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**VOICES**

**EDITOR'S NOTE**



## Our new garden writer is a familiar face

BY **FOON RHEE** / [foonr@newsreview.com](mailto:foonr@newsreview.com)

In this week's **Sacramento News & Review**, local gardeners will see a familiar and welcome face—Debbie Arrington, who will be writing weekly in our new home and garden pages.

Gardening has long been a popular hobby in Sacramento, which is blessed with a long growing season. The Farm-to-Fork movement has boosted backyard and community vegetable gardens. And millennials are getting involved as well.

In the weeks ahead, Arrington will write about all of that, cover big home and garden events and much more. This week, her story on page 28 is about how Sacramento really cares about gardening and why local gardening news matters.

Last year, she won first- and second-place national awards from the Garden Writers Association—right after being laid off in May after 20 years at The Sacramento Bee, the final 10 as the home and garden writer.

In June, she started a popular blog—Sacramento Digs Gardening—that is full of gardening tips, weekly checklists and stories, including recent items on the annual outdoor orchids show hosted by the Sacramento Valley Cymbidium Society, a guided tour through the first roses of spring at Sacramento Historic City Cemetery and a cake recipe that uses two whole oranges, peels and all.

"In Sacramento, we are a community of gardeners," Arrington wrote on the blog to announce her new SN&R gig. "Thousands of newspaper readers will see this new Home & Garden section every week. It's another chance to spread our love of gardening as well as share news and information"—"just in time for busy gardening weekends."

Arrington is part of a growing group of former Bee writers who are scattered across the region—at other media organizations, at local and state government agencies, at colleges and universities and elsewhere. I'm among them, having spent nearly nine years on The Bee's editorial board, until last November.

Not to get too deep into The Bee's financial challenges, but like many other newspapers across the country, it's trying to make the transition to a digital future. In recent years, that has meant consolidation with other McClatchy newspapers, plus several rounds of layoffs and buyouts.

While that's a loss for The Bee, it's very good for Sacramento that many writers are sticking around town and continuing to cover the state Capitol and big issues such as health care and criminal justice reform.

It's also very good for SN&R's readers that we're not losing this wealth of talent, knowledge and experience.

Former Bee sports

**SN&R's new garden columnist is among a growing group of Bee alumni who are still writing.**



Debbie Arrington will be writing a new weekly home and garden column.

PHOTO BY MARIA RATINOVA

columnist Ailene Voisin wrote a recent cover feature about the Sacramento Kings' playoff push, though the team fell short, extending the NBA's longest postseason drought. Former Bee music critic Chris Macias profiled local legend Jerry Perry in last month's Music Issue. Sasha Abramsky, a former regular Bee columnist, returned to SN&R to write about local progressives' reaction to special counsel Robert Mueller's report.

And now Arrington joins our team. We're very glad that they're in our pages—and that we can give their writing another home. □