



## Baldwin Park Woman's Club Newsletter

# The Lark Notes



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G.F.W.C. – C. F.W.C.

**JAN 2026 Volume 76 Issue 4**

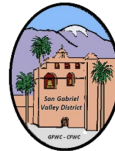
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BPWC Executive Board Members

**President: Refugio "Cuca" Rodriguez**

Theme: "Let us resemble butterflies  
by attending to the needs of our  
community, pollinating it to bloom and  
bear fruit."



37 strong, serving the  
community since 1906



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

## JANUARY 2026 CALENDAR

### "Happy New Year"

Ho Ho Ho! to all our Club Members and friends!

At our December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, we were delighted to be serenaded with Christmas songs from the Sierra Vista High School Choral Ensemble led by Ms. Suzanne Brookey. It was a great way to start the holidays!

The **Baldwin Park Christmas Parade** on December 6<sup>th</sup> was a little bit disappointing. We were in a bus with no windows so we were not able to decorate the bus. Due to a miscommunication with some of the people in charge, we also had to wait longer to get permission to actually participate in the parade. Next year we'll need to have different options. Cruz, Suzanne, Alice, Vida, Lia and other guests from Sierra Vista [who brought us 2 boxes of delicious doughnuts] all had a LOT OF FUN!

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, Cruz, Vivian and myself took the donated books and toys to the BPPD. We are also taking items from our craft boutique in November to the Craft Sale at the SGVD meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

**DO NOT FORGET our Christmas Party** on December 19<sup>th</sup>, it is a potluck and gift exchange (\$15). We will have games with sweet prizes, enjoy lunch and will be singing Christmas songs. In early 2026, plan to attend the **Student Music Competition on January 21<sup>st</sup>**. We need to have a great audience for all the students!

**Merry Christmas and a HAPPY NEW YEAR to all!**

**Refugio "Cuca" Rodriguez, President**

**Phone: 626-674-9067**

**Email: refugio\_rodriguez@aol.com**

01 - New Year's Day (holiday) (02 – holiday)

10 - Lark Notes due for Feb 2026

15 - Set Up for Luncheon Meeting 9:30 am

16 - Luncheon Meeting 10 am

19 - MLK (holiday)

21 - Executive Board Meeting 10 am

21 - Student Music Competition 1 pm

30 - Dean's Seminar 10 am

30 - Spud Bunco 11 am

**Luncheon assignments for Jan 16<sup>th</sup>** are on page 6.

Please RSVP to the Lunch Chairman by Jan 12<sup>th</sup>. Meeting begins at 10 am. Social time begins at 9:30 am. Meeting date is the 3rd Friday due to the holiday.

**Music Competition** on Jan 21<sup>st</sup> will be a way to support local music students. Please arrive by 12:45 pm and join us so we can have a welcoming audience.

Please **RSVP to Suzanne Perez** for the **Spud Bunco on Jan 30<sup>th</sup>**, see page 6 for details. If you want to help with food, let Suzanne know. The more the yummier!

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## DEANS MESSAGE

**Happy New Year Members,** I hope you are all having a wonderful Holiday Season. So great to spend time with family and friends, sharing delicious meals, great conversation and just being together.

I believe a New Year should start with a clean slate...doing things you have been putting off, traveling, spending more time with friends and family, organizing your home or focusing on an exercise program. Whatever you decide, the new year is a good time to start, well at least give it a go!!

As a club we had a very busy holiday season. We put together, donated and participated in giving out Thanksgiving Baskets for neighbors in need, Santa's Clothes, BPPD Toy Drive as well as events at the Esperanza and Serenity Tiny Homes. We should be proud of all the work we do and all we are able to accomplish. We are still missing members who have been absent from our meetings. We miss your friendship and your ideas. Please come join us...remember, we can pick you up if you need a ride.

Let's start this year with enthusiasm and do it together!! Our first **Dean's Seminar** in 2026 is scheduled for **Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>**. Start time is 10 am and ALL ARE WELCOME to attend.

**Cruz Baca, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

**Phone: 626-806-9583**

**Email: cruzsembello@hotmail.com**



**HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS** to Diana Asmundson and Susan Rubio *'via Elena Robles'*.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The word for 2026 is that we have a few prospective members buzzing around. Welcome them with a smile and a kind word. New members are always welcome to join. Let's make some new friends!



**Alice Konopasek, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

**Phone: 626 512-3548**

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In the next few weeks, all club members might receive calls from the **Nominating Committee** asking if you can step into a leadership role. We know for many this may be a task you are not sure you can commit to, but we are all leaders and stepping into a role as Secretary, Vice President, Parliamentarian, etc. is a great way to really **'join the team'**.

As our member roll has lightened these past two years, we are looking for some of these positions to be infused with new ideas and energy. You have a supportive team to help guide you. This is "your club" and we welcome new leaders and new ideas.

In Woman's Clubs we encourage leadership roles for all, **including new members**. Our By Laws rely on term limits so we continue to evolve and grow. We hope some of our new members will want to GROW WITH US! If you get a call, please consider serving the club in a leadership role; we know you have so much to offer!

## WAYS and MEANS

**Happy New Year!** We have some really fun activities planned in the new year that allow us to raise funds for charitable giving. If you cannot join in on the fun, please consider donations so we can meet our goals. Any donation may be sent to the P.O. Box and please write in the memo area the fund you choose to support like 'Music' or 'Art'.

**Maureen Foster Davis, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President**



*Take on the new year  
with purpose.  
Pay attention to  
**YOUR HEALTH,**  
pay attention to  
**YOUR FRIENDS,**  
pay attention to  
**YOUR FINANCES!***

## HEALTH and WELLNESS

Hello Members, are you ready to ring in the New Year? With the start of a new year, we often feel stressed in anticipation of the year ahead. Stress can cause negative health outcomes and **High Blood Pressure** is one of those conditions that sneaks up on you, especially if you feel stressed. More than half of Americans don't know they have it. You can monitor your own pressure at home with a 'cuff' device, and you'll know how you are doing daily. Here are a few tips to lower Blood Pressure right away.

- 1. Plan Ahead:** Avoid crowds, plan your day out with intention and if your patience is tested, try to stay as calm as possible. Skip the double cappuccino and bring your own healthy drinks along when out.
- 2. Hit the Loo:** Having a full bladder sends a signal up to your brain that stimulates the nervous systems, that can increase blood pressure.
- 3. Take a Few Deep Breaths:** This can relax your nervous system and help ease "white coat syndrome" which can cause high blood pressure like the anxiety you feel in a Dr's office. Slowly breathing in and out with long deep breaths 8 - 10 times will actually help.

Additional tips include eating a healthy diet, using less salt, losing a few pounds, avoiding stressful conditions and getting better sleep. Ask your Physician about other tips and take medication if prescribed.

Let's start the New Year focusing on being healthier! Wishing you a **Healthy and Happy New Year!**

**Cruz Baca, Health & Wellness Chairman**

## THE MONTH OF JANUARY

It's the beginning of a new year and a great place to **re commit to being part of our club's mission of community service.** There is something for everyone like supporting students, those facing homelessness and families in need due to domestic violence. We hope your resolution for 2026 is to become more engaged and more informed allowing you to be a part of our success.

The January birthstone is the **Garnet** which some believe is a protective stone, shielding the wearer from injury. It is usually a brilliant red with amber undertones.

The flowers this month are the **Carnation** and according to Christian legend, the first pink carnation on Earth grew from Mary's tears when she wept for Jesus as he carried his cross. The pink carnation often symbolizes a mother's unyielding love. The second flower is the **Snowdrop** and are often used to express both sympathy and celebration. During happy times, they are thought to provide optimism and hope, when following a death or misfortune, they symbolize compassion.

January is **National Blood Donor Month.** While many of our members no longer give blood our family members can and should be encouraged to donate. It is life saving and the largest volunteer effort on the planet. Donate to the Red Cross or local Blood Banks any day of the week!



**07- Edna Rathel**

**23- Margarita Vargas**



## LIVING WITH PURPOSE IN 2026

There's something about a new year that feels like a clean slate or a quiet invitation to start again, refocus, and **live with purpose**. Setting goals can be a great way to start and **making a list can get you started**. Whether you want to travel more, focus on your health, or enjoy life with more intention, here are some great list ideas...

- >**Read one new book** every month, this can be for learning like gardening tips or just for fun like a novel!
- >**Move your body** at least 30 minutes a day. Walks count, maybe even try chair yoga or stretch programs.
- >**Drink more water**, be mindful of your diet so you eat well and choose healthy over sweet or processed.
- >**Cook more homemade meals** and try new recipes; invite a friend and share meals over conversation.
- >**Prioritize sleep** and aim for consistent bedtimes.
- >**Track your** spending for 30 days to see where your money goes and prioritize financial health.
- >**Try a DIY** or home decor project just to stir things up.
- >**Declutter** and simplify your living space so what you surround yourself with is what you love!
- >**Reconnect** with old friends or distant family members; be proactive with your friendships.
- >**Travel** to at least one new place, even locally.

Keep in mind that your goals don't have to look like anyone else's. You just need intention that leads to small actions that align with what matters most to you. The start of a new year is a great time **to make changes that improve your life mentally, physically and in spirit.**

## 2026 TOY DRIVE

**Thank You everyone who donated!** The toys, books and gift cards are headed to needy families via the **BPPD Christmas with the Cops program!**



## STUDENT MUSIC COMPETITION

**Wednesday, January 21, 2026**

**1 pm to 3 pm**

Please join us as we host local high school students as they compete for cash awards. We will host four different categories, and we promise it will be inspiring! There is so much talent in our community; come out and support these kids. We are their audience, please plan to join us.

**We ask that you arrive by 12:45 pm** so we can be seated at the start of the competition at 1 pm.

***Cruz Baca, Music Chairman***

## COMMITTEES THAT NEED MEMBERS

We have special projects coming up and we need members to join! Ask the Chairman in charge or **attend the Dean's Seminar on Jan 30<sup>th</sup>** to find out when and where you can help.

**Scholarship Dinner** – We need help with the dinner and service in general. This includes the preparation of food and in getting the community to support these students. Let Cruz Baca or Cuca Rodriguez know if you or your family members can help with this event on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Memorial** – We will eulogize our friends who have left us in the past year. We need a few members to step up to help with the ceremony, eulogy and things like the decor and lunch service. Let Diana Asmundson know if you can assist with the décor, lunch or ceremony scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup>.

## WHAT WE GAIN WHEN ENGAGING IN OUR COMMUNITY – Diana Reyes Williams, Azusa WC

**Building New Skills** - Community engagement helps us grow in leadership, teamwork, and communication. Working with others teaches us how to guide, listen, and collaborate; skills that make us stronger in every part of life. These 'lessons' often lead to successful outcomes, both inside and outside the club.

**Seeing New Perspectives** - When we meet new people, we're exposed to different experiences, cultures, and ideas. This helps us to understand one another better, reminding us that collaboration is more powerful than working alone. As the saying goes, "No man is an island." Together, we can make a bigger impact.

**Embracing Diversity** - Engagement challenges us to welcome different viewpoints. If we only surround ourselves with people who think like us, we risk missing out on fresh ideas or unintentionally excluding others. By inviting diversity into the mix, we create stronger, more inclusive communities.

**Finding Fulfillment** - Community involvement brings joy, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Every act of service enriches our community and our own lives. The challenge to you is to attend a community event, introduce yourself to someone new, and see what you learn. You will broaden your worldview and gain so much in return. When we show up, we grow.

*-taken from "the Key" Nov 29 , edited for space and content.*



## SGVD CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 2026

05 - DVAC Meeting at CWC 11:30 am  
09 - SGVD Birthday Council at EMCC 9:30 am

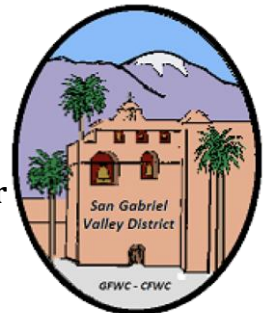
**CWC – Covina Woman's Club**  
**128 S San Jose Ave, Covina, CA 91723**

**EMCC - El Monte Community Center**  
**Grace Black Auditorium**  
**3130 Tyler Avenue, El Monte, CA 91731**

The district meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> is the 'Birthday Council' which will feature the Craft Contests. This is always a special meeting and is lot's of fun. If you would like to attend any district meeting or a special date, please remember we need to RSVP in advance. Lunch is \$25 and we typically carpool to meetings, so it ends up being a great day out with friends! Please call me to RSVP as soon as you know you'd like to attend any meeting or event.

The **SGVD Newsletter** is called "**The KEY**" and is available online at **www.sgvd.org**.

**Vivian Reyes, District Registrar**  
**Phone: 626-827-7457**  
**Email: aginuzv@aol.com**



## FALL COUNCIL UPDATE

In November, Vivian Reyes, Cuca Rodriguez, Cruz Baca and Lia Ritter attended the western themed 'Fall Council'. Cruz and Cuca brought the west with their hats and attire, Yippe Yi Ka-yee!

This meeting was also a fundraiser for the dog rescue organization Save-A-Bow-Wow. The SGVD has a great many projects to improve the quality of our local communities. It was fun to attend and support this cause.

## SPUD BUNCO GAME DAY

**Fri, Jan 30, 2025**  
**11 am to 2 pm**  
**\$15**



Our Spud Bunco features a Baked Potato lunch with toppings galore! Cheese, butter, sour cream, chili beans, mushrooms and gravy, diced ham, green onions, broccoli and salsa. We are playing Bunco after lunch for prizes. This event begins **AFTER** the Dean's Seminar at 10 am. Please join us!

We always appreciate your support; please consider a cash donation! We'll have a **sign up sheet** for food donations at the Jan 16th meeting. Please **RSVP** to Suzanne Perez at 626-862-7182 or perezsue@aol.com.

## JANUARY 16th LUNCH ASSIGNMENTS

Luncheon Chairman ..... Vivian Reyes  
Committee ... Margarita Vargas, Enedina Tamayo  
Décor/Theme ..... Vivian Reyes  
Hostess ..... Margarita Vargas

Committee members, hostess and chairman should all arrive no later than 9:30 am to help coordinate the check in of members and the lunch service. Service will include lunch and dessert.

Be sure to contact the lunch chairman by January 12<sup>th</sup> so she plans enough food.

We plan to **thank our Chairmen** at the January meeting, If you are a Chairman, please join us so we can show you how much **we appreciate YOU!**

We will be announcing our new **Kindness Angel!** This was voted on at the Holiday Party in December...join us as we reveal her! ???

**SET UP** will take place on **Thu, Jan 15<sup>th</sup>** at 9:30 am. The cost of lunch is \$10.

## *Paint & Sip Day for the Arts*

**Friday, February 20, 2026**  
**11 am to 2 pm**

**\$15, lunch only**  
**\$24, lunch with paint & sip**



*Discover your joy or just have a fun day. Painting, laughing, sharing a meal; just a great girl's day out! Invite your family or friends!*

We will be raising funds for the student art program by making some of our own art! You can join us just for lunch or for **lunch and the Paint & Sip**. There will be preprinted canvases, paint, brushes; everything you need to create a canvas and wine. So much fun, don't miss it!

All the supplies needed will be provided; wear clothing appropriate to paint.

**Deadline to RSVP** is February 16<sup>th</sup> to Vivian Reyes at 626-827-7457 or email at [aginuzy@aol.com](mailto:aginuzy@aol.com). If you cannot attend and want to support our high school students, please consider a donation. You can make donations by mailing to the P O Box. **Thank You everyone!**





*Diana Asmundson celebrated as an Honorary Life Member with Cruz Baca, Alice Konopasek and Cuca Rodriguez.*

## SIERRA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE

What a glorious December meeting we had! If you missed it; we were serenaded by the Sierra Vista High School Choral Ensemble, conducted by Ms. Suzanne Brookey. Thanks to your generosity this year, we were able to give the choir a \$300 stipend and gifted Ms. Brookey with a gift card to show our appreciation. She was unfortunately one of many Angelenos who lost a home in the Jan 2025 fires. Picture below is Ms. Brookey hard at work with some of her students who enjoyed juice and cookies after singing. It was a real joy!



## SCHOLARSHIPS UPDATE

Back in May 2025 we awarded Scholarships to twelve students. At right is the list provided of the student's name, award name, college of choice and amount.

We are so grateful to see so many large family contributions. Our giving has such a bigger impact because we can award to so many students and really it is due to all the generosity of our members.

Thank you again to EVERYONE who helps us reach our goals.

### Baldwin Park High School Recipients

**Mary Grace Calma** / Cruz Baca / University of Chicago / \$1,000  
**Wilfredo Calderon Padilla** / Richard Perez / Cal Poly Pomona / \$1,000  
**Jaqueline Ramirez** / Vargas Family / Azusa Pacific University / \$1,000  
**Valeria Zacarias** / Clinton O. Nixon / Mt. San Antonio College / \$1,000  
**Jasmin Sivakumaran** / BPWC / \$1,000

### Sierra Vista High School Recipients

**Montserrat Angel** / BPWC / Cal State Fullerton / \$1,000  
**Atltlaxinolli Omeyokan/Rodriguez Mier**/Mt. San Antonio College/\$1,000  
**Idet Ponce** / BPWC / Cal State Fullerton / \$1,000  
**Maritza Quintana**/Garnier, Damian, Breceda / Cal State Fullerton/\$1,000

### North Park High School Recipients

**Alondra Esparza** / Clinton O. Nixon / Mount San Antonio / \$500  
**Alondra Garcia** / Clinton O. Nixon / Pending / \$500  
**Diana Torres** / Clinton O. Nixon / El Monte Medical Assistant / \$500



## HONOR FOR HERMINIA 'MINNIE' PEREZ

Our friend Minnie who passed earlier this last year was just afforded an honor in the California Senate. A session was ended in Minnie's honor, and this was presented to the Senate by our friend State Senator Susan Rubio.

Minnie was a beloved member of not only this club, but also the community at large. Working tirelessly in our club on committees and taking part in local groups in support of her children; Minnie established herself as a thoughtful, reliable partner in the Baldwin Park community. We miss her! *See left a picture daughter Suzanne took of Minnie at her home in BP.* RIP to our special friend.

## OUR VISIT WITH BETTIE NIXON

Now that Bettie Nixon is in Valencia, we do have to travel a few miles to see her. In the fall, several club members made the short ride together to visit. Bettie treated them to lunch and all had a great time catching up. Bettie can entertain, call ahead to arrange your visit and bring along a friend or two to share the ride. We are planning another visit in early 2026; let us know if you are interested so you can join us. In the picture below see our group just before our lunch where we dined on the patio. Remember that being forgotten is a dread for us all. Let's stay engaged with our friends as long as we can; that will be a gift to you.



Above from left; Vivian Reyes, Suzanne Perez, Lia Ritter, Maria Orozco, Cuca Rodriguez, Bettie Nixon, Barbara Ottem and Alice Knopasek. Bottom right; Bettie enjoying lunch with friends in the patio dining area.



*The Lark Notes Newsletter is intended to inform members of the Baldwin Park Woman's Club about our general activities, it is not intended for public distribution. Do not forward or copy for non-Club Members.*