THE CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS is the 137-year-old nationally landmarked gem of San Francisco. It is an oasis for thousands of visitors each year — a place where our visitors are immersed by flowers and foliage from across the world and we provide 11,807 square feet of secluded warmth and the freshest oxygen year round. This being my first year at the Conservatory, I have been overwhelmed with the love for our cherished Conservatory and world class plant collection. Everyone I meet loves the Conservatory! The past year was filled with many milestones: the ushering of thousands from across the globe and nearby neighbors through our doors, continuing to produce unique and innovative exhibits highlighting the awesomeness of nature, inspiring thousands of school children to think about plants differently, maintaining a balanced budget for the fifth year in a row and the opportunity to celebrate filling core leadership positions throughout the entire organization.

This year also represents a year of significant change and evolution for the Conservatory. The staff and I for the past few months have feverishly been making many changes throughout the Conservatory, some subtle and some quite noticeable. Some of these evolutions have focused on how we curate our day to day visitor experience, some on how we plan and manage our collection and facility, and some on items that help us work more efficiently behind the scenes. While our beloved Conservatory has been around for many years, there is still lots of excitement and change being planned to keep us youthful, relevant and constantly growing. I expect the coming year will be filled with a lot more excitement, incredible accomplishments and many more evolutions.

Two exciting projects the Conservatory team will be working on over the next year are completing an enhancement to the Highland Tropics Gallery and re-branding as the Conservatory’s new Cloud Forest Gallery. This work will allow us to better showcase our world class Andean cloud forest orchid collection. We also hope to use this enhancement as a catalyst to better position the Conservatory to play a greater role in international orchid conservation by displaying, preserving, propagating and disseminating rare and unusual cloud forest orchids. Building upon this gallery opening, the Conservatory will also be taking major steps to initiate a Master Planning process for the entire Conservatory site. While the Conservatory was renovated in 2003, our aging support spaces and operations were never updated. This has constrained the Conservatory’s horticulture, programming and further development due to our limited and aging support facilities. The primary goal of developing a Master Plan will be to create a framework that will equip the Conservatory with the facilities it needs to continue to provide an engaging and immersive experience as well as further support a renewed conservation focus. This will be the first Master Plan ever created for the entire site, and we are excited to begin!

It is my privilege to thank all of the Conservatory’s friends, staff, volunteers and advisory board members for their tireless dedication to making the last year an incredible and resounding success!

MATTHEW STEPHENS
Director

CONSERVATORY CHRONICLES

In a genus known for diminutive flowers so small that, to be truly appreciated, a hand lens is often used to see delicate floral details, this plant looms large. Pleurothallis gargantua, aka Acronia gargantua, is a member of the genus Pleurothallis which was first described in 1813 and is related to the better known magnificent Masdevallias. Pleurothallis gargantua is the largest species of over 1,000 Pleurothallis orchids. Its velveteen burgundy flowers are three inches long, while the flowers of other species in the genus measure in millimeters. Pleurothallis gargantua blooms from the leaf base of one-foot-long heart-shaped leaves that rise on stems up to eighteen inches tall. But what sets this Pleurothallis apart is not just gargantuan size. Its enormous beauty allows it to stand tall even next to its showier relatives.
ONE OF THE MORE frequent questions we receive on our information line is, “Are the butterflies there?” For many visitors, the Conservatory of Flowers has become synonymous with a free-flying butterfly habitat. We heard you, and they’re back!

Since opening on November 17th, North American butterflies have filled the colorful cottage garden constructed in the Special Exhibit Gallery. Beyond the sheer beauty of the butterflies is the mystifying science and magic of metamorphosis. The story of the butterfly, the specific nectar plants required for each species, along with the specific plants necessary for egg laying and caterpillar nourishment, tell nature’s story of the importance of protecting our environment from toxins and nurturing a broad diversity of plant material.

The Butterfly Bungalow in the vestibule allows visitors to observe one of the most critical stages of the butterfly’s life cycle — the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly.

At the Bungalow, visitors see the chrysalises, hardened exoskeletons formed by the caterpillars. These intriguing structures are as varied as the creatures that created them — some jade colored with gold spots, some sporting prominent and unusual horns. Inside, one of the great mysteries of nature is taking place — a total metamorphosis during which the caterpillar liquefies completely and its cells reorganize into a butterfly. Many visitors will be lucky enough to catch the moment when one of these transformed and winged beauties emerges.

New this year is a chance for anyone to become a member of the Butterfly Patrol for just $20. Patrol members learn how to carefully release a newly emerged butterfly into the exhibit and receive complimentary people-sized antennae and a special Butterfly Patrol badge to take home.

Make your holidays – and every day – special, with the butterflies!
Conservatory Curiosities  
**AUGUST 12 — OCTOBER 1, 2016**

Conservatory Curiosities is an activity series that brought the Conservatory out into Golden Gate Park with the goal of engaging the public in educational and interactive lessons, demonstrations, and conversations. We hosted 8 community partners and organized 16 activities on the Palm Terrace on Friday and Saturday afternoons from August 12th through October 1st. Popular events included: bean-to-bar chocolate lessons with Dandelion Chocolate; coffee tastings and brewing demonstrations with Wrecking Ball Coffee Roasters and Sightglass Coffee; build-a-bog demonstrations with California Carnivores; and meet the Orchid Doctor with volunteer Paul Bourbin.

The Wild Bunch  
**MAY 5 — OCTOBER 16, 2016**

The Wild Bunch: Succulents, Cacti & Fat Plants, a special exhibit that opened on May 5th, engaged visitors in the rusty remains of an old ghost town surrounded by densely planted displays featuring hundreds of varieties of these fleshy and sometimes thorny plants in a stunning array of weird shapes and unexpected colors. After the exhibit closed on October 16th, many of these drought tolerant plants found new permanent homes in the Painted Desert Garden adjacent to the Conservatory. Stop by and visit them at your leisure.

Joyride!  
**JULY 16, 2016**

San Francisco’s newest live-storytelling show, took over the Orchid Pavilion for a night of extraordinary happenings. The theme was storytelling itself, and the tradition of warning young children and adults alike through the sharing of proverbs and fairy tales. Our guests enjoyed live music from a guzheng, a Chinese harp, and an art installation called an “Octoplayer,” an eight-armed copper and plexiglass sculpture that plays music, sings songs and tells stories. For the main act, five storytellers each shared a gripping tale of personal experience that mirrored a proverb or a warning tale, reminding us that they who burn witches love their coals, and that those who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones.

Laura Ackley  
**APRIL 9, 2016**

On April 9th, fans of The Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) of 1915 joined us at the Conservatory for a special lecture by Laura Ackley, author of *San Francisco’s Jewel City: The Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915*. Laura talked about the closing day festivities of the PPIE and guests were able to say farewell to our Garden Railway: 1915 Pan Pacific special exhibit.

Succulents Shindig  
**JULY 26, 2016**

Summer Succulents Shindig, our annual member party, celebrated the western theme captured in the Wild Bunch exhibit with a classic western shindig. Members were treated to live Rockabilly music by Mitch Polzak and the Royal Deuces, tequila cocktails, and tasty treats as they enjoyed the splendor of the Conservatory after hours. Become a member today and don’t miss next year’s members only event!
**Living Wall**

Visitors to the Conservatory are now being welcomed in the remodeled lobby where we are better able to showcase our living wall and provide a more streamlined cloud-based ticketing process. Passersby are enticed to view our vertical garden and gain a glimpse of the tropical paradise beyond the lobby doorways. Volunteer docents work hand-in-hand with guest services staff to greet visitors, answer questions, and provide information to make their visit memorable. The free standing kiosks on the Palm Terrace will soon be home to an all new café offering delightful menu items and refreshing beverages.

**Gala Under Glass**

**MAY 5, 2016**

Gala Under Glass 2016 – A festive crowd gathered to celebrate Cinco de Mayo and preview the Wild Bunch Special Exhibit. Traditional Mexican music and dance entertained the party goers who sipped creative cocktails, dined on delicious delectables, and enjoyed the beautiful Conservatory as the sun set and the magical evening began. The first ever after-party attracted a new group of revelers who danced the night away with DJ Deft. Lonna Wais served as Honorary Chairperson for the annual fundraiser for youth education programs, greenhouse preservation and plant acquisitions.

**Heron Oblivion**

**DECEMBER 4, 2015**

On December 4, 2015, visitors to the Conservatory were treated to a special evening of live music – featuring local psych-rockers Heron Oblivion and the roots reggae-influenced Extra Classic. Concert attendees explored the galleries after hours while enjoying craft cocktails, as well as four beers on tap provided by Magnolia and Lagunitas breweries. For the sold-out occasion, our Orchid Pavilion was transformed into a tropical concert hall, with musicians taking the stage underneath stately Phoenix roebelenii palms.

**Roof Putty**

**FALL 2016 – SPRING 2017**

Anyone strolling by the Conservatory the last few months has probably noticed the giant cranes stationed near the building. Work is underway to replace deteriorating roof putty with silicon caps and sealant while preserving the historic integrity of the building. With 16,800 panes of glass, the roof improvement project is an important component of the ongoing maintenance this unique building requires. Work will be ongoing for the next few months as our skillful contractors work their way around the entire building. The roof improvements are funded by the San Francisco General Fund, the San Francisco Department of Recreation & Parks and the Conservatory of Flowers.

**Aphrodisiacs of the Tropics**

**FEBRUARY 14, 2016**

Our first annual Valentine’s event was a hit for couples and friends alike! Guests were welcomed to Aphrodisiacs of the Tropics with a flute of champagne to be enjoyed as they set off to discover many living examples of the plants purported to be aphrodisiacs including cashew, hibiscus, cacao, bananas, coffee, vanilla, cinnamon and cardamom. Docents were available to offer an opportunity to smell and taste some of the spices that have long been treasured for perking up more than the meal. Aphrodisiac inspired specialty cocktails, chocolate covered strawberries and other sweet treats made for a magical evening in the Victorian greenhouse.
I recently had an opportunity to speak with one of our long time volunteers, Tom Perlite, who has been a friend of the Conservatory for many years and now volunteers in the cool growing orchid greenhouse. After majoring in botany at Cal Berkeley in the late 1970’s, Tom started working for Rod McClellan’s famed “Acres of Orchids”. While there, he often delivered orchids to George Marcopulos, the Garden Director of the Conservatory at the time. George was instrumental in putting the Conservatory on the map, bringing together one of the most complete collections of Masdevallia and Dracula orchids in existence.

When a month long position repotting orchids opened at the Conservatory, Tom jumped at the opportunity to join the organization. Tom went on to start what grew to be a large orchid propagating, growing and boarding facility. Now “semi-retired”, Tom has cut back his growing space from 40,000 square feet to 6,000. He currently grows Dendrobium cuthbertsonii, a miniature cool growing orchid from New Guinea, and he propagates tropical rhododendrons. Coincidentally, Eric Imperiale, our Highland Gallery horticulturalist, met Tom as a young boy and eventually worked with Tom as a young man. With Tom as his mentor, Eric worked in Tom’s orchid growing operation and developed his own passion for this large and diverse family of plants. Now Tom can often be found volunteering alongside Eric in the cool growing support greenhouse.

Following the 1995 wind storm, a closure of eight years caused the orchid collection to dwindle. Tom feels strongly that the Conservatory can rebuild its collection of cloud forest orchids and become an international leader in conserving Andean Cloud Forest orchid collections. The Conservatory is uniquely located to display, preserve, propagate and disseminate these diminutive orchids to other gardens, schools and the public. Currently, no public garden specializes in South American cloud forest orchids. The collection won’t be complete overnight, but it should be possible to re-build with the help of the San Francisco Orchid Society and local collectors. The Conservatory hopes to obtain orchids for its collection at the orchid society’s upcoming Pacific Orchid and Garden Exposition (to take place February 24-26, 2017) where Tom is the project manager.

Tom is not only a dedicated volunteer at the Conservatory, but also a valuable source of historical information regarding our orchid collection: what is has been, where it is now, and where it will be in the future. The Conservatory is extremely thankful for all of Tom’s support, generosity, dedication and endless passion for orchids.

Thank You Volunteers

We would like to thank all of our more than 100 dedicated volunteers who greet our visitors, provide daily informative docent-led tours, lead our Adaptation explorations for third, fourth and fifth graders, work hand-in-hand with our nursery staff tending our vast tropical collections, and assist in building our special exhibits.

Additionally, we thank our Advisory Council and our Gala committee volunteers.

We couldn’t do it without you!
Please accept our sincere apology if we have made an error or omitted your name. If corrections are in order, we would appreciate a phone call to the Development Department at (415) 831-2093. Gifts listed were received between September 15, 2015 and December 9, 2016.
Butterfly & Blooms Exhibit Docents educate visitors about the plants and butterflies that fill the Special Exhibit Gallery. The Conservatory offers new volunteers training materials on butterfly pollination, migration, and metamorphosis, so you can help visitors leave the exhibit with an even deeper sense of wonder over these fascinating creatures. Volunteers are asked to commit to two shifts per month through the run of the exhibit. Shifts are 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. In return for your time, the Conservatory offers free admission, volunteer-only lectures and social events, and a discount in the gift shop.

To join the volunteer program, contact Erika Frank at efrank@sfcof.org or (415) 637-4326.
COMING EVENTS

APHRODISIACS OF THE TROPICS
Celebrate Valentine’s at the Conservatory! Experience the Conservatory after dark, engage your senses, feel the warm moist air, taste specially cocktails crafted with tropical botanical essences, make it an evening to remember.

Get up close and personal with the many living examples of plants purported to be aphrodisiacs in our permanent collection. Each Gallery will host a different wine and chocolate pairing, a combination that has long been treasured for perking up more than just the taste buds. All tickets available at eventbrite.com.

Thursday, February 14, 2017
6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m.

GLASSHOUSE ARTISTS
We are delighted to offer artists and photographers a special opportunity to set up easels and tripods outside of normal hours of operation in our special exhibits gallery. Capture the amazing Butterfly exhibit crowd free, take your time to get that extraordinary photo!

Reservations are required, space is limited to 15 admissions per event: $15 for members; $20 for non-members. Please visit our website or follow us on Facebook for more information. All tickets available at eventbrite.com.

DRACULA BALL
Our fabulous Gala Under Glass shifts seasons this year to celebrate the amazing cool growing Dracula orchid in the month known for draculas of another sort. Save the date for the party of the season: Thursday, October 19, 2017. Visit our website or follow us on Facebook for more information.

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

CONTINUE YOUR SUPPORT for the Conservatory to keep an exceptionally beautiful place thriving for generations to come.

It only takes one step to get involved. Use the enclosed envelope to join our extensive Conservatory Community and inspire the connection between people and plants!

Elevate your support and become a Guild level Member today!
Members of our Begonia Guild, Cycad Guild and Orchid Guild levels revel in unique greenhouse benefits, while all membership fees go directly towards enhancing our botanical collections, conservation, education programs, and essential operations.

Don’t miss the liveliest invitation of the summer! Members are exclusively invited to attend the summer’s most alluring after-hours event at our annual Members Only party.

Conservatory members are guaranteed a first look at botanically-inspired events and news before they go public! Enjoy discounts for select local merchants, our Conservatory gift shop and special admission privileges and discounts at 300 gardens throughout North America.

Check conservatoryofflowers.org/support/membership for details on membership benefits or contact Membership Associate, May Slen at mslen@sfcof.org or (415) 577-2584.
EXPLORE AND CELEBRATE 137 YEARS
of San Francisco’s treasured Victorian greenhouse history. Be a part of the cornerstone to educate Bay Area students about the natural wonders of the world.

The Conservatory of Flowers relies on the support of donors and volunteers for many of its programs and activities. Supporting the Conservatory enables us to present unique special exhibits – such as the current Butterflies and Blooms – engaging school-age programs and docent tours to our visitors, as well as to care for our permanent tropical collections.

Convenient ways to contribute

DONATE BY MAIL
Send a donation using the enclosed envelope or send your contributions to:
Conservatory of Flowers
100 John F. Kennedy Drive
San Francisco, CA 94118

ONLINE
Visit conservatoryofflowers.org/support/donate

BY PHONE
Call (415) 831-2093 to make a contribution with a debit or credit card

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS FOR YOUR LOVED ONES
Purchase a gift membership for your loved ones to enjoy the butterflies and tropical blooms every day

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION
Ask your employer about the matching gift program at your place of business

HONOR
Recognize and celebrate a birthday or anniversary of a loved one with a gift to the Conservatory

IN MEMORY
Gifts in memory are acknowledged with a personalized note to the family

IN-KIND DONATION
Contact Kristen Natoli, Chief Nursery Specialist at knatoli@sfcof.org with your cloud forest plant donations

ORGANIZE A LEGACY OR PLANNED GIFT
Contact Jane Scurich, Director of Development, (415) 831-2093 or jscurich@sfcof.org

Your gift truly has the power to help us grow!
HOURS OF OPERATION

OPEN Tuesday — Sunday, 10 am
Last entry changes with the season:
November 1 — March 15
Last admission at 4 pm, Closes at 4:30 pm
March 16 — October 30
Last admission at 6 pm, Closes at 6:30 pm

HOLIDAYS
The Conservatory is CLOSED on Thanksgiving, December 25, January 1, and at 1:30 pm on December 24.

ADMISSION FEES
Conservatory members enjoy unlimited free admission.

GENERAL PUBLIC
Adults — $8.00
Youth (ages 12-17), Seniors (age 65 & over), & College Students (with ID) — $6.00
Children (ages 5-11) — $2.00
Children (ages 4 & under) — FREE

SAN FRANCISCO RESIDENTS (with proof of residency)
Adults — $6.00
Youth (ages 12-17), Seniors (age 65 & over), & College Students (with ID) — $3.00
Children (ages 5-11) — $2.00
Children (ages 4 & under) — FREE

INFORMATION
CALL (415) 831-2090
WEB conservatoryofflowers.org

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RENT THE CONSERVATORY!

We offer three unique event spaces that can be rented individually, or as a full property buyout.

THE PALM TERRACE
is the perfect space for those seeking an al fresco event with breathtaking surroundings. With southern views of the Conservatory Valley flowerbeds and Sutro Tower, and a northern backdrop of the magnificent Victorian Conservatory of Flowers, your guests will enjoy a truly San Francisco experience.

THE HISTORIC CONSERVATORY
offers five distinctive exhibit galleries where guests can enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres amidst exotic plants and flowers from all over the world. Each gallery showcases unique tropical botanicals, custom metal work and the historic architectural beauty of this Victorian masterpiece.

THE ORCHID PAVILION,
our reception hall, is the ideal place to host your seated dinner and dance the night away. This industrial tent is a blank canvas to inspire your creativity when planning the perfect wedding, corporate or private event.

Contact us to host an event your guests will remember!

For more information contact the rentals department:
rentals@sfcof.org or (415) 845-2394