

Days Gone By

By: Ann Schultzel

In 1973 the San Ramon Valley began to develop, from an area of cattle ranches and walnut groves, into the villages of Danville and Alamo. With the influx of many newcomers to the area, interest grew to establish a grassroots garden club. That summer, with the help of 50 enthusiastic ladies, under the direction of Pat Cassell and Alyce Radocay as coordinator, the Danville Alamo Garden Club was born. Coffees were held at various homes for prospective members

In September of 1973 the first meeting was held at the San Ramon Valley Methodist Church on Danville Boulevard, and the rest is history. The goal was to have the members get to know their neighbors learn the value of community involvement, stimulate a love of gardening and improve the knowledge of horticulture. The dues at the time were exorbitant, five dollars. The general meetings were held on the third Thursday of the month but every Thursday was Garden Club Day. One Thursday was Board Meeting Day, another Thursday was workshops and finally, the last Thursday was tours.

We were fortunate to have Pat Cassell as our first President. Pat was a very gifted flower arranger and artist. Our first speaker was Rose Gaubert, a fountain of knowledge on all things horticulture. With her knowledge, and that of Dorothy Grossman, we flourished. These two dear ladies became our matriarchs and were loved and revered by all. Rose had a large garden with many rose bushes and other flowers on La Gonda Way and held many tours and tea parties there. She was also a featured speaker and gave many workshops. Dorothy often hosted flower arrangement workshops in her home.

The Heather Farm Garden Center sponsored our new club and provided workshops on horticulture and flower arranging. They had a five acre lot which they were trying to build and expand. As a civic project, DAGC members volunteered to help raise funds at The Farm Yard, with plant propagating and repotting plants for the Garden Center October Sale. Eventually, Heather Farm succeeded in building a beautiful Center where many classes and flower shows were held over the years.

Our first ever Christmas party was a pot luck social at the Methodist Church with the "Madrigal Singers" of San Ramon High School as the program. The day was full of Christmas joy and merriment and a fabulous array of delicious foods. The event was such a hit that the ladies decided to make it a permanent annual event.

Spring was an exciting time of year with the opportunity to participate in many flower shows in the different floral societies. We were all encouraged to participate in the annual May flower show at Heather Farms. We entered flower arrangements and also volunteered to set up and work at the show. These were wonderful times and we looked forward to this show every year.

In 1975, I was honored to become President. The Christmas Party was the event that the members really looked forward to. After our first year, it became a tradition, that it would be held in a member's home as a pot luck luncheon. As a result of other social events, it became apparent that we had as many good cooks as we had green thumbs and we decided to print a cookbook. It would serve as a fundraiser to pay for future speakers. The hospitality committee assembled all the recipes from the luncheon and created the cookbook which was well received by the membership. We sold out all the books and raised a sizeable amount for our speakers.

During the tenure of Nancy Goreth as President, our meeting place was changed to St. Timothy's Episcopal Church on Diablo Road. Installations of new officers were always held as pot luck luncheons in June. Another tradition was an elegant tea to be held every September at the home of Audrey Von Poppel, located in the Diablo Country Club, to welcome back old members as well as new members. Past Presidents were asked to serve the tea and coffee in silver serving sets and everyone was dressed in their finest outfits.

Over the years, we had many workshops on flower arranging to prepare for the May Flower Show at Heather Farms. We also became interested in the Japanese Ikebana Ikenobo form of arranging after a guest speaker from that organization came to demonstrate the technique. Several members, including myself, began to take classes from Sensei Peggy McDonald, at her home in Lafayette.

Other workshops included dried flower arrangements, hanging baskets, potting and growing plants from seeds, preparing beds for summer planting and wreath making with pine cones, seeds, pods and wisteria.

Through the years, we strived to have good speakers. One who stands out is Ron Morgan of Berkeley, who came to us in 1982. He has continued through the years to share his brilliance and retired last year.

The Danville Alamo Garden Club has continued to grow and flourish through the years. All should know that this Club has a glorious history of how it all started in those early days and these are my cherished memories of
"Days Gone By".



FLORAL FESTIVITIES

*Ann Schultzel, Dorothy Grossman,
chairman Pat Cassell and Lorraine Nienaber*

"Spring Song" will be the theme of the Danville-Alamo Garden Club flower show for the Valley community, to be held in the Veteran's Memorial Building on Saturday and Sunday, May 6 and 7, beginning at 1 pm and 10 am respectively.

Ribbons will be up for grabs in the horticultural division in classes ranging from roses to peonies; small container plants; and the artistic design division, including levels for beginners, advanced and professional arrangement.

Entries should be sent in

early in order to plan the number of display tables. However, late entries will be accepted.

Send all entries to Ann Schultzel by Tuesday, May 2, at 50 Leeds Court East in Danville, phone 820-4487.

All plants and horticulture cut flowers and arrangements will be received at the Veteran's building from 8 to 10 am on Saturday, May 6. Anything brought in after that time will not be judged, but may be placed on display only.

Judging will be done from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm that day by nationally

accredited flower show judges.

Ann entries must be removed between 4:30 and 5:30 pm Sunday, May 7, as there will be no provision for care of entries left after then. Security precautions will be taken during the exhibit.

Schedules and information can be obtained by calling Marcia DeMent at 837-8432.