



December 2023

The Official Paradise Valley Estates Residents' Magazine

Volume 26, Issue 12



*Season's Greetings*

*from the Staff  
of Elysian Fields*

## Christmas Past

Growing up in a small one-bedroom, one-bath house just north of Detroit in the 1940s was a hoot. Eventually, there were five boys, but early on it was me, my younger brother Chuck, and Bob, who was still a baby. I was six and Chuck was three and a half. We shared the upstairs loft, which was unheated and uninsulated. There was about one-inch-thick roofing boards, tar paper weatherproofing, and tar paper shingles between us and Mother Nature. In the summer, we baked; in the winter, we froze our tushes off. The only heat for the whole house was a potbellied cast-iron stove just off the kitchen. On colder mornings, the porcelain honey bucket we had upstairs was a frozen yellow chunk of ice.

We had a steep roof to keep snow from piling up too deep, and that inspired Dad. One mid-December night, Chuck and I heard a loud thud followed by distinct running noises right above our heads. It HAD to be Santa's sleigh and his reindeers' hooves! He must be checking up on us! We called Mom and Dad upstairs, but they didn't hear anything. Then, we all distinctly heard jingle bells. Then they stopped. Then they started up again. Then they stopped. Then they started up again. Santa must be prowling around checking things twice! Chuck and I were afraid to move, and no windows faced the back yard. Dad said he would go down and check things out.

All was quiet. Dad came back and said he didn't see anything but some tracks in the snow in the yard and on the roof. It all happened again several more times before Christmas, and Chuck and I were the best-behaved kids you ever saw that year!

## Cheer

What is cheer? Sometimes it is a drink,  
Something you give to your friend who is on the blink.  
Cheering for your team who makes that touchdown.  
Smiles you send to those to erase their frown.

Cheer is the opposite of fear and sad.  
Smoothing over feelings when one feels bad.  
Beer done in moderation can make one cheery.  
A little "hard stuff" added could make one bleary.

—Joanie Cloughesy

## Remembering...

### Herbert Quilitzsch

Loving father and brother

Arrived: June 2017

Departed: October 14, 2023

### Marie Sosso-Knebel

Loving wife and mother

Arrived: June 2018

Departed: October 18, 2023

### Lt. Colonel John Knebel, USAF (Ret)

A World War II Veteran

Loving husband and father

Arrived: June 2018

Departed: October 20, 2023

### Janet Holderness

Loving wife and mother

Arrived: December 1997

Departed: October 29, 2023

### Margaret Hartnett

Loving wife and mother

Arrived: April 2014

Departed: November 23, 2023



Many years later, the mystery was solved when Dad fessed up. He had gone out back and tossed a big block of ice on the roof over our beds (thud), and it rolled down the roof (reindeer running)

and off the eaves. Then he put a bell collar on Duke, our German shepherd, and turned him loose. Our yard was huge and host to several large trees, and Duke visited one (bells), stopped to sniff and leave some yellow snow (silence), and ran off to the next one (more bells, more yellow snow). Then, when Dad called Duke in, "Santa" retired for the night. What a dirty trick to play on your own kids. It was great!

—Ray Haag

# What's Hanukkah All About?

Hanukkah marks deliverance of the Jews in Palestine from oppression by Syrian Greeks in the second century BCE. The Greeks tried to impose their practices on the Jewish population, prohibiting Torah studies, circumcision, Sabbath observance, and other sacred practices. The decisive insult was conversion of the Temple to a pagan shrine. In 165 BCE, against all odds, a small group of Maccabees led by Judah successfully rebelled against them. The Temple then had to be cleaned and rededicated.

When they were ready to rededicate the Temple menorah (a seven-branched candelabrum), they found that only one jug of oil had escaped contamination by the Greeks, and it was not enough to last. They lit it anyway, and the one jug miraculously lasted the eight days until new, ritually pure oil could be obtained. To commemorate and publicize these miracles,



the sages instituted the festival of Hanukkah. At the heart of the festival is nightly lighting of the menorah, which has nine branches. One holds the shamash (servant) candle used to light the other eight candles.

Hanukkah is primarily a family event and is observed with children in mind. There are songs to sing, games to play, small gifts for the children (small real and chocolate coins), and a prayer to recite when the menorah is lit.

Because the holiday celebrates the miracle of the

oil lasting, traditional foods are served as well: latkes (potato pancakes) served with applesauce and sour cream and jelly donuts fried in oil.

This year, the first night of Hanukkah is December 7. A Hanukkah candle will be lit on each of eight nights at sunset in the Community Center in a window alcove across from reception. All residents and staff are welcome to attend and observe this heartfelt tradition. We will gather at 4:30 p.m.

On December 11 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., a municipal menorah lighting will be conducted at Solano County (Texas and Jefferson Streets). It is open to all, and latkes will be available.

—Beverly Karfiol

## The Night before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas when across the Estates,  
Not a golf cart was rolling . . . and it was quiet at the gates.

Residents were all in their beds . . . and snoring out loud,  
The Community Center was quiet . . . no sign of a crowd.

Visiting grandkids were strewn across floors,  
And double locks were placed on all exit doors.

My wife was in her "jammies," and I was in bed,  
Hoping our grandkids had been adequately fed.

At midnight there came such a mighty clatter,  
I leaped from my bed to see what was the matter.

On my neighbor's roof was a red and white "chopper"  
And a very old man with a bag that was a whopper.

Filled with golf clubs and balls and cases of wine.  
And staring at the labels I knew it was all very fine.

I called in the dark, "Are you really THE Santa Claus?"  
He stared back at me and after a very long pause,

Yelled back to me . . . over the noise of the chopper,  
A few choice words . . . some really not proper.

"Believe!" yelled he over the chopper's noise,  
"I still love to bring . . . even grown-up toys."

—Bill Rawlinson

## Move-Ins since the Last Issue

**Stephen Fowler, Lt. Colonel,  
USAF (Ret) and Cristine Fowler**  
6107 United Circle  
From Lincoln, California

## A Christmas to Be Remembered

It was a time of innocence, joy, and good will. We lived in Castro Valley, California. The Capwell's store was in Hayward on Foothill Boulevard, and every season Santa would reign downstairs when it was called "Capwell's Basement." The basement evolved into a fantasy land with elves, reindeer, toys of every kind, and Santa with his helper.

Because of my husband's working hours and my detesting crowds, we visited Santa on Monday evening at 4 or 5 p.m., usually two weeks before the holiday. Since we were often the only ones there, it was like our own private visit.

The last time we visited Santa and his elves, my older son Phil decided he was too old to sit on Santa's lap and chose not to come with us. But he was considerate of his younger brother, Paul. So, off the three of us went, Mom, Dad, and Paul. As Paul and Santa were visiting, Santa asked where Paul's older brother was. Paul explained that his brother was too old to visit Santa. So Santa told Paul, "You say hello to your brother and tell him to come and see me next time." Paul hopped down from Santa's lap wide-eyed.

We put cookies and milk out for Santa by the fireplace and then went to celebrate Christmas Eve at my brother's home. But as we were piling into the car, my husband suddenly remembered something. Back into the house he went. Paul now was starting to question whether Santa was really a person since his school buddies were telling him it was all a fantasy.

When we returned home, Paul noticed the presents and that the cookies were gone and the milk half drunk. We exclaimed that Santa must have come early since he had so many children to visit. Paul kind of squinted at us and said, "You did this." My husband said, "Oh no, mom would never allow ashes from the chimney all over her carpet." Paul went to bed with sugar plums in his head.

We all enjoyed Santa that year; then, it was time to move on.

—Verna Dow

## 'Tis the Season

'Tis the season to be merry  
After all, it's customary.  
Spread the cheer  
With those who are near,  
But please go easy on the sherry.

—Alice Brill

## Rise and Shine

How you start your day can lift your spirits for the next 24 hours. Consider some of my routines.

When you awaken, go outside to your driveway or patio. Breathe in that cool crisp air. Look around at the grass – whether from sprinklers or morning dew, it shines at you. Look up at the sky and maybe see the last few stars before dawn. Close your eyes and smell the beginning of a new day.

Picking up the newspaper qualifies as my first exercise and stretch. It's followed by picking up my neighbor's paper and putting it on her chair so she doesn't have to bend over. This one just makes me feel good.

Coming back into the house, I make a cup of coffee. It's a smell and taste I enjoy. I sit down and read the newspaper in the proper order. Always *read the comics first!* Then you can tolerate the front-page news. Starting your day with a belly laugh is a bonus. And then required is either the crossword puzzle or sudoku, sometimes both.

I spend a bit of time thinking about the book I am reading and wondering what will come next. There are also "to-dos." Those encompass cleaning up around my abode and deciding what to do about dinner, whether at home or at dining.

My imagination flits about. Ideas for my next creative writing piece, a look at the clouds for shapes of animals, enjoying music and conversation with friends.

I take my dog, President Monroe, for walks and wave to the friendly people.

Do I have problems? Of course, but I can face them when I start my day with an upbeat view.

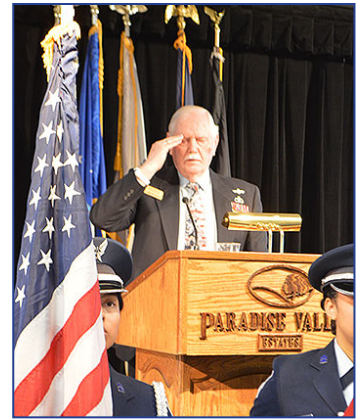
Have a good day. Even laugh at yourself.

—Claudette Brero-Gow

# Veterans Day Gets New Interpretation

Veterans of all stripes – from combat to “unofficial” – were honored during a traditional ceremony in Rawlinson Hall on November 10.

In keeping with PVE’s military heritage, Ray Haag of the Patriotic Committee updated what the word “veteran” means when it is no longer limited to combat survivors. “Thanks to improvements in technology and weaponry in the 1950s and 1960s, you no longer have to be shot at,” Haag said. “Veteran refers to anyone who has taken the oath to defend our country and pledges willingness to serve whenever and wherever needed.” Claiming “nobody trains like the military,” he explained that veterans are flight nurses, cooks on submarines, intelligence officers providing data to Ukraine, and personnel protecting missile silos in Alaska. Haag urged that service members’ spouses, children, and other relatives be considered “unofficial veterans” because of their support and sacrifices during deployments. He added that veterans suffering from Agent Orange, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), homelessness, and



tainted water at Camp Lejeune deserve answers and assistance.

The PVE Chorale sang *We Will Remember* after introduction of PVE’s two former Vietnam prisoners of war, Bill Tschudy, who attended with his wife Janie, and Bob Stirm. Also acknowledged were Mike and Barbara Goble who maintain the

nine military flags atop Memorial Hill 147 along I-80 toward Vacaville that can be seen from PVE. The program also included posting of the colors by the Fairfield High School AFJROTC, Tom DiGiorgio’s narration about the POW/MIA table accessories, and a video, *Remembering the Korean War Veteran*. Bob McCoy performed *Taps*.

Last year’s ceremony paid special tribute to 21 World War II veterans living at PVE. This year, their number was down to 12, a few of whom were in attendance and stood to applause.

—Carol Moore

## EAF Busts through Goal

Thank you to all the residents who contributed to our 2023 Employee Appreciate Fund. As *Elysian Fields* went to press, total contributions stood at \$317,923, exceeding our goal of \$290,000 by \$27,923. We expect the final total to be even larger.

This is a much deserved “Thank You” to the 343 hard-working hourly, non-commissioned team members who make our PVE lives so special. Come see their smiling faces on Friday, December 8, when we distribute their checks in the Large Arts and Crafts Room. We guarantee it will be a day you will remember.

—Your Resident Council

# Elves Line Shelves, Raise \$3,445 for PVE

The Estate Sales Holiday Elves created a beautiful wonderland full of the carols, aromas, and gifts of Christmas at 5809 Constitution to kick off the PVE holiday shopping season. Showcasing gift ideas from fur coats to antique dolls and furniture, they transformed the house into a magical shopping site for the event November 14 through 16 guided by Chief Creative Elf



Marilyn Byington and Chief Organizing Elf Candace Miller.

Doll expert Robin Tickner presided over the “doll room” full of antique dolls, games, puzzles, and toys. Elf Susan Richie directed creation of the “ornament room” in which an entire wall of ornaments was hung on a former wine rack built by a resident.



Decorator elves Arlene George, Isabel Buzko, and Pat Teranishi sorted and arranged festive greenery and wrapped paper and candles. The shining “silver room” was created by elves Betty Rawlinson, Linda Leach, Jackie Mate, and Carole Steiner. Elves Diana Panzer, Mariza Ruiz, and Ruth Wong spent hours creating three large, gorgeously decorated Christmas trees and tables of beautiful gifts.



Elf Loretta Epperson single-handedly delivered a year’s worth of Christmas items to the house, and a mystery donor left a surprise box of decorations on the porch every night. Carrie Reese created three candy cane wreaths to sell, and the team decorated many garlands and wreaths with lights and designer bows.



Publicity and the decorative signs were custom-made by elf Betty Silva, and elves Sarah Teranishi and Darlene Alexander helped with sales and tear down.

Winning tickets in the second annual raffle of miniature decorated trees were chosen by Nancy Bartels. The lucky recipients? Nancy Taylor won the tree decorated by Linda Goetz, Doug Kreitz won the tree decorated by Susan Boak, and I won the tree decorated by Susie Parrish.



As the scent of apple pie and notes of carols faded away, the last shoppers exited the Holiday House, and the tired elves completed their biggest sales event of the year. The event collected \$3,445 for use by the Resident Council to fund committee work throughout PVE. Thank you to all the elves!

—Candace Miller

# Moving Along

Long ago when I started jogging, it took a while before I became even remotely comfortable with it. I was in my mid-30s and had never done anything considered exercise since high school. Even that was minimal, and I wasn't any good at it. I spent what seemed like a lot of money (\$50 was a lot back then) on the most wonderful, cushioned, comfortable shoes, and that helped, but some motivation to keep at it was still necessary.

Setting aside \$1 a week for every mile seemed like a good start. Then one day, I realized I'd covered the distance between home in LA and San Diego, and I set a goal to figuratively run across the United States to Washington, D.C. Being perhaps just a tiny bit obsessive, I logged every mile to track my progress, following Route 66 to St. Louis and then straight for D.C. It took a little under two years!

Definitely worth a reward, right? A real trip to D.C. was not possible so I did the next best thing. I wrote a brief letter to the D.C. Chamber of Commerce explaining what I had done, enclosed \$5 and a

## Americana Trivia

Tons of trivia questions surround December, Christmas, and the holidays. Let's see how well you do with these. No fair using Google.

1. In what decade did NORAD start tracking Santa?
2. What Christian group banned Christmas in Boston?
3. When did we start using Xmas for Christmas?
4. What popular holiday song was written as a plea for peace during the Cuban missile crisis?
5. What state holds the record for the biggest snowman?
6. What is the most popular Christmas dinner in Japan?

—Your Patriotic Committee

Answers on page 16

### Save These December Dates

- 01 | Tree Lighting, Rawlinson Hall, 3:30 p.m.
- 02 | First Saturday, Club, 5 p.m.
- 05 | Solano Winds Concert, Rawlinson Hall, 7:30 p.m.
- 07 | Hanukkah Begins  
| Pearl Harbor Day  
| Angie Major Dance Class, Group Exercise Room, 12:30 p.m.
- 08 | Holiday Gala, Rawlinson Hall / Main Dining Room, 5 p.m.
- 09 | Army-Navy Game, Rawlinson Hall, 11 a.m.
- 11 | Gardener's Lottery  
| CARF Accreditation (Dec 11–13)
- 13 | History, "Chinese in Napa Valley," John McCormick, Learning Center.
- 14 | Chorale Concert, Rawlinson Hall, 3 p.m.
- 15 | Hanukkah Ends  
| Chorale Concert, Rawlinson Hall, 6 p.m.
- 21 | MOAA Luncheon, Rawlinson Hall, 11 a.m.
- 25 | Christmas
- 31 | New Year's Eve

self-addressed envelope with plenty of postage, and asked them to send me some postcards of D.C. They did! And even enclosed a lovely note of congratulations.

Buoyed by that, I did the same for the East Coast, gathering postcards from big cities along the way as far as Buffalo, which sent cards showing snow from one of their truly dreadful winters. After Buffalo, it was time to head west. Cleveland, Chicago, Notre Dame in Indiana, Minneapolis, back to San Francisco, and finally home. It was a great trip, and I had invested in a treadmill so I could run no matter the weather and without getting hit by a semi when I wasn't paying attention. All the postcards I amassed along the way went into a large photo album . . . every now and then, I pulled it out and remembered what fun it was to collect them. The album is gone now, but the memories stay with me.

The \$1 per mile? I didn't adhere to that as faithfully as I might have but it still added up. Some of it went for new running shoes every few hundred miles (prices kept going up, of course), and the rest went into the "real trip to D.C." fund.

These days, I've slowed down to a fast walk, but I still log every mile, even without a destination.

—Alice Brill

# Día de los Muertos Pays Tribute to Ancestors

*Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) is a vibrant and colorful celebration conducted in Meso-American cultures such as the Olmecs for more than 3,000 years. The celebration in Latin American countries usually runs from October 31 to November 2.

Though it may seem similar to Halloween, Day of the Dead is a unique, significant tradition connected to All Saints' Day, which is celebrated on November 1 and is also known as All Hallows' Day, a Christian holiday that honors all saints and martyrs. It is a time for believers to



remember and pay tribute to those who have passed away and attained sainthood.

During *Día de los Muertos*, families create altars called *ofrendas* in their homes and at the grave sites of their loved ones. The altars are adorned with photographs of the honored family members and their favorite foods, drinks, and personal belongings. Marigold flowers are used for decorations as their vibrant color and strong scent are believed to guide the spirits back to their families.

At PVE, we extended this celebration, starting on October 30

when an offering table was set up in the Java Zone of the Fitness Center, prompting plenty of memories and conversations. For the closing celebration on November 13 in Rawlinson Hall, dancers from Napa and Solano County, Quetzalli Ballet Folklórico, performed. They wore beautiful colorful dresses, and their faces were painted to resemble *calavera*, the skulls made of molded sugar that symbolize loved ones.

Folks dances are a form of storytelling done with the body and passed down for generations. During *Día de los Muertos*, dancing is an offering to those who have passed and is another way to bring joy and celebration to the spirits who visit us at the altar. From the tap of our feet to the beat of our hearts, dancing fills the world with love.

*Día de los Muertos* is not a somber occasion. It is a joyous celebration of life and death. Our observance ended when we gathered at the Community Center lobby for *pan dulce* (sweet bread) and hot chocolate.

—Christina Gamble

## Photo of the Month



This photograph was taken inside the Westfield Mall on Market Street in San Francisco. The building once was the Emporium Department Store and is across from the Powell Street BART station and the cable car turnaround.

Photo by Don Corbett.



## Golf News

Twenty-five Moaners and Groaners (M&Gs) hit the links to celebrate the first Walt McDaniel Memorial Golf Tournament in November. Tee prizes, including a “mulligan” card, were distributed to all participants. Since each player got a mulligan card, you can expect some super low scores (see results below). For non-golfers, mulligans are free second shots when golfers hit shots they’d rather forget. The tournament winners are:

- **1st Place (71):** Rick Cole, Bob McCoy, Bob Irwin, and Johnathon Irwin
- **2nd Place (72):** Gene Noble, Don Campbell, and Kimmie McCann
- **3rd Place (74):** Ginny Caspersen, Andy Caspersen, and Verna Dow
- **4th Place (75):** Chris Moore, Bryce Moore, and Ed Vacin
- **Low putts (21):** Harriet Orlove, Alice Burggrabe, Sue Vukasin, and Bud Ross.

The low putters all pulled white balls out of the purple bag so no wine prizes, but Bob McCoy saved the day by donating wine for each table.

Kimmie McCann opened the follow-on dinner by greeting 55 golfers, guests, and friends of Walt. The microphone was passed around so people could share their stories about him.

Kimmie announced that the men’s and women’s trophies for good sportsmanship on and off the course will now be awarded annually. A new women’s trophy will be called the Dottie Shelley Memorial Trophy owing to her significant past contributions to the M&Gs. Its first recipient was Kimmie McCann for her exceptional leadership before, during, and after Walt handed her the gavel. The last holder of the women’s trophy, Estelle Holway, was unable to attend the dinner so Bud Ross made the presentation for her.

The 2023 Walt McDaniel Memorial Trophy went to Norbert Luke for his extraordinary assistance to the McDaniel family before and after Walt’s passing. Past holder of the trophy, Dick Crocker, made the presentation.

Five beautiful golf-themed gift baskets were auctioned off, raising \$720 that will be donated to the Scholarship Fund in memory of Walt.

## Photo of the Month



I took this photograph in Vacaville on Candy Cane Lane two years ago.

Photo by Dick Lubman.

Pat Williams did a great job of creating the lovely baskets. Thank you, Pat.

Kimmie laid out a curved course for a putting contest before dinner. The winner, Bryce Moore, Chris’ son, who made his ball curve around the bend, was in the hole in two strokes. Bob Irwin was runner up with three. We note that some took eight or nine to make it to the hole.

The PVE monthly putting tournament took place on a chilly overcast day, but the putters went at it hot and heavy. Norbert Luke reported that, after many eliminations, Kimmie McCann and Dick Crocker outlasted Chris Moore and Sue Vukasin, respectively, to advance to the final round. Dick, who had never won a putting tournament, was tied with Kimmie, a putting champion many times over, after eight holes. Someone yelled out that Dick was late for his lunch date so quickly he sank a one-putt to become a putting champion for the first time. Congratulations, Dick!

—Estelle Holway

## Appreciation

There is still beauty in the world around us.  
In the songs of the birds we hear and see,  
In the changing colors on the trees,  
In the smiles we encounter and the friendships we make,  
And in the joy on the faces of small children as they play  
Especially at this time, let us take a moment to appreciate it all.

—Alice Brill

## Boxing in the 1950s

Though I whetted my appetite for boxing in the late 1940s, it was in the 1950s that I really got the fever. Before television, radio was the medium used to follow boxing, which became a major sport in the 1950s, competing with baseball as the most popular form of sport entertainment. I remember lying in bed listening to championship fights on Friday nights. To figure out which boxer was winning, I counted the punches made by each contender. According to the announcer, some punches were more effective than others. That's when I put a + sign next to the contender's name (and sometimes went through the motions as if I were in the ring).

When television arrived, Friday night boxing became very popular. I would peek through a window at the local bar and watch matches on the small black and white TV above the bar. There were many popular championship matches. The Gillette Cavalcade of Sports allowed fans to watch our heroes for free. The 1950s gave us many exciting matches with Rocky Marciano, Jersey Joe Walcott, Sugar Ray Robinson, Ezzard Charles, Willie Pep, and Archie Moore. Those are just a few.

Who was my favorite? In the heavyweight division, Rocky Marciano, of course. Why? Probably because he was of Italian descent. Most fans cheered for their favorites the same way. The reigns of Joe Louis at heavyweight and Sugar Ray Robinson at welterweight may have helped improve the racial standing of African Americans in the United States while also giving

## The Christmas Letters

The Christmas letters come  
The drummer boy bangs his drum.  
They both annoy  
With forced joy.  
It's enough to make me turn to rum.

—Alice Brill

that growing community strong sources of hope, pride, and accomplishment. Fans of every race and nationality had to appreciate Louis and Robinson as the best of the best, and the two ruled the sport for much of the decade. That trend would continue into the 1960s and 1970s as boxing continued to adapt to the television landscape, changing racial compositions and cultural tones in the sport throughout the country and the world.

I was not aware of the Mob's involvement in boxing in the late 1940s. They controlled entire promotional outfits, sanctioning bodies, titles, arenas, television fights, and more. Middleweight Rocky Graziano had his license suspended in 1947 for bribery, and Jake LaMotta was famously shown as under the thumb of the Mob in the movie *Raging Bull*.

Boxing went on to make major changes that continue to resonate today. Muhammad Ali drew great attention with his glib remarks during his reign as heavyweight champ in the 1980s, and Hollywood made a series of movies featuring Sylvester Stallone's fictitious Rocky, mostly filmed in South Philadelphia.

In my opinion, the current kick boxing scene has morphed into a no-holds-barred spectacle of brute force, and I no longer have any interest in the sport. Why? Maybe because it seems to have lost the sense of clean "hand to hand" boxing so popular in the 1950s.

—Tom DiGiorgio

## Ring of Fire

Sitting here, wringing my hands about an impossible task,  
How can I ever do that, how can they even ask?  
I cower at the thought of being so very brave  
How to begin, how will I sound, how will I behave?

It is always that ring of fire we must jump through to get to the other side  
But now, I cannot believe I did it, a forward step in confidence I now abide.  
Nothing worthwhile is ever easy, I am finding out  
So, thank God, hold on; that is what life is all about.

—Joanie Cloughesy

# Photographers Needed

So, you have a phone with a camera and you like to take pictures! Every one of us that has a smart phone is a photographer. When you are “out and about,” do you enjoy taking pictures of flowers, scenery, and people in action? Do you enjoy composing pictures?

If so, you are just the person we are looking for to help take pictures for **POM**, our Photo of the Month. Right now, 24 people provide the editors of *Elysian Fields* with the photos presented each month. We are always looking for more contributors and would welcome an additional five to ten people.

You do **not** need to be an expert photographer. We select a topic on the first of each month, and you have ten days to submit your entry. The photographs are then emailed to the POM members, who vote for their choice of the best one, and that photograph becomes Picture of the Month in the next issue of *Elysian Fields*.

If this motivates your inner Ansel Adams (some of his photographs were composed in the spur of the moment), email Dick Lubman at [LubmanRG@sbcglobal.net](mailto:LubmanRG@sbcglobal.net).

—Dick Lubman

## A Halloween-Boo

Do you remember way back when you were a kid on Halloween? My mom was not a seamstress and there were no store-bought costumes so I went as a ghost in a sheet or wore one of mom’s hats after smearing lipstick all over my face. The boys were hobos because they already had holes in the knees of their pants.

Stage two was as a parent. I walked around the neighborhood with my children. I didn’t go to the door with the kids so they could scare and surprise the residents with their costumes. Parents didn’t dress up normally. I recall one year when we parents rang the doorbell after the kids collected their candy. We yelled *Trick or Treat!* while holding empty wine glasses. We were rather goofy by the end of the evening.

Now, being an “older person” and not caring what others think of me, I can just be my silly self. At PVE’s recent Halloween buffet, the variety of costumes ranged from outrageous to sublime. Laughter from all the diners made a very happy evening.

Let’s come up with new ideas to unleash our silliness. Perhaps a silly hat event or a bring-a-special-treat event. Let’s come up with new ideas to allow our silliness. I love smiles.

—Claudette Brero-Gow



## Dining Services

Good Grief, Charlie Brown! It's the holidays again.

Can't you remember the rush of the season as you organized those family holiday feasts, hosted festive parties for friends, and just prayed that your guests would remember to tell you they were coming and how many guests they bring?

Well, that is exactly what our PVE Dining Services staff will be feeling in the coming weeks. So let's try and make everyone's holidays cheerful and bright by saving your Dining Services 2023 Holiday Schedule information sheet, making your reservations as early as possible, and not making last-minute changes if at all possible.

Let's face it. Getting dinner on the table for a party of 500 or so is hard enough without a flurry of last-minute special requests. The secret? To enjoy the season in our status as very special guests, along with remembering to try to make the tasks of our hosts as pleasant as possible.

And while we are thinking about being thankful and remembering the efforts of others to make life more pleasant and rewarding, the Dining Services Committee expresses our appreciation for the contributions of our two retiring members, Sally Gripman and Kimmie McCann. As committee chair and secretary, respectively, Sally and Kimmie helped to ensure that our residents' dining experiences were as enjoyable as possible.

The past three years provided them with numerous challenges given the ever-changing state of COVID and resulting changes in dining practices and rules, opening of two new dining venues and all the ensuing issues around transportation, and our normal human frustration when having to adapt to change. So thanks to you both, Sally and Kimmie, for all your efforts on behalf of your fellow residents.

Because giving thanks is always in season, please consider congratulating our October Servers of the Month, Dylan Carroll-Brown and Jayna Stamatelaky, when you see them in the Dining Room. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful team of servers, and nothing feels better than knowing that your work has been noticed and is appreciated.

—Jan Heise

## The Gala Is Coming, Let's Celebrate

Long-term and new residents will soon be enjoying PVE's annual Holiday Gala. It's an opportunity for residents to break out their "festive" clothes and gather to

enjoy another of Team Kalbaugh's / Quinn's truly special dining events. A gentle warning to readers: Do not fill up with food before showing up at the Gala.

Upon arriving at the Community Center on December 8, we'll be greeted by sharply dressed members of the wait staff as they offer us champagne and canapés. David Kalbaugh's ice sculpture will be presented in the Cafe area along with refill stations for your drinks. After some cheerful greetings, and perhaps some hand wringing, we'll go to the Main Dining Room or Rawlinson Hall for an elegant dinner (or lunch).

As PVE has grown, we've seen the Gala grow as well. We are now filling two dining venues.



As in past years, recollections tend to pour out as we review highlights and challenges with each other. Residents will enjoy their meals with musical accompaniment and then head

to Rawlinson Hall for a little dancing or more sharing of memories, plans and goals for 2024.

Past experience assures us that there will be some heavy sleeping later in the night as we recall enjoying seeing so many of our friends again and treating ourselves to a true dining delight.

—Ken Lyon

## Termites Made Wooden Toys

Here's some Termite history. In 2012, the Termites constructed wooden toys for needy children who lived in our area. The leader of the annual toy-making venture was Steve Shanahan. He developed the plans for the toys and then cut the dies for each piece. Bob McCoy (Head Termite at the time) worked on the wheels and trucks. In 2012, they added several new designs.

The cars, trucks, tractors, planes, and helicopters were painted by many residents, including Charlotte Gearhart, Paul and Carol Bergerot, Elizabeth Carlisle, Bobbi Neilson, Fred Montanye, Bette Peterson, and Marianne Smith. As you can see from the pictures, the painters were very creative in finishing the toys with bright colors and designs. In the days of plastic toys, wooden toys bring back memories of Christmases past for all of us.

The toys were presented to Toys for Needy Children, a program run by the Vacaville Christmas Wish organization, which shared them with Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army. The toys were well received by local children, many of whom would not have been blessed

with any type of gift for Christmas otherwise.

A big shout out to the Termites and other residents who helped make Christmas in 2012 so special.

—Bruce Bartels



## Marines Celebrate 248<sup>th</sup> Birthday

A small group of Marines celebrated the 248th birthday of the Corps on Saturday, November 11, with a luncheon in the Dining Room. On November 10, 1775, the Marine Corps was founded at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. Over the decades, the celebrations have grown and are held wherever two or more Marines gather.

PVE has seven Marines, five Marine spouses, three Marine widows, and an honorary Marine, Doss Miller, who was a Navy medic with the Marines in Vietnam.

The program was introduced by Dave Eller. The guest speaker was Major Kim Nelson, who served as a helicopter pilot during Desert Storm.

The original message to the Marines on its birthday in 1921 from Major General John A. Lejeune was read by Don Gardner, and Art Mark read the message from the current Commandant.

Next, the cake-cutting followed tradition in giving the first piece to the oldest Marine, Frank Strong, and the second piece to the youngest Marine, Kim Nelson. Strong mentioned that this was his 72nd Marine Corps birthday celebration.

Toasts were made by Jim Ritchie, Dave Eller, and Mark Caspersen.

Though the group this year was small, the pride of the Marines was visible in all who served. There is no former or ex-Marine. Once a Marine, always a Marine. *Semper Fi!*

—Ginny Caspersen

# The Libraries of PVE

Searching for banned books? When you consider that many, perhaps most, books have been banned somewhere or other at one time or another, it won't be hard to find one in the multiple libraries of PVE. Multiple libraries? Yes! Our main library is located in the Community Center, and it holds our largest collection of books and periodicals.

To encourage greater access to books, our library team of residents now monitors and stocks smaller libraries in the 6000-area mail room, Quail Creek's lobby and two upper floors, on a traveling cart, and in the Activity Rooms at Laurel Creek and Willow Creek. Large-print books are kept primarily at Quail Creek with some in the Community Center. Deer Creek has a small assortment of audio and regular books in its Snoezelen Room, a controlled multi-sensory environment.

There are more than 6,000 books available to residents throughout PVE. The stock of books across the campus is constantly evolving as some transition to thrift shops due to wear and tear and to duplication and others come in as new donations. Such donations are welcome, but your understanding is requested. Please pace your

donations so they can be adequately reviewed and stocked as appropriate. We cannot handle boxes full of books left at the Community Center.

Currently, the only location that requires books to be signed out is the Community Center Library for hard-bound books. Fortunately, residents have been quite conscientiously returning books to the

library location at which they found them per our volunteer "librarian," Nancy Wisner.

At the close of the year, Sue Conklin will become our new librarian. She will be supported by a team of 10 resident library assistants.

Our volunteers, who understand both the Dewey Decimal System and the Library of Congress System, ask that books be returned to the libraries from which they came. The volunteers will shelve the returned books so they can record the books' use and monitor their condition.

I have only addressed our own PVE libraries. We are fortunate to have excellent modern public libraries in Fairfield and Vacaville. Additionally,

those who have access to Travis AFB can visit its library and check out books there. And yes, it is 2023, and a plethora of books are available to download or buy, some free, some with a charge.

Adventures in reading await us in all of the locations mentioned.

Not into adventures? How about honing your repertoire of facts you carry with you, learning something new, or pursuing an adventure theme still out there waiting to be enjoyed?

—Ken Lyon



## Christmas 2023

I invited both my nephew and my niece!  
Both declined, saying "We don't like geese!"  
I said, "No worry, they only patrol,  
They are our form of road control!"  
So, we never have to call the local police.

—Bill Rawlinson

# Lunch Speaker Revisits Golden Era of Shopping

Childhood memories flowed for many attending PVE's quarterly Ladies Luncheon as author Anne Evers Hitz discussed her book, *Lost Department Stores of San Francisco*. Its chapters recount the rise and fall of six grand stores, all founded in San Francisco shortly after the Gold Rush in 1849, thrived in the 1950s, and disappeared in the 1990s. These retail meccas that epitomized customer service were the White House, City of Paris, Gump's, I. Magnin, J. Magnin, and the Emporium.



- The stores had their own musicians and bandstands, tea rooms, seamstress services, and even “wolves’ dens” where men could wait while their wives shopped.

Though such personalized salesmanship has been replaced by suburban malls, online shopping, and discount

stores, Hitz remains optimistic that downtown San Francisco can be revived much like New York City after its I♥NY campaign in 1977.

Topping the memories shared were accounts of holidays at the stores with Santa parades, window display competitions, and Christmas trees inside that rose three or four stories. My own recollection is of patiently waiting at age eight for Mother to purchase a Chinese vase at Gump's, where I knew not to touch the expensive merchandise. My reward for good behavior? A slice of famous coffee crunch cake at Blum's.

Ali Corbett was the chief organizer of this event with support from the Wellness Committee and Convention Services. Dining Services provided the Southwestern salad lunch and chocolate cake.

—Carol Moore

Several in the audience brought treasured shopping bags bearing logos of these stores, which Hitz said were all started by immigrant entrepreneurs who had high standards for style, quality, and design. Hitz also teased that Gump's did a booming business selling decorative mirrors to wealthy residents for homes and to saloon keepers, who needed constant replacements. Such was life in the cosmopolitan metropolis on the frontier's edge.

Among the historical anecdotes Hitz shared:

- The White House donated clothing and furniture to San Francisco residents and turned its delivery trucks into ambulances after the 1906 earthquake.
- Isaac Magnin wanted the front of his store to be sheer white marble without window ledges so pigeons would not have a place to perch.

## GARDENERS

First come, first served. Contact Head Gardener Ed Vacin. Beds are assigned for one year, January through December.

A lottery will be held December 11 to select 15 PVE residents to obtain beds. The first 12 beds will be prioritized for apartment dwellers. The other three will be assigned to the remaining lottery winners as the beds are assembled.

If you're interested in participating in the lottery, please send an email by Wednesday, December 6, to

[edwardvacin@gmail.com](mailto:edwardvacin@gmail.com)

*Subject: Community Garden Raised Beds*



# Precipitation at PVE

Where's the rain? Well, we've had a bit of rain though nothing like last year. However, it looks like it could be another good year for rain as forecasters anticipate a strong El Niño this year. The waters in the South Pacific are unusually warm, which influences weather across the United States. In California, that means the possibility of above-average rainfall while the Southeast will likely be dry and the Northeast will likely be warm. We shall see.

At this point, we have had 1.8 inches of rain. Last year, we had received 2.05 inches at this time. My friend AI tells me that "According to *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, California is expected to experience a *cold and wet winter* with above-normal mountain snow. The stormiest and wettest periods are predicted to occur in early and late January, early to mid-February, and mid-March. Please note that the Almanac's predictions are made up to 18 months in advance and are traditionally 80% accurate. Stay warm and dry this winter!"

So, where do the reservoirs that serve PVE stand at this point? Lake Shasta is 68.2% full (45.2% last year), Lake Oroville is 66.3% full (47.2% last year),



and Lake Berryessa is 76.3% full (65.6% last year). You can see what a good wet winter means to us in California.

**Weather Fact of the Month:** Mars is the fourth planet from the sun. Because it is farther from the sun than the Earth, it receives less sunlight, but that doesn't mean the Earth is always warmer. On Mars, surface temperatures reach as high as 20°C at the equator and as low as -153°C at the north and south poles. So it depends entirely on where on Mars you are since 20°C (68° F) is quite cozy.

—The Rain Guys

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## Americana Trivia Answers

to questions on page 7

1. The 1950s. Actually, December 1955 and every year since.
2. The Puritans in 1659–1681. You remember that, don't you?
3. In the 16th century. X comes from the Greek letter chi, which looks like an X.
4. *Do You Hear What I Hear?*
5. Maine. A snowwoman named Olympia in 2008 at 122 feet, 1 inch tall.
6. KFC! Go figure.