



NEXT MEETING: NO JANUARY MEETING! NONE. Next meeting is February 9

PARTY HEARTY?

Oh, yea! What delights greeted us coming in from the cold to our warm meeting room. Pat bedecked the tables with fir boughs and candles. Deborah added nutcrackers to our package table and an amazing SIX vases of not bad dahlias—Hollyhill Cotton Candy, Belle of the Ball and Bloomquist Jeff could have entered competition any month of the year. Her Olivia Maureen and Shea's Rainbow weath-ered the rough rain storm well.

And such smells! Shelly brought a huge ham; Lola baked a stuffed turkey with gib-let gravy AND a Jell-O ring whose recipe many requested; Deborah tested palates with Chicken Tikka Masala. Gino's shrimp disappeared in a thrice. Debbie, Jackie, Nathan, Dan and Billy all brought festive versions of MacCheese which augmented Tony and En's scalloped potatoes and the Dingwall's corn casserole. Going fancy French for us, DJ and Paige made croquembouche complimenting Pat's quiche and super Brussel Sprouts. To keep us healthy, John brightened up the banquet with mandarins while Mike and Martha whipped up a kale salad. Baker Bill set up our bar with sodas and juices; Pat, Frank, Jackie and Nathan donated wonderful wine.



Ah, but the desserts: Devi outdid herself with a glorious chocolate bomb; Scott backed a huge tray of peanut brittle; Leo added choco-late chip cookies and Paula's lemon tart came from her own lemon trees.

Special thanks to Lola for washing so many serving dishes and utensils.



GIFTS THAT GO ON GETTING STOLEN

All at once in the gathering, there arose such a clatter.
To the windows we looked, to see what was the matter.
And to our well-fed eyes did appear.
St. Nick Jr. festooned in new Santa gear.



Having clearly learned his father's ho ho routine, Nick bounded in, explained the rules, and then to his mother's dumbfoundment, stole a French coffee press—did he secretly drink coffee now that he turned 13? Was he planning on drinking coffee to study for exams? Did he have visions of coffee Klatches with Boy Scout pals?

No problem, the coffee press was promptly snatched away by another present predator. Also quickly frozen were the Gaensler's magnificent basket of narcissi, JoAnn's mini cactus collection, a framed photo from our Frank and another huge framed yellow water lily, and oddly enough a blue Warriors

T-shirt—they were—after all-- on an unprecedented 16-game winning streak.

No one had to steal lemons, because Ron and Joann brought a whole box full to share with their fellow dahlia friends. Thank you to all for your food, your creative presents, and mostly for your wonderful attitude and conviviality.



DSC's SMILING HOLIDAY FACES



OUR HERO - MARK OLDENKAMP

Last year when we discovered that so many tubers had rotted for no identifiable reason, Mark rescued DSC by sending us a huge box of tubers and pot roots from which Devi, Lou and Pat grew those gorgeous cuttings we saw at our Tuber Sale in April. Mark rescued us. He sent cool new dahlias including all the Hapets, Bloomquists and many of the newer Hollyhills.



To recognize Mark's incredible contribution to our society, we have made him a life member of DSC and engraved one of our DSC medals with his name.

Devorah videoed our holiday gang expressing their thanks. She has sent him a disc of the presentation as well as the beautiful engraved medal. THANK YOU, MARK. May the dahlia force remain with you.



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DAHLIA CONFERENCE

Our Dahlia Society of California hosts the annual Pacific Southwest Dahlia Conference this year. This is the day that dahlia enthusiasts from all over the state get together to discuss The State of Dahlianness. We talk about conference medals--what are they, do we have enough, should we phase one out???? We also get the latest lists from Karen Zydner about which were the winningest dahlias in all our shows last year. We talk about where we hope our societies are going and share good practice scenarios.

Our PSW conference will be held on Saturday, Feb. 13th from 9:00 AM (registration) to 5:00 PM at the Lakeside Presbyterian Church, 201 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco, CA 94132 (right off 19th Ave. – the San Francisco extension of Highway 280). Cost will be around \$25, buffet lunch provided. Come hobnob with bloomerati and learn new things. We should have a good speaker, too.

REGISTRATION FORM

MEXICO: THE CRUCIBLE OF DAHLIAS

(This is the first part of Kevin Woodson's adventures in Mexico meeting dahlia enthusiasts and painting dahlias. More to come in the next two newsletters—what a way to pass the mud months!)

In the summer of 2015, as the California Dahlia Society and Dahlia Societies around the world prepared for annual expos and Dahlia events, I headed south to the Dahlias' native Mexico to get back to the roots of one of the planet's most revered flowers.

Dahlias' potential is massive and we are only at the cusp of understanding it. Behind the plants in your garden, there is a wealth of undiscovered genetic possibility, health benefits, and the floral bench strength necessary to support and grow human culture. During my travels in Mexico, I discovered that the country that is the Dahlia's historic home also holds the key to its future.

Let me start out by introducing myself. As an artist, I paint watercolors of flowers in the gardens where they bloom. My goal is to paint a flower as it exists in relation to the world today, to explore how a tiny bloom can call out to us, engage with us, and change our lives forever.



This August, I was invited to Mexico to exhibit, participate in the Mexican celebration for the Day of the Dahlia (August 4) and the 20th anniversary of the Asociación Mexicana de la Dalia o Acocoxochitl (Mexican Dahlia Society), to present my Dahlias to Mexican gardeners and art lovers, and to paint the Mexican Dahlia.

How did this all come about? The internet is a wonderful thing! San Francisco Dahlia grower extraordinaire Deborah Dietz has reported receiving Dahlia queries from as far away as Saudi Arabia, and I personally can attest to linking up with worldwide

flower-loving friends who all found me on internet and Facebook searches. At the end of 2014, Asociación Mexicana secretary, Ana Laura Teyssier, began such a conversation with me on Facebook.

We continued communicating, and by the time I arrived in Mexico, I had become the official artist of the 20th anniversary, and my art had been incorporated into Asociación Mexicana's branding of the posters, key chains, and coffee mugs. For my part, I was fully booked to exhibit and speak to national flower clubs, scientific bodies, and Dahlia gardeners.





When I was greeted at the airport, I found the Asociación Mexicana de la Dalia was composed of some of the most dedicated Dahlia enthusiasts I'd met the world round.

Although the Dahlia has been Mexico's national flower since 1963, by the early 1990s it had fallen into decline, and few Mexicans could even recognize one, let alone understand the history and national pride it represented. But one woman saw the flower for what it was, and committed her life to restoring its proper place in gardens, society, and culture.

Maestra María Guadalupe Treveño de Castro, affectionately known as Maestra Lupita, began her personal journey in 1992. As the story goes, Maestra Lupita first became acquainted with Dahlias in the glossy photos of an American magazine she picked up in a Mexico City waiting room. Im-

mediately enamored by her national flower, she began her quest to immerse herself in Dahlias. Unfortunately, disappointment awaited. She soon discovered that, in all of Mexico City and its surrounding gardens, there were only five Dahlias growing. The books she found on the flower were all published in other languages and kept on the libraries' dustiest shelves. She talked to anyone who would listen, but most of the people she met didn't even know what a Dahlia was. But she did not despair.

Like Dorothy on the road to Oz, Maestra Lupita eventually found the perfect companions for her journey. Maestro Jeronimo Reyes Santiago and Maestro Jose M. Mejía Muñoz were professors of biology and agriculture in the Autonomous Mexican University system. Although their official posts were in agriculture, they both shared fascinations for the Mexican Dahlia, and included it in their research it at every opportunity. They knew what Lupita was talking about and joined the effort.

Twenty years later, by the time I arrived for the Anniversary, the Asociación Mexicana de la Dalia had seeded gardens across Mexico with bright blooms and reawakened a passion for the flower. Universities actively researched and preserved the 36+ species Dahlias growing in Mexico. Nutritionists and doctors uncovered popularized the flower's nutrition and health benefits. The Asociación Mexicana was in collaboration with farmers and cultural associations across Mexico, and with Dahlia Societies in Germany, New Zealand, and Japan. There was even a special brand-new cultivar, developed in Germany in honor of the Asociación Mexicana - it's named 'Lupita.'



To be continued.....

YOU ARE INVITED

Mardi Gras Is Forever in Flowers: a Carnival of Flowers in Watercolor by Kevin Woodson, opens at the Spark Art Gallery, 4229 18th Street (between Collingwood and Diamond). The reception for the artist is Saturday, February 6 from 1-4:00 PM. Kevin would so love to see you all there. The show runs from Feb. 1-28. Half the paintings are dahlias! Support a fellow DSCer.

JUDICIOUS JANUARY

Continue to pull your dahlias out and divide them. Pop a few into milk cartons and put them in the warmest part of your house. At my Maus Haus, this is in my loft, the “germinating loft;” at Paula’s it’s on the top shelf of her upstairs closet. Tubers sprout between 62-70 degrees. Lou, Devi and Pat have teamed up again to produce another crop of great cuttings for our tuber sale. They are looking for A, AA, Ball, Mba, and pom clump donations. Please help your DSC out by donating to our Cutting Crew.



Cover Crop or just covering up? When you have lifted out all your dahlias, you are left with a brown expanse.

This will turn to weeds in a twinkling. Not good. You could sow a cover crop of fava beans, mustard seed, hairy vetch, or a combination of nitrogen fixing seeds that you would let thrive until the last week in March. If you don’t plant a cover crop, consider adding some bags of chicken manure and covering the whole thing with straw or even cardboard pieces. This is so ugly that you might have to place flowering potted plants on top just so the mud months don’t weigh upon your floral soul. Last year Deborah covered her Cabrillo Gardens with cardboard. Not only did it squelch the weed revolution, the cardboard began breaking down and the worms loved the sanctuary.

Check out some hot dahlia catalog sites: Aztec, Blossom Gulch, Corralitos, Linda’s and Verrone’s or your other favorites. Maybe go in with a couple other DSCer’s to save on the shipping costs. There’s nothing like something new to look forward to. Time to set up a little mini greenhouse with a bookcase, shop lights, cardboard and tin foil. This looks sort of like a Susie Bake Oven, but it’s great for warming up and prolonging the light time for cuttings and sprouting tubers. Check out DSC newsletters: March ‘12 and May ‘14.

Remember if you leave any tubers in the ground, cover with a five-gallon bucket to limit the amount of rain they receive and maximize any solar heat they might chance to be blessed with. Consider helping someone else dig and/or divide and/or label their dahlias. It’s so much more fun with company. Be soooooo glad we’re here in the Bay Area and not where it’s freezing or flooding.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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Originally Organized
In 1917
In San Francisco

the Dahlia was adopted as the
Official Flower of San Francisco
on October 4, 1926
by its Board of Supervisors

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[Click here for past issues of the
DSC newsletter](#)

Like what you see? Visit the DSC for even
more dahlia information. And if you are
not a DSC member yet be sure to join.

sfdahlias.org