

# Amazing Women of SBWC

*A glimpse of the women who contributed to our club's history...*

*This is a series of interviews chronicling the women of SBWC, a background of their lives and contributions to women's clubs. The SBWC board has chosen several members to interview and these narratives will be posted monthly in the Buena Briefs then archived on the club website.*



**Carolyn Gorka**

Carolyn Gorka was born in Springfield, Illinois on March 24, 1917. One of her earliest memories was learning about the history of President Lincoln which was taught to every child living in Springfield. Her joy of music started in Grade 3

when she started taking piano lessons and continued throughout her lifetime. In 1938 she graduated from the University of Iowa with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and English. Her parent's gift for graduation was to pay for her master's program. She continued her studies and graduated from USC with a Master of Arts in Music and English in 1940. Following graduation she took a job as a teacher for the Compton High School District for a few years. In 1943 Carolyn decided to join the U. S. Navy and become a WAVE after Congress approved a bill allowing women to serve in the military. She attended officer training school at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. During her three years as a naval officer she achieved the rank of lieutenant and said serving in the military was one of the greatest experiences of her life. At the end of her service, she signed a 30-day work extension so men could get jobs first. She had to turn down a job at the Hollywood Bowl because of her extension. As it turns out the job was available to her following her service agreement. She relates this experience as a life lesson to stick to your commitments and everything will work out in the end. In 1949 Carolyn married Lee Gorka at All Saints Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills. They lived in the Los Angeles area until 1969 then moved to Santa Maria where they owned a bookstore. She sold the bookstore after her husband passed away then worked as a medical bookkeeper for a doctor until 80 years of age. In 2001 she moved to Ventura where she lives with her son and daughter in law. She had two children, one grandson and one great-grandchild that arrives in July.

She joined the Minerva Women's Club of Santa Maria in 1980. She gave book reviews and put on two-piano concerts. In 2001 she joined the San Buenaventura Women's Club with Saima Needham as her sponsor. She helped with the Patriotic Moment for several years introducing historical patriots and stories to the membership. She loves to play bridge and still plays with her duplicate bridge partner Marge Towery. Her message to women joining the club today, "Go into the club with a commitment, if you are into it, you are going to give everything you can."

Finally, Carolyn's words of wisdom to the membership after living for almost 100 years, "Have fun with all the things you can still do and don't worry about the things you can't do." Carolyn will celebrate her 100th birthday with family and

friends at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Happy Birthday Carolyn! One of our club centenarians for March 2017.