowly walked to our cars for the trip back home.

Many thanks to Dames Kathleen Hill, Georgeanne Brennan, Elaine Corn, and Roberta Klugman for their organizational effort, to John Preece for sharing his knowledge, and to Cole Ogando, owner of Preserve, for a memorable lunch.

For more information about the Germplasm Repository, go to: www.ars-grin.gov/dav

Induction of New Members Dinner
September 22, 2014
Wente Vineyards,
Livermore, California
By Fran Gage

Co-President, Amy Hoopes, and Dame Carolyn Wente, graciously hosted the induction dinner this year at the oldest continuously operating family-owned winery in California. About forty Dames welcomed three new members and congratulated Jessica Battilana, the recipient of the Karola Saekel Food Journalism fellowship.



Here is the list of our new Dames, an impressive trio:

Cindy Daniel, co-owner of Shed, a café, market, and event space in Healdsburg that received the James Beard award for Best Restaurant Design, 2014.

Lane Giguere, owner of Matchbook Wine Company in Zamora, California.

Andrea Nguyen, a Santa Cruz-based author, teacher, and consultant who has written four books about Vietnamese and Asian cuisine.



The group dined on a salad of Purple Cherokee Tomatoes, House-Made Ricotta, Baby Kale, and Pine Nuts with a Balsamic Reduction. Entrée selections were either Pan-Seared Walu accompanied by Creamed Cauliflower, Roasted Brussels Sprouts, and Bacon Jam, or House-Smoked Pork Chop served with Sautéed Greens, White Cheddar Polenta, and Apricot-Onion Marmalade. A de-constructed Banana Cream Pie was the grand finale. Yum!

Karola Saekel Craib Excellence in Food Journalism Fellowship

September 22, 2014

Wente Vineyards,
Livermore, California

By Fran Gage and Roberta Klugman

Dame Margo True introduced Jessica Battilana, the fifth recipient of this fellowship, and presented her with a check for \$2,500 as an acknowledgement of her good work and as encouragement to keep writing. Jessica joins past recipients Novella Carpenter, Sarah Henry, Twilight Greenaway, and Emily Kaiser Thelin.



Jessica was most recently the senior editor for Tasting Table. Her writing has appeared in many publications, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Gastronomica*, and *Sunset*. She is the co-author of three cookbooks: *Vietnamese Home Cooking*, with Charles Phan (Ten Speed); *Tartine Book No 3*, with Chad Robertson (Chronicle); and *Sausage Making: A Complete Guide with Recipes*, with Ryan Farr (Chronicle).

For more about Jessica, go to her web site: <http://jessicabattilana.com>.

The scholarship review committee includes Dames Antonia Allegra, Janet Fletcher, Margo True, and the four past recipients, Novella Carpenter, Sarah Henry, Twilight Greenaway, and Emily Kaiser Thelin. They actively solicited confidential nominations from our members, as well as the past recipients. This year the committee reviewed eight candidates.

The membership is contacted via email for nominations (although the committee accepts nominations throughout the year). Perspective candidates are women journalists in the Bay Area who are committed to a career in food journalism, and whose writing shows talent, promise, excellence, and includes a range and relevancy of food subjects.



McEvoy Ranch Tour and Lunch

October 10, 2014

Petaluma, California

By Fran Gage

McEvoy ranch covers 550 acres in West Marin, just outside of Petaluma. Nan McEvoy took her first shipment of Tuscan olive trees in 1991. Today 18,000 trees produce olives; in addition, a new program produces small batches of wine from estate vineyards. A variety of vegetables are also grown on the ranch. Everything is farmed organically.

A group of twenty Dames and invit ees drove through an iron gate guarded by a fat stone rabbit and met outside the building that houses the olive mill. Dame Deborah Rogers walked us through the process that turns olives into oil. Alas, the mill was silent that day; it would be two more weeks before the machinery that washes, crushes, churns, and centrifuges the olives would begin to run. Olive harvest depends on farming conditions, and the olives needed a little more time on the trees.



We walked through the olive groves, some interspersed with grape vines, stopping along the way to hear about the different varieties of olives and harvesting methods before arriving at a Chinese pavilion, fashioned after one Nan saw on a trip, at the top of the property.

There we enjoyed a lunch of assorted sandwiches and salads from Della Fattoria bakery, sips of the three ranch-made wines, and a luscious quince and fig tart accompanied by cr me fra che ice cream topped with saba that was made by Gerald Gass, the in-house chef.

Many thanks to Dames Kathleen Hill and Deborah Rogers, as well as Ananda Bagiackas and Jill Lee, for an informative and gustatory outing.

Chapter Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

October 25, 2014

Cakebread Cellars, Napa Valley

By Linda Anusasananan



Happy Twenty-fifth Anniversary!

On October 25, Dolores Cakebread hosted a lunch to celebrate our chapter's silver anniversary at Cakebread Cellars in Napa Valley. After a tour of the winery's garden, the twenty-one guests sat down to a sumptuous three-course lunch paired with Cakebread Cellars wines.

As we ate lobster minestrone with garden vegetables, Jerry Di Vecchio, our first president, shared the history of our chapter. In 1989, our San Francisco chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier was born. The national office of LDEI encouraged Jerry Di Vecchio and Pam Hunter to start a chapter in the Bay Area so LDEI could have their national conference in San Francisco. Jerry and Pam invited women in food, wine, and hospitality to Harry's Bar (now defunct) in San Francisco. These nineteen women became the founding members: Pam Hunter, Jerry Di Vecchio, Linda Anusasananan, Carolyn Wenthe, Heidi Krahling, Dolores Cakebread, Toni Allegra, Pat Boomer, Cynthia Coleman, Laurie Chenel, Carol Field, Sue Fisher King, Sibella Kraus, Sue Yung Li, Zelma Long, Martine Saunier, Gig Owen, Lois Link, and Mary Risley. At that meeting we shaped our vision for our chapter. Mentoring and



support for women would be our path. Jerry became our first president.



Twenty-five years later, Jerry estimates that our chapter has had about 165 members over the years. We claim MFK Fisher plus four Grande Dames (Marion Cunningham, Alice Waters, Jerry Di Vecchio, and Dolores Cakebread), more than any other chapter.

Jerry tried to piece together a list of past presidents and members. She discovered that neither national nor our chapter owned a complete set of membership directories with lists of officers.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Elaine Corn, proposed members help fill in the missing names with a little contest. The one who could list the most chapter presidents with the year they served would win. The winner was Nancy Ash with help from tablemates Fran Gage and Laura Brainin-Rodriguez. She won a gift box of brownies donated by Eileen Spitalny of Fairytale Brownies.



Beverly Soules-Barbour, one of the six founding members in New York, told the group the purpose of starting LDEI was to raise the image of women in the food world. "We chose the name Escoffier because he was the first person to recognize the importance of women in gastronomy."

As we departed, Dolores sent us home with beautiful persimmons and pomegranates from her garden.

Many thanks to: Dolores Cakebread and her staff for hosting another fabulous event, Cakebread Culinary Director Brian Streeter for preparing a delicious lunch, Program Chair Kathleen Hill who worked with Dolores, Jerry Di Vecchio for her persistent research into our history, and Elaine Corn for Master of Ceremony duties.

New Members' Brunch

November 9, 2014

Home of Jerry Di Vecchio

San Francisco

By Laura Brainin-Rodriguez

We were welcomed into Dame Jerry Di Vecchio's home on a bright, sunny Sunday to partake of the wonderful potluck food and wine offerings brought by sixteen of our members. These included savory quiches, wonderful salads (egg, greens, bean salad), Boston baked beans, artisanal cheeses, seasonal fruit, apple and applesauce cake, scones, and brownies. We also got to select items from a large box of beautiful, just-picked organic produce from former Dame Cathrine Sneed's Garden Project. One of our three new members, Lane Giguere, from the Sacramento area, was able to attend and shared the fascinating story of how she got into the wine business. After this, our hostess, Jerry, suggested we do a go-around and have everyone briefly share her story.

It was a truly wonderful opportunity to hear about our members' current projects, as well as something about the other things we had done before our current vocational and avocational pursuits. This led to a brief discussion of how we might capture this information in a way that furthers the goal stated by our Co-President Amy Hoopes- opportunities to increase the visibility the SF Chapter of LDEI and its members, and demonstrate all the ways we are contributing in a wide range of arenas.

Some possibilities for this include doing interviews of our members, starting with the founding members, by other Dames who are personally and/or geographically close to them, gathering any materials these Dames wish to share, such as the video produced by Dolores Cakebread, articles, curriculum vitae, links to blogs, web sites, and bibliographies.

Another possibility is to engage students from institutions, like the Art Institute University, UC Berkeley School of Journalism, SF State School of Journalism and Broadcasting, to do brief YouTube videos with our members briefly telling their stories that we could link to our web site. Jerry and Laura offered to reach out to our members in the New Year, to figure out the next steps.

After enjoying a delicious repast and libations we had an opportunity to hear at length from former Dame Cathrine Sneed, who conceived and is in charge of The Garden Project. (Read more about Cathrine's work, written by Jerry Di Vecchio, and suggestions that were generated at the brunch in Dame News.)

Many thanks to Dame Jerry Di Vecchio for her many contributions- helping found our Chapter, hosting us, opening her home, and providing an opportunity for us to hear from our Members and from former Dame Cathrine Sneed about the Garden Project. Everyone left feeling nourished physically as well as spiritually, inspired by the immense amount of talent, dedication, and vision in the room and in the San Francisco Chapter of LDEI!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 12, 2015, Ancestral Pot-Luck Dinner, details to follow
- May 17, 2015, Art of Eating: A Tribute to MFK Fisher, details to follow

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