

Elysian Fields



January 2024

The Official Paradise Valley Estates Residents' Magazine

Volume 27, Issue 1

Happy New Year!



Happy New Year!

A Time for Resolutions

Well, it's the beginning of a New Year and that means it's time for the annual "New Year's Resolutions." I asked myself why we try things like this that most of us don't complete. My answer is simple—we are lazy, shiftless, good-for-nothings and cannot complete even the simplest resolution. I can hear you yelling already. You say, "I'm not lazy or shiftless or a good-for-nothing." Maybe you're right. Maybe there's more to it than that. I do know that most people who make resolutions each year fail to complete the tasks—lose weight, get fit, improve finances, learn to play the piano, play pickleball, take a trip to Antarctica. So what is the real reason?

First of all, we fail to **set realistic goals**. We try to do too much too soon. Take it easy. Pick one or at most two things you want to accomplish. Okay, you say, I got my goals set for 2024. I understand them and there is a way to **measure how I'm doing**.

Next, you need to **believe that you can complete your new goals**. Many of us are finished before we start because we don't believe we can do it. This approach will most likely take a change in the way you do things to complete resolutions. Doing things the same way will result in the same outcomes. You need to change something to get a different outcome—and change is hard.

When you fail (and you will fail along the way), you need to **get back on track quickly** and keep going. And you should select some milestones to honor along the path to success. When you reach a milestone, have a celebration. **Celebrate your success** and keep on going.

Move-Ins since the Last Issue

Lawrence and Debra Epner
5806 Constitution Avenue
From Rio Vista, California

William "Bill" Hesley
6103 United Circle
From Pittsburg, California

Remembering...

Margaret Hartnett

Loving wife and mother

Arrived: April 2014

Departed: November 23, 2023

Betty Wallerstein

Loving wife and mother

Arrived: September 2023

Departed: November 25, 2023



So you have the basics of completing your New Year's resolutions. Now, I'm going to make it easy on you. I'm going to suggest a list of resolutions from which you can choose one or two.

1. Call old friends or colleagues and wish them a *Happy New Year*.
2. Visit one of your neighbors in Laurel Creek Health Center.
3. Take your spouse or a good friend to lunch to celebrate the holidays.
4. Start a monthly donation (billed to your account) to the Benevolence Fund or the Scholarship Fund.
5. Join a Resident Council committee.
6. Thank a few staff members for all the good work they do to make your life at PVE better.
7. Think of one more yourself.

There, wasn't that easy? You have made a resolution or two that you can keep. You are now one of the 8% nationally who will complete their resolutions. And you are not lazy, shiftless, and a good-for-nothing. Happy New Year!

—Bruce Bartels

Chorale Carolers Take a Western Turn

If the *Yellow Rose of Texas* does not seem like a tree decoration, the PVE Chorale may have persuaded you otherwise during their December 14 concert titled *A Cowboy Christmas*. After all, John Denver's *You Fill Up My Senses* certainly applies to the holiday atmosphere, and *Humble and Kind* by Tim McGraw is the spirit we most need during this season and in the new year. Announcer Jan Heise explained that the mix of "Hee haw" and "Ho-ho-ho" was actually a hybrid of two concerts the singers had been preparing with accompanist Nicholas Martens.

The Chorale continued with an Old West medley of *Chisholm Trail*, *Red River Valley*, and *Home on the Range*, which featured a solo by Ellen Fisher. Listeners were then asked to think of movie scenes from simpler times as director Carla Grokenberger turned the focus to a Hollywood Christmas. The singers waved large nutcrackers and candy canes as they performed *We Need a Little Christmas*, *Pine Cones and Holly Berries*, *White Christmas*, and *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas*. For *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, a mystery dancer sashayed down the aisle dressed as the fairy in a leotard and tutu with glittery wings and wand.

One of the closing numbers was *Do You Hear What I Hear*. Written in 1962 as a hymn for peace during the Cuban missile crisis, it is even more relevant today.

The Chorale voices are sopranos Pat Benacquista, Joan Cloughesy, Doris Eastman, Sandy Esposito, Reynatta Hoberecht, Linda Leach, Nancy Pastori, Phyllis Riley, Barbara Rockwell,



Romy Sabelhaus, Marie Smith, Lyn Sorrelle, Sanae Vancil, Catherine Van Eyck, and Ruth Wong and altos Ann Bonar, Lenie Brown, Ellen Fisher, Caroline Keller, Bea Olsen, Mary Robinson, Sueva Terry, and Grace Tsay. The tenors are Dick Feaster, Allan Fisher, Kimmie McCann, David Rausch, Tim Tomko, Ming Tsay, and Ann Waldman. The basses are Doug Fisher, Jerry Hedrick, Jerry Mate, Richard Murray, Tad Riley, and Walt Suder.

—Carol Moore



A New Year

A chance to be better, to do better,
Maybe be more understanding,
More patient,
A better listener.
And who knows,
Maybe I'll finally lose a few pounds.

—Alice Brill

Cochlear Implantation – Part 1

Today, my journey begins with defining words to express my intentions. Do I journal, keep a diary, document, or chronicle? Journaling seems to be what I'll do since I might not have daily entries. Keeping a diary is a daily event. Documentation is more related to providing documents for proof, and chronicling is related to factual written accounts of important or historical events without personal thoughts, feelings, or insights. So I will keep a journal of my cochlear implantation in 2023.

But first let me review. I remember my grandmother helping me with my spelling in grammar school, phonetically sounding out words. I could not distinguish the differences in the sounds she was expressing. I remember her looking at me with an expression of "poor thing, she doesn't get it." At that time, children's hearing was not tested, and I was able to manage without realizing how much I was missing. My spelling was atrocious, and my pronunciation was always somewhat off. I now attribute this to not hearing well.

Time went on. I grew up, married, had a family. It wasn't until I returned to college that I realized I was not hearing all that I should. In a science class in which sounds were being analyzed, I wasn't hearing all the sounds that others were hearing. Then, while on vacation, we bought some nice small chimes. Returning home, I mentioned how I liked the look of the chimes but it was too bad they didn't emit sounds. My family was very surprised since they were enjoying the chimes.

Also, I was having unusual conversations. Someone would ask "How is your cat?" and I would speak of my hat. So I scheduled a hearing test and, at the age of 40, began wearing hearing aids.

Years went by. Each time a new technology came on the market, I updated my hearing aids. Then, an audiogram determined that the hearing in my left ear had declined dramatically. An MRI revealed an acoustic neuroma that required surgery, and afterward, the damaged acoustic nerve caused deafness in my left ear. My right ear had 50% word clarity but then dropped to 40%.

What does this sound like? I was talking with a friend and I could not understand one of the words even with my hearing aid and microphone. I kept asking my friend to repeat the word but to no avail. Finally, I said and wrote "this is what I am hearing: "pre faure." My friend was saying "pleasure." Another audiogram.

At that point, I could clearly distinguish only 20% of the words and would be deaf in a short period of time. Without question, a cochlear implant was necessary. The journey begins.

—Verna Dow

Willow Creek Welcomes 2024

Welcome to 2024! The new year means new actions for our Willow Creek residents. For 2024, we will highlight new programs at Willow Creek, such as the men's group, Getting to Know You events, hallway bowling, monthly baking activities, and group walks. Resident-run programs will encourage participation.

We will also increase the number of group physical and social activities as part of our New Year's Resolutions. Exercises such as chair yoga, mindful movement, walking, and gentle exercise can help control weight, build muscles and bones, and improve balance, posture, and mood. Physical fitness at Willow Creek will be available at least five times a week.

We are also going to name Residents of the Month and Week. Willow Creek residents will vote for nominated residents based on various prompts. For example, they may be asked to vote for the funniest resident or the silliest resident. The person who receives the most votes "wins" and will be celebrated and presented in the halls to wave to their fans. They also may receive additional prizes depending on their wishes since we always practice person-centered care.

Lastly, we thank you all for supporting our Willow Creek residents as we say goodbye to a successful 2023 and hello to new beginnings in 2024. Happy New Year!

—Adrian Quinones

Solano Winds Unwrap Musical Treasures

What a gift of music! On December 5 in Rawlinson Hall, the Solano Winds performed three Christmas medleys of 20 classic holiday tunes—a whirlwind mash-up of *Dreidel Song* and *Hava Nagila*, W.C. Handy’s signature *St. Louis Blues March*, and *Elegy for a Young*



American written in 1964 by Ronald Lo Presti as a tribute to President John F. Kennedy. Various instrumental sections evoked the stages of grief, and concluding chimes provided a sense of peace.

Before musical director Bill Doherty conducted *Symphony on Themes of John Philip Sousa*, the band’s Brass Quintet—Heather Handa, Ray Cabral, Kim Rodriguez, Kenneth Anderson, and Doherty—played Sousa’s *Fairest of the Fair*.

After hearing *Russian Christmas Music* composed by Alfred Reed in 1944 for a concert in Denver, Colorado, to improve Soviet-American relations (according to narrator Patty Cole), it was hard to believe he composed it in just 16 days.

The pizzazz and sparkle of *Christmas on Broadway* arranged by John Higgins really did make the season bright. Presentation of this piece was sponsored by the PVE Resident Council with a grant in memory of Liz Wildberger, who was the

long-time “voice of Solano Winds.” For seven minutes, listeners could imagine the stage scenery as they heard *God Bless Us Everyone*, *It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas*, *March of the Toys*, *My Favorite Things*, *Toyland*, and *We Need a Little Christmas*.



A flourish by trombonists Adrian Coulson, David Flores-Workman, Glen Lienhart, and Todd Wood finished Leroy Anderson’s *A Christmas Festival*.

The concert ended with the traditional *White Christmas* sing-along.

As a Christmas surprise, the Solano Winds Flute Ensemble entertained residents with a dinner concert on December 16. A special treat during the holiday season.

—Carol Moore

Greetings from Laurel Creek

In January, residents at Laurel Creek will participate in various activities, including watching travel videos and movies, playing Bingo, and attending musical entertainment and exercise and arts and crafts activities. Everyone likes Poetry with Gladys. We will also celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

As always, there will be one-on-one activities of resident’s choice, such as FaceTime and Zoom calls with friends and family.

All our residents and many of their families enjoyed the December Holiday Gala. We also had beautiful Christmas decorations at Laurel Creek, including wooden gingerbread houses and a holiday tea party.

Wishing you all a safe and wonderful “Happy 2024!”

—Sharon Johnson

SOLANO WINDS
COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND
presents
HOLIDAY FAVORITES
December 5, 2023 - 7:30 PM
Rawlinson Hall, Paradise Valley Estates
SPONSORED BY
Paradise Valley Estates Resident Council

Golf News

Editor's Note: The December Moaners and Groaners Golf Tournament was rained out, but the Putting Tournament took place.

Drive for show, putt for dough! The Moaners and Groaners were certainly on for the last PVE putting tournament of the year. Norbert Luke reported that it rained the night before the tournament, but not even the threat of rain and near freezing temperatures discouraged the dirty dozen from battling it out. Even Andy Anderson, recovering from knee surgery, showed up to cheer the putters on.

In the first round, Chris Moore, Tom DiGiorgio, Alice Burggrave, Verna Dow, Bob Irwin, and Jim Tantillo fell to Kimmie McCann, Herb Heberling, Bob McCoy, Dick Crocker, Sue Vukasin, and Don Campbell.

In the next round, Kimmie found herself on defense against last month's champion, Dick Crocker, who sank two back-to-back one-putts at the start of the round. Kimmie's perseverance proved too much for Dick, though. He three-putted the last hole, giving Kimmie the round.

In the final round, Don Campbell tried the *mean eye trick* with Kimmie but failed to throw off her smooth two-putt consistency to victory. The mean eye strategy is never effective when you do it with a smile, Don.

What do we know about putting? For centuries, the diameter of the holes was haphazard, ranging from three to five inches. In about 1829, the holes became a standard four and a quarter inches, possibly because that was the size of the instrument used to cut them. Later in the century, the metal liner was introduced, and in 1891 the Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews, Scotland, decreed that the cup would be a standard four and a quarter inches in diameter and at least four inches deep. In any event, putting was not an exact science. It still isn't.

Our beloved Walt McDaniel left us with two putting rule changes for seniors:

1. If a putt passes over a hole without dropping, it is deemed to have dropped. The Law of Gravity supersedes the Rules of Golf.
2. Putts that stop close enough to the cup to be blown in can be blown in. This does not apply to balls more than three inches from the hole. No one wants to make a mockery of the game.

—Estelle Holway

Americana Trivia

Okay, Christmas is over. Sunday evening, all the silliness started to bring in the New Year. Here's some trivia to get you started. As usual, no fair using Google or Siri.

1. Where and when was the first New Year's celebration?
2. What is the most common New Year's resolution?
3. Which country is the first to ring in the New Year?
4. How do Colombians ring in the New Year?
5. New Yorkers celebrate New Year's Day by smashing a small, candy pig tasting like what? (peppermint, chocolate, sherbet, or licorice)

—Your Patriotic Committee

Answers on page 14

The Sound of Silence

Recently on a Sunday afternoon, I took my dog for a walk around the campus. I stopped for a few moments to listen to something I last heard about 30 years ago—something I did not think I would ever hear again. The sound of silence. No I-80 or local or campus traffic. No lawn mowers, weed cutters, leaf blowers, or sprinklers in action. No sounds of nature such as fluttering leaves, birds, squirrels, turkeys, or dropping acorns. No dogs barking. No airplanes nor helicopters overhead. No people conversing. Absolutely nothing. Next time you are out and about the campus, listen for it. Can you hear it? The beautiful sound of silence?

—Phyllis Mosher

Tree Lighting Features Lights, Camera, Tradition



This year's Tree Lighting ceremony on December 1 hit all the right notes, starting with performances by PVE's Chimes Players and the Merrie Olde Christmas Carolers of Sacramento.

Five Chimes players started the festivities as Phyllis Mosher led them in a medley of holiday favorites and Dick Feaster sang lesser-known lyrics of *Jingle Bells*. Ann Bonar clapped wood blocks to provide the sound of horse's hooves. Christina Gamble, Wellness supervisor, then introduced the carolers, who were in period costumes. They sang centuries-old carols interspersed with historical trivia about the lyrics. Then came *Frosty the Snowman*, *Winter Wonderland*, and *White Christmas* before they left the stage to *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.

The audience adjourned to the Community Center lobby where Resident Council President Joe Spinelli admitted that *Happy Holidays* might be too politically correct. He gave specific greetings for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and winter solstice and "for those not celebrating anything this month, Bah Humbug!" He also premiered a PVE cheer, Blue Bed Socks! And asked anyone who could not remember it to report to the Health Center.

After the countdown to illumination that added colorful light to the tree dressed in blue and silver ornaments, the carolers sang *O Christmas Tree*, and the crowd was served eggnog and cookies.

This year a camera is focused on the tree so the holiday lighting can be enjoyed 24/7 via a link on Pulse.

—Carol Moore



Ho, Ho . . . And a Happy New Year

I am sitting here on a rainy night in mid-December with a headache that won't stop and trying to compose a Dining Services article for January's *Elysian Fields*. Surely this assignment would have been better given on April 1st and April Fools' Day. However, we know the holidays will soon be over and, as always happens, folks will begin to make plans for the year ahead. And I know that Dining Services will be no exception to this annual cultural ritual.

What will this ritual look like for Dining Services, you might ask.

Well, we will start by asking ourselves if we can see any gaps or problems in the system. Are residents comfortable with the current dress regulations? Do servers and residents still need some extra support from volunteers at mealtime? Is Grab and Go working smoothly and fairly for cafe dinners and Sunday brunches? Is the Community Table successful as a welcoming social hub? What are we missing that a newcomer might be experiencing? Are the communication systems currently in place allowing for good two-way conversations between residents and the committee? Next, we will need to review our existing programs and ask whether they are still working as intended or need some adjustments to meet current needs. And finally, if we've really done our work honestly, we will define our goals and objectives for the coming year.

One thing that is missing from all this discussion, however, is you. If you see a dining problem you feel is not being addressed, have a suggestion for making an existing program work more effectively, or have an idea that you would like to see Dining Services take up as a goal in 2024, please join the conversation and share it with a committee member.

All policy committee members are listed on the Resident Council bulletin board in the mailroom. You are also free to email me personally, Jan Heise, at janmheise@gmail.com.

—Jan Heise

Holiday Gala a Wonder-filled Day



On Friday, December 8, PVE residents were treated to the annual Holiday Gala. The Dining Services team put on three separate events that day, starting with a lunchtime event for independent residents and a special Gala event for residents in Quail Creek. The biggest event was held in the evening in the Community Center. Two dining areas were set up—the Main Dining Room and Rawlinson Hall. Our own Nick Martens provided piano music in the Main Dining Room while the David Hardiman Quartet played in Rawlinson Hall.

The Gala started with passed appetizers of ahi poke in a phyllo cup with micro radishes and cambozola crostini with chutney, dried figs, and pistachios and champagne offered throughout the Community Center where residents, dressed for the occasion, mingled with friends. As people entered, they were greeted by the beautiful ice sculpture shown on the cover of this issue.

As guests convened for the special dinner, they enjoyed beautiful tables set for the meal, which began with a parade of Dining staff members dressed in holiday attire bringing in the salad course. The salad was butter lettuce, with currants, pine nuts, truffle cheese, fennel, crispy pancetta, and white balsamic vinaigrette. For entrees, most enjoyed the crab-imperial-crusted beef tenderloin with béarnaise sauce served with roasted garlic mashed potatoes and baby carrots. Dessert was hazelnut praline petit gâteau.

Following dinner, there was dancing in Rawlinson Hall, and many residents from the Main Dining Room dropped in to enjoy a dance or two.

Residents look forward to this annual event as a highlight of the season at PVE. We are so lucky to have such a talented Dining Services staff. A special thanks to Director David Kalbaugh and Chef Michael Quinn for helping us make the holidays so memorable every year. I'm already looking forward to Friday, December 13, next year. Mark your calendars.

—Bruce Bartels



The Gala

*The Gala was truly a success,
Each lady wore her finest dress.
Tasty "crab encrusted filet,"
And we didn't have to pay.
And the service truly did impress.
—Bill Rawlinson*



A Pair of Threes

I recently was searching through my old boxes of stuff, including photos. I highly recommend this if you are in a reflective mood—treasures everywhere. I even have every class photo from my elementary school years. But I came upon something different.

It is a black and white photograph of Nana, Mom, and me. It was taken around 1945. I was 3, mom was in her 30s, and Nana was around 60. Behind us is the St. Francis Hotel entry as, of course, this was on Union Square in San Francisco. I believe the freelance photographer was an ex-GI from the war. We three ladies were attired in the custom of the day; when visiting downtown, we dressed in style: hats, gloves, high heels, and fancy coats. It was very special.

This also reminded me of a photo hanging on the wall. A beautiful color photo of three women on a warm beach on Hawaii's main island. The occasion this time was my granddaughter's wedding. Now, I am Nana at the age of 80, my daughter is 60, and the beautiful bride is my granddaughter, who is in her 30s. Another special moment, and our smiles say it all.



Rain Came

We never know when we'll get big rains.
Sometimes welcome and often real pains.
But when the mountains have snow,
The young head out, never taking it slow.
We meet in Colusa, where they're buying chains.

—Bill Rawlinson

The time span of 77 years between the two photos reminds me that I have lived through thousands of changes. Too many to list. Just the general growing up from a young child to the “goofy” old lady I am now. Changes in technology are massive. We have gone to the moon and seen other space travel! There have been too many wars and not enough peace. Children and grandchildren. And at least a zillion more items.

These two photos of three women recall the decades in between.

—Claudette Brero-Gow

I Have a Little Dreidel

“I have a little dreidel . . .” That's how the popular Hanukkah song begins. It has a short verse and a short chorus and then repeats and repeats until the children get tired of singing or the parents get tired of hearing it.

In 2023, the first night of Hanukkah was December 7, and about 30 people gathered in the Community Center to celebrate the holiday and light the candle for the first of the eight nights of the commemoration. There was a brief introduction of the history and meaning of Hanukkah and several short blessings in Hebrew and English and then the candle was lit. Because food is an essential part of Hanukkah, especially fried food, there were donut holes (instead of the more traditional deep-fried jelly donuts) and dreidel-shaped cookies just because they look and taste good.

A candle was lit every night following the ancient tradition, and then the menorah was put away until next year, when we'll do it again.

—Alice Brill

Army Bests Navy 17-11

A group of 60 die-hard football fans met in Rawlinson Hall on Saturday, December 9, to watch and cheer the 124th Army-Navy football game. Watching the game in Rawlinson Hall this year allowed everyone to enjoy viewing the game on the three large screens with plenty of room to spread out and enjoy the tailgate party beforehand.

This year, both teams came in with 5-6 records. With a win, Army would get the Commander in Chief Trophy since they beat Air Force earlier in the season and Navy had lost to Air Force.

Navy entered the game as a 3-point underdog. The game started slowly, and those in attendance began to fear a “booring” game like last year. But Army scored first, and after making a field goal, they led 10-0 at half time. The third quarter was scoreless.

Things got interesting in the final quarter. Navy’s second team quarterback came off the bench and started passing (not something either team does much). Navy scored to make it 10-6, but they missed an attempt at a 2-point conversion. A touchdown by Army and a field goal by Navy made the score 17-9. As the quarter came down to the final seconds,

Navy had moved the ball to the Army one yard line, but Army held them out of the end zone, took over, and used up the final few seconds before giving Navy a safety that made the final score 17-11.

At the close of the game, the residents rose to sing the schools’ anthems. This year, Army, being the winning team, sang last as is traditional. For Navy, there is always next year. We’ll see you on Saturday, December 14, 2024, when the game will be played in Washington, D.C.

—Bruce Bartels

Welcome to Wellness Town Hall

Happy 2024 to all! As we all know, the concept of wellness moves the definitions of health and well-being away from a mindset of disease and disability and to prevention and proactive strategies. Active aging embodies the philosophy that you can live as fully as possible to make the rest of your life the best of your life. Wellness therefore becomes the framework for serving one’s needs and wants to remain engaged fully in life.

One of the many goals of the PVE Wellness program is to improve everyone’s health span, the period of life in which we remain healthy and free from age-related diseases. If you would like to learn more about the wellness concept and Wellness in Paradise, please join us for our Wellness Town Hall presentation on January 19 at 1 p.m. in Rawlinson Hall.

During this presentation, participants will learn about the Wellness lifestyle and gain a better understanding of our calendar of offerings in all areas at PVE. We will also provide greater knowledge about our programs and initiatives across the campus. Our vision is to inspire wellness and nurture the human spirit one team member and one resident at a time.

—Jan Olson





Santa Visits Children of All Ages

Santa Claus took time off from his very busy schedule to visit PVE and hear the Christmas wish lists of grandchildren of residents and children of team members. A few adults also sat on his lap. “Everyone was so festive and happy! Christmas is for everyone but especially for the young at heart,” said Santa’s spokesman, Michael the elf. “Santa loves everyone and enjoyed celebrating, singing, and spreading Christmas cheer with all who attended.”

The Big Man in Red was assisted by members of Friday Night Live, a service club at Vanden High School. Carolers sang at all the Creek venues and at Rawlinson Hall, accompanied by pianist Noam Elsen. The afternoon of fun and laughter included photos with Santa, holiday games, finger foods, hot cocoa, and candy.

—Carol Moore



Peggy Lee and Life Changes

Do you remember that fabulous singer, Peggy Lee? She had a deep throaty voice, and the song I most recall is *Is That All There Is?* There has been much discussion about development of a mid-life crisis around the age of 40.

Many wonder if there is more to life than we are currently experiencing. Sometimes this causes us to make changes, perhaps buying a sports car, changing jobs, growing a moustache, having an affair, or getting a divorce. I’ve experienced all of these things but the moustache.

Two remarkable items occurred when I was 40. The first was the discovery that I should not push so hard to have friends. By just being myself, I became comfortable in my own skin and, consequently, made many more friends.

The second item was that I started my own commercial general contracting firm: Brero Construction, Inc. Though I had started other companies before, this one produced the big win for me for the next 20 years. While the business grew, my real joy was seeing growth in my employees. Another reward came from being a visual person and viewing more than 400 hotels, retail facilities, schools, hospitals, and (even) prisons. Though I owned none of them, they were all “my buildings.”

My second mid-life crisis arrived at my doorstep this past year. Another 40 years had passed. At the age of 80, I realized how wonderful being reflective is. No regrets because they don’t do much good at this stage. Instead, the opportunity to review my life, even with all its flaws. Many big and small thoughts. My children, who I had raised to be independent, are! The varied and interesting paths my career took from point A to point B. Even my relationships and the hows and whys of my decisions placed me in this small boat called life. I use this example to remind myself that, while I steered “the boat,” life is like a river that takes me where it will. My mind reviews the memories and pictures of these 80 years with clear eyesight on my past. I quite enjoy this process, and I continue to be excited about life’s chapters.

—Claudette Brero-Gow

Team Members Receive EAF Checks

The Employee Appreciation Fund (EAF) delivered checks to Team Members on December 8, and there were plenty of smiling faces. The Resident Council, which manage the EAF each year, set a goal of \$290,000 for the 2023 fund drive. When all the money was counted, the final total was \$338,148! The fund drive exceeded the goal by more than 16%.

A special thank you to all our residents who contributed to make this such a successful effort.

You should take a moment and read some of the *Thank You* cards staff posted in the lobby of the Community Center. It will warm your heart to see how our Team Members appreciate this annual EAF gift. It makes a big difference in their lives and their families' lives.

—Your Resident Council



Welcome, 2024

Oh boy, a brand-new year
Starting with bowl games on TV.
Who'll we root for, I don't care
Just as long as you're with me.

Guacamole, sure, and all the chips,
Never mind the damage to my hips.
And some sangria too, to go along
Tomorrow we'll worry about doing wrong.

—Alice Brill

Peace on Earth

We failed in the year 2023,
For a world that is truly war-free
So let's really try it again,
To stop fighting if we can,
And be as rational as we can be!

—Bill Rawlinson

The Red Typewriter

I had a wonderful job during my husband's senior year in medical school. I was secretary to Walter E. Blessey, head of the Civil Engineering Department at Tulane University in New Orleans.

Dr. Blessey was a highly respected engineer who also had a private consulting business so he was in and out of his office. He was an excellent golfer and was Arnold Palmer's partner in the New Orleans Pro Am when I worked there. I was always fielding phone calls and students' visits while he was on the course or out on a consultation so I was alone in the office a lot.

I was the "manager" of the budget. We had a dinosaur typewriter that needed replacing. It took some talking, but I convinced Dr. Blessey of the need for a new one. I bought an IBM electric typewriter with all the special engineering symbols included and it was red! I was so proud of it!

I hated to leave that job, but my husband accepted an internship in Miami, Florida. After the year was over, we returned to New Orleans for his surgery residency, but by then, I had a baby and didn't return to the workforce.

A couple of years passed before I stopped by the office where I once worked. And there was the red typewriter sitting on my former desk being used by the current secretary. It was like seeing an old friend.

—Rosanne Kaufmann

Grandmas Are Okay

Grandmas are okay. You can tell them anything like no other.
They'll listen, sympathize, and try to make it get all better.
Her recipes she will share and delight that they are wanted
To groom a new baker; send you into the world undaunted.

Grandma showed you how to use that needle to good measure,
Adorn the Christmas table with a feast that brought all great pleasure.
Will you miss her when she has left with no more tears to dry?
Remember, she is not gone; she will always be there if you cry.

—Joanie Cloughesy



Precipitation at PVE

There is great joy in Fairfield as the rains have begun to fall. We are beginning to feel the effects of El Niño. During the holidays, the skies opened up and dropped 3.05 inches of rain over the past month. That gives us a total of 4.85 inches for this year and is similar to last year, when we had 5.25 inches at this time. Unfortunately, the rain has been quite warm, and it has snowed only at the very highest levels of the Sierra Nevada mountains to the east. That snow, of course, is what gives us our water during the summer months after it melts and runs into reservoirs.

Let's take a look at where those reservoirs stand right now. Lake Shasta is at 67% (31.6% last year), Lake Oroville is at 66% (29.4% last year), and Lake Berryessa is at 76% (49.7% last year). The reservoir levels reflect the great snow we had last winter, but the more rain and snow, the better.

Thanks to Doug Kreitz for getting up early to show us the beauty of PVE on a rainy night.

—The Rain Guys

Americana Trivia Answers

to questions on page 6

1. Ancient Babylon (in Mesopotamia) about 4,000 years ago.
2. To get healthier.
3. Kiribati, an island in the Central Pacific.
4. They wear brand-new yellow underwear.
5. Peppermint.

Heaven on Earth

Driving eight miles north of Sedona, Arizona, off Highway 85A literally through a creek, Tom and I discovered what turned out to be heaven on earth. Garlands' Oak Creek Lodge opened our hearts to a home away from home that we visited once or twice a year for ten years.

Our stays of three days were for a "same time next year" trip in mid-April. The weather was breezy and cool, and about half the time, two or three inches of snow treated our senses. The log cabin had a wall heater and a fireplace, and the interior walls were pine and exuded a "woody" aroma. No locks on the doors, just a leather thong resting invitingly in a hole in the door to lift the latch. There was no television and no phone (cell phones were rare, and receiving a signal was sketchy at best). The only public phone was in the main building just off the dining room.

Our time there was punctuated with excitement from now and then, namely as snow. One afternoon, a guest returned from Sedona to report an accident that had held up traffic. When cars were allowed to pass the vehicle, he noticed the Garland name on the side. One of the workers there had collided with an enormous boulder that had fallen onto the road a split second before she hit it. She sustained critical injuries that left her with lifelong disabilities. Since she had gone to Sedona to pick up the mail, her medical expenses were covered by employee disability insurance. Dinner that night was a somber affair.

With only two full days to spend, it seemed we always fell into a pattern of visiting Sedona's touristy shops and stunning vistas on the first

Photo of the Month



This is Miss Kitty checking the Christmas tree from the inside out to make certain everything is purrfect.

Photo by Lynn McCurry.

day. The second day was spent hiking the West Fork of Oak Creek and bemoaning the fact that we would be leaving the next day. Once or twice, we drove to Flagstaff on 89A. The switchbacks are not for the faint of heart, but the views are spectacular.

Each of our days began with a hearty breakfast, including fried trout if desired. The next food served was tea at 3 p.m., complete with a savory and sweets. Just enough to keep us going until dinner at 7 p.m.! There was a cocktail hour preceding dinner with hors d'oeuvres circulated by a member of the wait staff. With only a small number of guests (around 25), dinner was a culinary experience and was always served flawlessly. Prices to my recollection were \$185 per day for the two of us, including the sumptuous breakfast, tea, and dinner. Drinks were on our tab.

Garlands sold out several years ago, and though the cabins remain the same, the prices have risen considerably. It is now known as Orchard Canyon on Oak Creek. Look them up on the internet!

—Mary Ann McKinney

ORCHARD CANYON
• ON OAK CREEK •

12 Ways to Slow the Aging Process

Chronological aging is inevitable, but you have control over how well you age. Yes, it's true! As we start the new year, 2024 brings hope, opportunities, and challenges. I'd like to share 12 ways we each can slow the aging process by the choices we make regarding our wellbeing.

1. Honestly assess your strengths and weaknesses.
2. Exercise consistently year-round. The older you get, the faster you lose fitness when you don't exercise.
3. Train wisely to avoid setbacks and injury.
4. Plan to combine your favorite activity with addressing areas you need to improve and set goals to track your progress.
5. Exercise aerobically year-round to maintain and improve your cardio-respiratory fitness.
6. Include intensity workouts appropriate to your goals.
7. Strength-train regularly to complement other fitness sessions and maintain your capacity to do daily activities.
8. Stretch regularly to increase your physical comfort and maintain your capacity to do daily activities.

9. Practice balance drills to reduce the risk of falling, the number one reason mature people go to emergency rooms.
10. Engage in weight-bearing activities as part of your aerobic and strength training.
11. Balance exercise with the rest of your life so you recover sufficiently and avoid over-training.
12. And last but not least—Have fun!

Our Wellness Team is here to help you invest in your most valuable asset: YOU.
Happy New Year!

—Jan Olson

To Tell or Not to Tell

As I was peeling potatoes for dinner, Kathy, our seven-year-old daughter, approached me with a forthright question. "I want a bike for Christmas and don't know who I should tell, Santa or you?" I was caught unprepared, but knowing her, I couldn't evade the question. She would probe until she got the truth so I told her my version of Jolly Old St. Nick and the spirit of giving and love. Then I said to please not tell her five-year-old sister, and she promised she wouldn't.

Fast forward three years. All that time, Kathy fended off other children who told her sister Nancy there was no Santa Claus. It was the Christmas Eve of Apollo 8's orbits around the moon, and the astronauts reported to Houston, saying they had just seen what appeared to be Santa on his way with his sleigh full of toys pulled by eight reindeer! Kathy was in the living room, and the report fell on eager ears. As was my habit, I was in the kitchen when she came running to tell me I was wrong. There really was a Santa Claus! The astronauts had seen him! Dear little girl. She had wanted to believe in him all along.

As for her sister, Nancy hung onto the Santa myth until she was nine, and I began to somewhat seriously wonder about her mental capacity. She gave me an opening, and I slid right in with "Now that you have mentioned it, let's talk about Santa." She clapped her hands over her ears and loudly denounced my approach with "No, No, No. Don't tell me!" Of course, I pursued it, and the deed was done.

—Mary Ann McKinney

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