

Department notes

Queen Anne Frolic

THE MOST COMMON reaction among planners, hosts, and guests of the first-of-its-kind party at the Arboretum was that it exceeded all expectations. The weather was balmy perfection, the barbecued beef dinner was delicious, the historical buildings were alive with visitors as they might have been nearly a century ago, the vintage cars, horseless carriages, paddle boats, and other entertainments were patronized by almost a thousand people, and

Photo: Peter Douglas



View from in front of Queen Anne cottage, starting point for rides in vintage cars.

the music played far into the night. The inclination in retrospect is to single out those responsible for the success of this fund-raising party. It is impossible, unless one were to name individually a good part of the California Arboretum Foundation, members of Las Voluntarias, the Arboretum staff, the foundation Board of Trustees, the department Board of Governors, the president of the Descanso Gardens Guild, the many who provided the entertainment, and an assortment of wives and husbands who cheerfully lent their collective hands to the myriad chores necessary for an event of this kind. Summing up the results in terms of figures, a net of \$4,600 was raised, a good part of which will be used for seeds and plants for the Arboretum during the coming year. Mark the evening of September 24, 1971 as one milestone in the short history of the Arboretum that surely will be repeated.

Retirement

AFTER TEN YEARS OF supervising the development of South Coast Botanic Garden from a barren tract of land consisting of a few feet of top soil atop a hundred or more feet of trash to a garden with respectable collections of pines, eucalyptus, ficus, flowering fruit trees, and ground covers, Superintendent Donald P. Woolley has retired at a vigorous 68 years of age. At a farewell luncheon on August 20 attended by staff and friends, the mood was purposely light-hearted in accord with Don's wishes, with no effort made by Director Francis Ching and other speakers to recount his many achievements. But they exist in the record and in the memories of Don's legion of friends and co-workers, many of whom shared with him the heartbreaking setbacks arising from broken pipes, root-burned trees and shrubs, and other horticultural catastrophes resulting from unstable land and unusual, to say the least, soil conditions. In devel-

Photo: Palos Verdes Newspapers

oping a botanic garden on what was successively a diatomaceous earth mine and then a county dump there were no reference books to turn to; Don's approach to his task was necessarily one of trial and error based on his years of experience as a horticulturist. Before going to South Coast he had worked at the Arboretum for seven years as chief horticulturist, a period that included two years as acting superintendent, and before that, he spent eleven years at UCLA, first as an orchardist and then as senior superintendent of cultivations. Although Don has retired from County service he has by no means retired from active work in his field. We talked with him on the telephone recently, following his return from a three-week vacation with his wife in the Hawaiian Islands, and he told us that in addition to serving as a consultant to South Coast he is already lined up for teaching and lecture assignments for the coming fall and spring seasons.

Musical at Descanso

AN UNUSUAL FUND-RAISING party was presented October 9th in the Hospitality House of Descanso Gardens by the Descanso Gardens Guild. Titled "An Evening With The Old Masters," it offered talented young musicians performing during a champagne reception, through the dinner hour, and, later in the evening, in concert performance. The accent was on elegance. A gourmet dinner was set off by the loveliest of floral decorations and the various soloists and instrumental groups lent a special charm to the affair by appearing in costumes, some representative of the period of the composers they were playing, others an actual facsimile, as in the case of one soloist dressed as Chopin and another dressed as the wife of Robert Schumann. Proceeds from the event will be used both for the Guild's programs to aid handicapped children and for general improvements within Descanso Gardens.



Department director Francis Ching, retiring South Coast Botanic Garden superintendent Don Woolley, and assistant director Glenn Hiatt, left to right, share a moment of levity at a farewell luncheon honoring Mr. Woolley.

Smog and Longevity

FURTHER EVIDENCE that smog may be reducing the life span of humans has been uncovered by two geneticists working in different fields but drawn together by a common interest. W. E. Trout, III, of the City of Hope Medical Center in Duarte, and our own senior biologist, George Hanson, collaborated on a paper indirectly bearing on this subject which Dr. Hanson presented at the annual meetings of the Genetics Society last August 23-26 in Rochester, New York. Entitled The Effect of Los Angeles Smog on the Longevity of Normal and Hyperkinetic *Drosophila melanogaster*, it detailed in classical research-lab language how virgin female *Drosophila*s, a species of fruit fly, were placed in chambers and exposed to "ambient Los Angeles basin air." The results, for the flies and very possibly all the rest of us, were not happy. Smog reduced the life span of the flies approximately 15%, based on average summertime smog



1971. "Retirement." *Lasca leaves* 21, 56–57.

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