



# TGOA-MGCA National Convention "Roses and Wine in 2009" Santa Rosa, California



Photos by Sue Rohan

Convention participants were Sue Rohan, Mary Naumann, Betty Cox, Marsha May, Ritayln Arps, Rose Borowitz, and Agnes Schussman.



Double Cheers!  
Agnes Schussman and Betty Cox

### Sue Rohan writes . . .

"Roses and Wine in 2009" truly lived up to its name. For lovers of both wine and roses, the annual convention was definitely the place to be. I have never seen so many stunning roses as I did during those three days. We were treated to outstanding tours, and my favorite had to be the Garden Valley Ranch in Petaluma, CA. Pictures cannot do justice to the fantastic beauty of countless roses, some reaching as high as 30 feet. The owner explained that their heady fragrance resulted from growing in the open air and sunshine—no protection for these gorgeous specimens. There were many other lovely flowers on this property as well.

Even though the Santa Rosa club is small, they pulled out all the stops and made this such a memorable convention. I will never forget those miles of vineyards, the wine tasting ☺, the Luther Burbank Home and Gardens, all those roses, the fish hatchery, the lovely long-stemmed sweet peas, the early morning fog, and the magnificent redwoods and our picnic among them. Of course we enjoyed reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones too. All in all, it was a wonderful time.

I'm already looking forward to next June in Grand Rapids. Plan to join us—you won't regret it.



Mary Naumann, Sue Rohan, Rose Borowitz, Agnes Schussman, and Marsha May at the Armstrong Redwood Reserve

### Mary Naumann says . . .

I had a great time at the 2009 garden convention. The Santa Rosa club was friendly, gracious, and welcoming. We attended some interesting seminars on sweet pears, seeds, bonsai, and olive oil production. Our field trips were super. The Luther Burbank Home and Gardens, Green Valley Ranch, and Sonoma Horticulture Center were beautiful. The roses and all the flowers were spectacular. I really would like to try growing some alstroemeria—they were all over in a rainbow of colors. We visited several wineries and tasted a lot of wine. I could not believe the number of



vineyards in that area—thousands of acres of grape vines. They were everywhere.

The memorial service at Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve was the most moving event of the three days in Sonoma County. There amid the giant redwoods, with the sun filtering through the leaves, the birds chirping, and our voices raised in song and prayer, we remembered those who are no longer with us. It was especially meaningful for me as I thought of my husband and how he would have so enjoyed walking the paths of this forest.

I thoroughly enjoyed this convention. It gave us the opportunity to see flowers and gardens in another part of the U.S. We met new gardening friends and had the opportunity to chat with those we had met before. Hope to see all in Grand Rapids in 2010.

### Views from Betty Cox . . .

Was a very great experience—7+ types of transportation: plane, shuttle, bus, trolley car, air porter, Bart, cab street car, regular car—I think that’s all of them! We tasted wine—three different wineries, had four samples at each—“weeeee!”; also toured champagne making with four samples. Did Burbank tour, saw “most beautyest” rose garden I ever saw and mega roses, learned what a good olive oil is and what to look for when buying, learned about Spencer sweet peas, Shepherd Seeds speaker was great, also bonsai—how to and not to do this great art. Man, what a wealth of information, wished more people could have gone, had a great time—met old friends again, also some De Pere people, Michigan people, one De Pere person took his bike out in the 70s, stayed, and now does landscaping; we spent quite a bit of time with them. This is why we should have another convention, lots of work but fun work. It was cooler than I thought it would be but very enjoyable. After convention, toured two days in San Francisco—what fun!



### And from Rose Borowitz . . .

Ah, “Roses and Wine in 2009” sounds like a good theme for a gardening convention, and it was. This was one of the most memorable conventions that I have attended. It was very well organized; the food was wonderful as well as being healthy. A unique game of gardening BINGO was used to distribute the many door prizes. We all were made to feel welcome in the hospitality room with beautiful flowers, bakery, silent auction and always someone interesting to talk to.

The seminars were informative and interesting. We learned about the art of bonsai, olive oil production, sweet peas and a wonderful presentation on seeds with Renee Shepherd of Renee’s Garden Seeds.

My favorite tour was to the Luther Burbank Art and Garden Center (where the local club holds their monthly meetings) and to his home and museum in Santa Rosa. You can just imagine how exciting it was to be standing in his

greenhouse and office and look out onto his gardens where his plants are blooming. If anyone gets the chance, they should make it a point to visit the home of this legendary horticulturist.

As with all national conventions, it is still heartwarming to renew old friendships and catch up with their lives. I feel in my heart that this organization will be around for another 77 years.

### Ritalyn Arps reports . . .

The national convention in Santa Rosa was my second convention. Luckily, I went with a group of convention veterans! Everything was great, but I’ll mention just a few of my favorites. Armstrong Woods has Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Big Trees (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and Dawn Redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). The



biggest of these is the Coast Redwood at 300 to 360 feet. The picture shows a redwood that germinated in 948. It survived numerous fires, due to its unusual bark, and died only recently.

The bonsai speaker really had some beautiful specimens. I didn't know that Japanese pots are much better than Chinese. I've tried a few bonsai, and killed a few too. It's the daily watering that is really hard.

The Sonoma Horticultural Nursery was a real treat. The owner gave us a personal tour. He does a lot of hybridizing of azaleas, but also gets many unusual plants (to me) from South America. One plant he is growing that I love is the Japanese Primrose. It has whorls of flowers that bloom in succession up a single stalk. Mine have survived for six years, but I lost 2 of the 3 last winter. They are marginal here.

If you haven't gone to a convention, next year is a good time to go. It's in Michigan. You'll learn new information, develop new friends, and have a great time!



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### Plant Sale Report

You did it again! You volunteered your time, brought plants, and even silent auction items. The result was a very profitable sale and an enjoyable event for members. This year the club made \$1,080.89 on the plants you brought and \$181 on the silent auction for a total of \$1,261.89. Thanks for all of your help, especially our treasurer, **Sue Rohan** and helper, **Don Nighorn**. The \$25 prize for the most plants brought, 55, went to **Paul Hartman**, but **Dave Parsons**, 43, was hot on his heels. Paul donated this prize back to the club. Thank you, Paul.

A special thank you to **Joyce Heney**, membership chair, who planned an inviting display to interest others in GCGB. Joyce enlisted a lively crew of club members who staffed the GCGB table throughout the sale to distribute pumpkin and sunflower seeds to children, answer customer questions about plants and to promote and publicize club projects, programs and membership. Joyce conducted a drawing for a free membership, and as a result, has some additional names to contact. **Shirley Winnes** provided leaflets, newsletters, and sunflower and pumpkin flyers to promote the club. Joyce donated hyacinth beans for shoppers interested in the club. Both children and adults examined the Kentucky coffee tree beans **Paul**

**Hartman** brought for examination at the club table. Shoppers could not resist visiting our club gals in their flowery hats! The hats also sparked apparel ideas for the 2010 sale.

If you have any suggestions to make the sale better, please send them to Ritalyn at rarp1@new.rr.com. We'll keep the suggestions to discuss before next year's sale.

### Plant Sale Co-Chairs Sherry Campbell & Ritalyn Arps



Thank you, Joyce Heney, Sherry Campbell, and Ritalyn Arps for the many, many hours spent on the 2009 Plant Sale!