

Artisan Bread de la Garden Club:

In early Spring the garden club decided we needed some new trash cans but sadly there were not enough funds in the budget since we had just completed a major irrigation project. "Let's do a fund raiser," someone suggested! And so, the dream began.

Gardeners came together and pulled weeds, dug planting beds and filled them with gorgeous plants from our nursery. Pea gravel was laid, and rocks created borders. The gardeners worked tirelessly to beautify our garden area. But this was not work, this was a labor of love joining forces with friends and garden neighbors. Telling stories of the zucchini that got away and laughing. All the while, creating memories and enjoying companionship.

Some garden plots boasted abundant crops of beans, peas and lettuce to say nothing of the strawberries. Then came the tomatoes, what a bounty! Too much rain we cried, not enough rain we grumbled! But through it all the weeds kept growing and we kept pulling them! Gardeners tendered on in their garden plots trimming, weeding and netting our veggies away from the birds and one pesky ground squirrel that always managed to find a way in, feasting upon our fresh fruit and vegetables despite repeated efforts to keep him out!

As summer was drawing to a close, and the herb gardens were filled with fresh basil, oregano and rosemary, the harvest began! The basil found its way into Pesto and the oregano and rosemary were headed to the community kitchen to be added to homemade Artisan Bread! How do you bake 50 loaves of bread in two commercial ovens. You put out a call to the Oceana Community and wonderful volunteers arrive with their Dutch Ovens and roll up their sleeves to help bake bread!

Have you ever taken a recipe and then multiplied it by 50 to put together a shopping list? "So..... if I need 3 cups of flour, multiple that by 50 and give the answer in pounds and ounces. Oh, and throw in a little extra to flour the table when working with the dough!"

Wednesday evening Eileen, Sandee, Mary, Diane, Jeanne and Jayne convened in the kitchen with the goal of preparing the dough. Ellen was behind the scenes

washing bowls and utensils, keeping our flour mess under control. With a little stress and a lot of laughter the dough came together, and we left to let it rise overnight! Did it rise you ask? Oh yes, it was a monster escaping the baking dishes and heading for the floor! 30 minutes later it was cleaned up and the dough tamed. Baking began just as coffee morning was starting in the auditorium! Oh, how we tortured everyone and anyone who entered the building. The smell of fresh bread baking was a great preview of the evening's event.

The facilities team shuttled tables and chairs and set up our event. The bread was taken to the garden, some loaves still warm! The golf cart shuttle crew were busy early on transporting guests to the garden. The traffic monitors were busy directing cars, golf carts and parking!

The Activities committee was busy arranging their spread with a colorful array of fruit and appetizers. The wine and beverages were chilled as the musicians warmed their instruments. The lights came on and our guests arrived. As they strolled the gardens, wandered the farmers market, bid in the silent auction and learned to plant succulents, the party came alive. The musicians, one on clarinet the other on violin, were delightful. Just the perfect sound for a beautiful evening.

An Evening Under the Stars was a success in so many ways. It always brings a smile to my face when I see people pull together for a common goal. When you witness the true meaning of community and see strangers becoming part of something fun. The feeling of camaraderie, the laughter and joy of accomplishment. Thank you to everyone who participated and to all our wonderful guests. Your smiles made all the hard work worth it!

Jayne Geisler, Garden 4B