

Elysian Fields

February 2024

The Official Paradise Valley Estates Residents' Magazine

Volume 27, Issue 2



PVE Celebrates 2024



The New Year Arrives 1920s Style

PVE brought in 2024 with amazing music from the Roaring Twenties Live Band played by the David Hardiman All Star Quartet. Many old favorites were played with some residents even remembering the words. There was a lot of socializing and laughter throughout the room, followed by reflection on all that 2023 brought our way. Much to be thankful for with some sorrows as well. Before the night ended, our very own Michele

Rivard joined the band and shared a tune with her amazing vocal skills as we all swept the dance floor in our dancing shoes one last time.

New Year's Eve from Times Square in New York City was livestreamed on the big screen in Rawlinson Hall with entertainer Paul Anka singing *My Way* . . . and the countdown began. The "ball" dropped and 2023 came to an end. A new beginning awaits us all in 2024, bringing optimism and joy. While we are looking forward to what will happen in 2024, we are filled with memories from 2023 to cherish for a lifetime. So, Happy New Year and Cheers to 2024!

—Christina Gamble



'Twas the Day before New Year

'Twas the day before New Year
And all 'cross the sky
Gray clouds were fleeting
The storm had passed by

My thoughts were on St. Nick
As I started out the door
Would he finally send my gift
Or did it have to pour more?

I rushed to the bridge
And what did I see?
The Creek was back!
My "gift" splashing with glee

Water came dashing
Around every bend and limb
Prancing over rocks and roots
Singing a joyful hymn

In the distance I heard
St. Nick exclaim with good cheer
Peace and joy to all
And a Happy New Year!

—Sharon Goldman

Quail Creek Happenings

February is all about the heart and health so here at Quail Creek we will be kicking off the month with the "Battle of the Creeks!" This time, the Battle of the Creeks will have bowling and volleyball so make sure you get your practice in. Quail Creek residents definitely hope to continue our winning streak.

Also on the calendar for February are pampered hands, valentine's crafts with Suzie, Valentine's Day Happy Hour with Alvon Johnson, and an outing to Pelayo's for lunch.

—Monique Rogers

New Year Resolutions

With the start of the new year comes the promise of resolutions. To get rid of those unhealthy habits that hinder better solutions. So, we get out the new calendar to schedule a new exercise plan. But after a few months we soon find ourselves where it all began. Is it because we bit off more than we could chew? Whatever it is we know we must try something new. A weekly trip to the gym might be all that is needed. And in time you will realize this resolution succeeded.

—Tom DiGiorgio



Wellness Town Hall a Success

Town Hall meetings provide opportunities for community members to connect with each other, build relationships, and share information on initiatives and projects.

The Wellness Team, with support from Ali Corbett, Wellness Committee chairperson, Clinic Manager Janice Alagao, and Chris Coe of Aegis Physical Therapy hosted a Wellness Town Hall meeting on Friday, January 19, in Rawlinson Hall. The event focused on the Wellness lifestyle, mission, and vision and introduced all members of the Wellness team to residents.

Ali Corbett gave an overview of the Wellness Committee’s 2024 goals and encouraged resident participation in Wellness-directed programs and events. Adam Cleary, one of our fitness specialists, discussed Wellness orientations related to fitness and personal training offered at PVE. Janice Alagao covered clinic services and support offered to all residents. Chris Coe of



Aegis Physical Therapy described the process for physical therapy referrals in detail. Adrian Quinones, one of our Wellness coordinators, hosted a segment on The Creeks and their importance in Wellness offerings at PVE. He described the programs offered in The Creeks, which include Java Music, IN2L, sensory stimulation, and gardening initiatives, in detail.



The event was well attended, and many positive comments were received. If you could not attend, you can go to a link to the presentation on Pulse and check it out.

Wellness plans to host Town Halls twice a year. If you missed this one, stay tuned for the next one.

—Jan Olson

Remembering...

Colonel Edwin “Ed” Bradley, USAF (Ret)

Loving husband and father
Arrived: May 2013
Departed: December 15, 2023

Lloyd Tincher

Loving husband and father
Arrived: January 2018
Departed: December 22, 2023

Colonel Richard “Dick” Youngflesh, USAF (Ret)

Loving husband and father
Arrived: April 2015
Departed: December 23, 2023

Captain Arthur “Dan” Child, USN (Ret)

A World War II Veteran
Loving husband and father
Arrived: March 1998
Departed: December 31, 2023

David C. Rausch, M.D.

Loving husband and father
Arrived: July 2010
Departed: January 10, 2024

Catherine Van Eyck

Loving wife and mother
Arrived: September 2013
Departed: January 11, 2024



Willow Creek Days

Gong Hei Fat Choy! Chinese New Year arrives on February 10. February is Heart Health Awareness month, and we will continue our daily physical activities that focus on cardio-vascular exercises. We will also celebrate many special dates.

- *February 2:* Live concert with Kendall Osbourne and presentation on the history of music.
- February 8: Battle of the Creeks between Willow Creek and Quail Creek, a fun day with games and social activities located in Rawlinson Hall with light refreshments provided.
- *February 10:* Celebration of all February birthdays with a live concert by Banjo Man Jack Convery and serving birthday cake and refreshments.
- *February 11:* Super Bowl Sunday watch party in the Willow Creek family room with appetizers and refreshments provided.
- *February 14:* Valentine's Day party at 2:00 p.m. in the Laurel Creek main dining room with a live concert by one of the best jazz musicians in the Bay Area, Alvon Johnson.
- *February 20:* Scenic drive to Napa with the afternoon spent driving downtown and the back roads of Napa Valley.
- *February 27:* Cooking with Adrian, a group sensory stimulation activity featuring tastes of Southeast Asia.

Thank you all for continuing to support our residents at Willow Creek. Happy Valentine's Day to everyone.

—Adrian Quinones

Move-Ins since the Last Issue

Daniel and Janice Rolfs

5702 Flag Court
From Fairfield, California

Robert and Barbara Leigh

1208 Estates Drive
From Corona, California
Referred by the Bonars

Matthew and Akiko Giordono

2103 Estates Drive
From San Jose, California

Love Was in the Air

After we'd been dating for three or four months, we decided to buy a house together. We were preparing to make the move in February, and in January I started to think about a gift for Valentine's Day.

Easy, right? A new fishing tackle box, complete with lures. Some personalized golf balls, or golf club covers, or maybe a new piece of photography equipment. Sounds great, but he doesn't fish or golf and he isn't into photography.

Then, aha! An ad appeared in the newspaper: *Enjoy a hot-air balloon ride!* That sounded perfect. I called and received the certificates in advance of Valentine's Day so I could present them to him when we went to dinner at our favorite French restaurant. Well, he was impressed and said all the appropriate things for such a wonderful gift, and we set about making arrangements for the ride, which was going to be in Perris, California. That is not a typo; Perris is near Hemet. He made a reservation for the finest hotel in Hemet, the Best Western motel, and for dinner at an equally fine restaurant.

The next morning, we headed to the field in Perris and hopped into the balloon's basket. The pilot fired up the system and off we went. Not exactly the wild blue yonder but still pretty nifty. The air was clear, the sky was blue, the views were great, and the temperature was as close to perfect as it could be. After an hour or so, we had a safe landing, helped put everything away, received our official hot-air balloonists' certificates, and went home. It was a lovely weekend all around.

It wasn't until several weeks later that Mr. Macho mentioned that he was afraid of heights but hadn't wanted to rain on my parade. Actually, he said he was doing just fine in the balloon until he saw small planes flying below us with skydivers jumping out of them. Best of all though, he said he'd be glad to do it again.

—Alice Brill



Line Dancers Step It Up

“Community,” “vigorous,” “fun,” “challenging,” “exhilarating” – all words that come to mind when we think of our line dance class. As we dance, we focus on the music and steps but also work on balance, fitness, and memory. So often I’ve heard dancers say they just feel better after the class, and it always lifts my spirits.

Our class started with country music line dances, but line dancing is done all over the world and not just to country music. We all enjoy putting on our cowgirl boots and hats, but we know a wide variety of dances and have adapted the country dances to Christmas music, oldies, and music from around the world.

Before Covid, the class was taught by a PVE Wellness employee. After she left, the schedule indicated that the class would be “resident led.” Since I had taught international folk dancing in the 1970s and we were on the verge of losing our wonderful dance hour, I stepped up and took the reins. I don’t present a new dance every week; we have quite a few we’ve learned over the years. When new people join, I always ask that they be patient with the learning process and offer to send them links so they can work on dances on their own, and gradually (or very quickly), they become regulars.

Would you like to join us? We would be glad to have you.

—Bonnie Sonnenburg



A Focus on Our Hearts

Self-care and managing one’s health and well-being take on special significance in February, which is American Heart Health month as well as the month of love and romance. It’s a great time to raise others’ awareness of healthy heart behaviors and show care for our own hearts by engaging in activities such as exercise, choosing heart-healthy diets, and getting regular check-ups. Physical activity offers many benefits for our heart health. It improves cardio-vascular fitness and strengthens the heart muscle plus contributes to reducing blood pressure. Exercise also supports weight management, and losing excess weight eases the strain on the heart.

The best types of exercise for heart health are aerobic activities that increase the rate of your heart and breathing. Aerobic exercises include brisk walking, spin classes, cyber cycle workouts, swimming, and line dancing.

If eating healthy is on your agenda, please join Wellness for the *You Are What You Eat* series, which will be held on February 2, 9, 16, and 23 at 1:00 p.m. in the Fitness Center’s group X1 space.

The series involves a study of twins who eat specific plant-based and omnivorous diets for eight weeks to study the health impacts of each diet.

We are fortunate that these offerings are readily available as part of the Wellness in Paradise program. So, what are you waiting for? Show your heart some love and join us! Your heart will be happy and filled with love to share.

—Jan Olson



american
HEART
month

Be My Valentine

He softly cooed, “Be my Valentine!”
She replied, “Sign on the dotted line!”
Now the two are wed,
And he is seeing red,
‘Cause he thought she would decline.

—Bill Rawlinson

Sales and Marketing Report Shows Good News

The Sales and Marketing Team is excited to begin a new year. This past year, it was important to re-evaluate PVE's brand and messaging to be certain we remain relevant in the industry. The 6000 expansion had been open for more than a year, we had come through the pandemic, and there were vacancies that needed to be filled.

One of the first things we knew we needed to do was to engage a full-service ad agency to collaborate with us and develop a plan. After a thorough request-for-proposal process, we engaged Angell Marketing, a full-service print and digital marketing agency for senior living communities. Last June, they visited the community and conducted focus groups with residents and team members. They also met with management and the Sales and Marketing Team to discuss the community's goals and objectives, both short term and long term.

Using all the information they gathered and working closely with Sales and Marketing, Angell established a clear direction for our brand and three immediate goals:

Goal 1: Generate new leads and nurture existing leads

- Integrated campaigns: direct mail, email, and website content
- Pay-per-click online advertising
- Cost calculator on the website
- Marketing automation
- Monthly e-newsletters
- Paid Facebook ads
- Community brochure

Goal 2: Enhance the digital representation of the community brand

- Website search engine optimization audit
- Website refresh with new messaging, branding, photos, and videos
- Monthly search engine optimization
- Monthly blogs
- Online reputation management
- Owned Facebook and Instagram content
- Video ads

Goal 3: Continue to elevate the community brand

- New messaging and positioning
- Refreshed brand and brand guidelines
- Print advertising
- Photo and video shoot
- Five videos for website and social media

Some of these tactics may sound foreign to you, but marketing, like all technologies, is ever changing and looks quite different from 20 to 25 years ago when we opened.

It is exciting to note that in the last 6 months of the year we have been able to put ourselves in position to use almost all of these tactics to market PVE. One of the major benefits is generation of a greater number of qualified leads, which allowed us to close 2023 on a strong note. We succeeded in meeting our year-end goal of 39 sales and obtained 14 of those sales in the last quarter. All of this translates into new neighbors for all of you to welcome!

We are looking forward to an even better 2024. Our focus this year is on some very specific sales tactics to reduce the amount of time between deposit and move in by having move-in-ready homes available. We are also excited to have new marketing materials available very soon and completion of the refresh of our website.

You may ask – What can I do to help? ***Refer your friends and family!***

—Patti Lucioni

Taxes

Ugh! January means starting on my taxes
Planning, copying, ledgers and sending faxes
I cannot wait until the tax info is done
Because it is so painful; not at all fun

When my mission concludes, I breathe a great sigh
Banish all thoughts of research and bid goodbye
Start granting myself pats on the back and plaudits
Cross my fingers and pray that there will be no audits

—Joanie Cloughesy

Let's Go on a Treasure Hunt

Where in the world is Waldo? Do you know? The truth is that the person writing this article doesn't know. But WAIT! There is going to be a contest. Where in the world of PVE are certain pieces of art, artists, and other information.

The walls of PVE are brimming with information and artists' works. From the halls of the Community Center to the walls of the Dining Room, the Oak Room, both cafes, and the Flight Deck, we are treated to vision and color through images. You might know some of the locations as well as some of the artists.

The Arts Advisory Group and staff of *Elysian Fields* are challenging members of the community. How observant are *you*? Test your skills with this "teaser" sampler.

- What is the name of the former resident whose mother is shown playing a cello?
- Name at least four Shutterbugs whose pictures are on the walls in the Community Center.
- Who was president of the Resident Council from October 2009 to October 2010?
- Where can you find something black and white and read all over?
- Who is responsible for putting together Laurel Creek's ambiance improvement artwork?
- Where can you recycle light bulbs?
- Where can you find a picture of the Rosie the Riveter stamp?
- What is the Dining Room's maximum occupancy?
- What is the title of the painting from Daniel Mundy?
- Who painted the Pavilion?

Crazy 2024

My newest calendar has too many days.
And it has left my brain in a serious haze.
February is showing an extra day,
That will delay my retirement pay.
And this year's expected automatic raise.

—Bill Rawlinson

Join in the fun! The treasure hunt begins in March – watch the *Friday Flash* for more information as the start date approaches. Winners will be determined on Pi Day (March 14) and posted in the April issue of *Elysian Fields*. The prizes will be a surprise!

The contest will have two sections. The first will have clues concentrated around the Community Center. The second will have clues in and around gathering areas in the Oak Room, Creekside Cafe, and Learning Center.

You can practice this month by answering the teaser questions. Answers to those will be posted on Leap Day (February 29). Enjoy the hunt!

—Sally Gripman

Greetings from Laurel Creek

February has many things to celebrate, including Mardi Gras, Black History Month, President's Day, and, of course, Valentine's Day. Laurel Creek and Willow Creek will enjoy Valentine's Day with a luncheon and entertainment in the afternoon.

Java Music Time is held Thursday mornings with others to enjoy the music and reminisce. We will also have morning exercise, classical music, coffee, and IN2L programs daily. Other activities include karaoke with staff, movies, poetry with Gladys, arts and crafts, room visits, and one-on-one activities of residents' choice. Enjoy the month of February and Happy Valentine's Day!

—Sharon Johnson





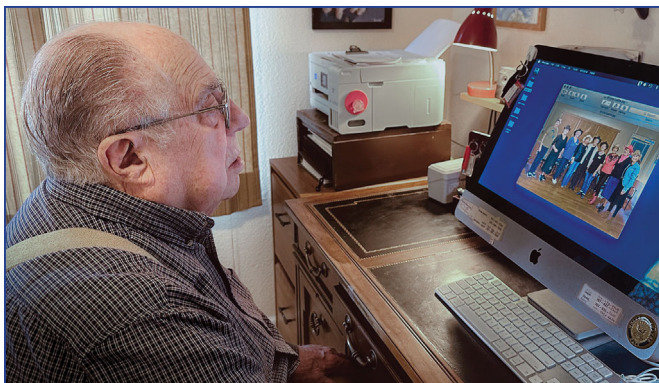
Norm Heise Retires

After 10 years as photography editor of *Elysian Fields*, Norm Heise is stepping back. During his tenure, he took thousands of photos around PVE. He also managed photos submitted by others. Norm recalls that when he started *Elysian Fields* normally had 10 to 12 photos each month. The latest issue has 30. His role grew over those ten years. Norm spent time each month preparing photos for printing, hosting the monthly meeting at which photos were chosen for the next issue, and managing assignments for other staff photographers. In addition, Norm provided photos from his archives to PVE families for use in Celebrations of Life.

We could not have produced the monthly magazine without Norm's help each month, and we salute him for a "job well done." We encourage residents who enjoy reading *Elysian Fields* to take a minute and thank him when you see him.

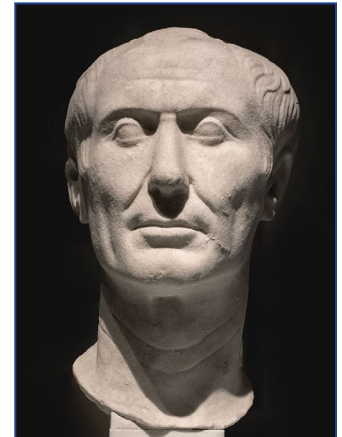
Please know that Norm is retiring in name only. He will still be taking photos for *Elysian Fields*, but the editorial work will go to new photo editor Doug Kreitz. Doug spent years as a professional photographer, videographer, and video and photography teacher. *Elysian Fields* is fortunate to have him join us.

—The *Elysian Fields* Staff



Julius Caesar, Father of Leap Year

This month, we have an extra day – February 29. Most of us know the poem we learned in first grade: “Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November. All the rest have 31 except February, which has 28 and leap year coming once in four. February then has one day more.”



We call it a leap year, and one is happening this year on Thursday, February 29. By the way, leap years are also years in which we hold our presidential elections. But where did leap years come from? Who is responsible for them? It turns out that Julius Caesar is the person who developed the leap year. Well, actually, his astronomer did in 45 BCE.

Without getting into too much detail, it turns out our year (the time it takes for earth to go around the sun one time) is not quite 365 days long. It actually takes about 365 and one-quarter days. So Caesar said, “Well, if that’s the case, I can just add one day every four years to make up for the quarter day per year.” I’m not sure he actually said that, but you get the idea. So, leap year comes once every four years.

It’s a touch more complicated than that, though, because it actually takes a bit less than 365 and one-quarter days. So, there was no leap year in 1900. And if you live long enough, there will be no leap year in 2100. Skipping leap years in these century-changing years makes up for the small difference.

So maybe, as Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar on the Ides of March, Caesar would have been heard saying, “Brutus, I gave you some extra days and this is how you thank me?” Or maybe that didn’t happen, but now you know why we have leap years. What are you planning to do with your extra day this year?

—Bruce Bartels and Julius Caesar

Dining Services

This month we are discussing dining comment cards and providing our annual report. One of the most significant and labor-intensive tasks of the Dining Committee is recording and evaluating the comment cards submitted through Pulse. The program gives residents a direct immediate resource for letting the dining staff know about their dining experiences. This input is invaluable because it informs the staff very specifically about which items on the menu worked well and which items did not work well. It is also a way to express appreciation for our remarkable crew of servers. If you are uncertain about how to use this option, just go to Dining on the Pulse menu and scroll down to Dining Comment Card. Your comment is sent directly to the dining staff and the Dining Committee member on duty for that month, whose task is to alert you that your comments have been received.

Thanks to the genius of Excel, the daily comments can be tabulated and studied on a monthly and annual basis and can be compared over years. For example, we learned that in 2023 we received 1,046 comment cards, a 22% increase from 2022. Clearly, moving from exclusively handwritten comments to online submissions significantly increased communication.

Food satisfaction for the year was 87.5%, which was a 10% increase over 2022. Service satisfaction was 95.1%, which was a 6% increase from 2022. This high level of satisfaction with service likely reflects the current focus on server training and efforts to build incentives and career development into the dining training program.

This year, for the first time, the committee solicited comments exclusively on the Gala, which is a major challenge every year for the dining staff. In spite of the increase in resident participants and some definite problems for

a few party groupings, the numbers were still 87.3% overall satisfaction with food and 95% satisfaction with service. Clearly, this added to the workload for everyone, but it helped pinpoint logistical processes and menu items that didn't work as well as planned. As a result, the committee has decided to seek resident input on a few upcoming major dining events such as the Valentine's Day dinner and the Crab Feed.

Perhaps the bottom line is that the committee encourages your comments because dining staff members love to hear when things go right and when a new recipe really is worth a repeat presentation, but they also need to know when a recipe or service arrangement is not working and should be reevaluated.

And finally, because we all have strong feelings for our wonderful young servers, the Servers of the Month for November were Alejandro Godinez Chavez and Ashley Moore and the Servers of the Month for December were Desirae Chavez and Kaylia Lindquist. Congratulate them when you see them.

—Jan Heise

Photo of the Month



This photo was taken last summer on our trip to Italy in an old hilltop town called Pienza in Tuscany. It shows one of the old wells used in more primitive times.

Photo by Don Corbett.



Have You Been to the Java Juice Zone?

The new Java Juice Zone (JJZ) at the Fitness Center is a *big hit* with exercisers. The new venue gives those using it or passing through an opportunity to get coffee and flavored water (flavors change daily) and discuss whatever the topic of the day might be. It is also a great way to meet people, relax, and get hydrated after exhausting workouts with Kelly, Adam, Christina, Andrea, and Jan.

Just sitting in the JJZ allows you to interact with numerous residents passing by on their way to workouts and classes. Those who show up after an 8:00 a.m. class or workout try to solve the world's problems. But the issues reappear shortly after we leave and must be dealt with again the next day.

The coffee shows up at 8:00 a.m., and some of us get in line for our first or second cup of the day. Some have already worked out at Victor's 7:00 a.m. spin class. Others are attending pickleball, tennis, yoga, water aerobics, Zumba, and tai chi.

The JJZ, in my opinion, is a great addition to the venues at PVE. Come and join us. I am sure you will be energized in more ways than one.

Spoiler Alert: The coffee is refilled but it doesn't last all day.

—Dick Lubman



Golf News

Bud Ross reported that nine brave souls played in the January Moaners and Groaners (M&Gs) tournament. Carts were restricted to the paths and standing water made for very little roll of the ball. The weather forecaster got part of it right as there was no rain most of the day, just some sprinkles the first 10 minutes. The four groups originally scheduled were combined into one foursome and one fivesome. Here are the results:

1st Place (77): Rick Cole, Susan Ritchie, Norbert Luke, Tom DiGiorgio, and Howard Adams

2nd Place (81): Chris Moore, Dick Crocker, Doug Fisher, and Bud Ross

Low Putts (23): The two teams tied.

All players received highly deserved prize money.

Norbert Luke reports that the PVE putting tournaments in December and January were cancelled and will resume in February.

I had the pleasure of dining with NCROC board member Andrea Andersen at the 2023 Gala. I was excited to talk about the M&Gs, and she was excited to report that her husband, Lee, made a hole in one on the 15th hole at Paradise Valley Golf Course last summer. He used a seven iron and a golf ball inscribed "Squadron 32 TFS, Soesterburg AB, Netherlands." Thank you for your service, Andrea and Lee, both graduates of the Air Force Academy. Congratulations, Lee, for proving you *can* get over the water on the 15th hole.

Thought for the month: Golf is rewarding and fun, but it is not an easy sport to pick up. Enjoy the challenge of getting better. It's a journey.

—Estelle Holway

Putt Putts

Down by the Oak Room
Early in the evening,
See the little golf carts
All in a row.

See the hungry people
Going in for dinner,
Stop for a moment, say hello,
Good to see you, and off they go.

—Alice Brill

Presidents' Day Facts

While we celebrated Washington's birthday and Lincoln's birthday in the past, now we have Presidents' Day, which is February 19 this year. Here are some presidential facts you probably don't know.

1. Abraham Lincoln was a licensed bartender and owned a saloon in Springfield, Illinois.
2. Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to ride in an automobile.
3. William Taft was the first president to throw the first pitch at a baseball game.
4. Herbert Hoover was the first president born west of the Mississippi River.
5. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first president to appear on television.
6. Harry S. Truman was the first president to give a televised address from the White House.
7. John F. Kennedy was the first president to hold a press conference on television and was the youngest president to be elected at age 43.
8. Lyndon B. Johnson was known for his love of Fresca, a grapefruit-flavored soda.
9. Richard Nixon was the first president to visit all 50 states.
10. Gerald Ford was a fashion model before he became president.
11. Jimmy Carter was the first president born in a hospital.
12. Ronald Reagan was a lifeguard during his teenage years and saved 77 people from drowning.
13. George H. W. Bush loved Tex-Mex food and had a custom BBQ pit installed at the White House.
14. Barack Obama collects Spider Man and Conan the Barbarian comic books.

Tribute to PVE

PVE, a favorite destination
To visit my friends of the greatest generation.
Spike and company bring many a grin
Riveting stories, whilst passing the Zin.
Adept Oak Room servers present the mains,
Whether weekly special or bowl of grains.
All here contribute, be it flower committee,
Resident Council or composing a ditty.
Elysian Fields evokes a guffaw
Or occasional tear when the story is raw.
Witticisms framed on walls,
Stunning photography lines the halls.
Passionate bakers, makers of wine
Termites, groaners, bocce is fine.
What's taking place in Rawlinson Hall?
A heartfelt tribute or formal ball.
Military service songs proudly lifted,
Players, not quite ready, but certainly gifted.
Passing the Rose Table, I say a prayer
For framed faces no longer here.
Staff and residents, present or passed
Make these final quarters simply world-class.

—Kristy Sheridan

Valentine Envy

Valentine's Day when I was in elementary school was an occasion of great anxiety. Valentines came in a special pack of 30 cards for 25 cents. This meant that everyone in the class might get the same card. They were distributed by a "mail man" who walked up and down the aisles and placed the cards on each desk. We didn't get cards from everyone, and the piles of envelopes on each student's desk varied. That's where the anxiety came in – how many cards would I get? The desperate silent prayer echoed in my head: "Please let me get a lot this year."

I was not alone. I knew Barbara Fitzgerald had an overflowing number of valentines and even a small box of chocolates on her desk. Some of the boys gave her two or three cards! She was my first friend ever and the focus of my jealousy in the moment. She had naturally curly hair, which is probably why I had only eight cards on my desk and they were all from girls. Barbara was the most popular girl in the class, and I hated her every Valentine's Day and despised her and her curls and her dimples and her "toe, tap, and ballet" lessons right then. I knew the sin of "coveting thy neighbor's goods" was mine, but one can understand my feelings of anxiety; life really isn't fair.

—Jean Martin

Who Are the Termites?

The Termites are a group of residents who have one thing in common. They all get to wear a really cool name tag. Additionally, many have an interest in woodworking. Some are true crafters while the majority just dabble in the hobby.

We have almost 85 members. Fifteen members actually work on projects for residents, 20 use the shop for their personal projects and to borrow tools, and the rest just like to wear the name tag and attend the annual BBQ. All it takes is a phone call and \$10 for our annual dues and you too can be a Termite. Men and women alike participate. Several members have never lifted a screwdriver but want to learn what woodworking is all about.

Our humble shop is tucked away in the far corner of the 6000 campus next to the Maintenance Shop. It includes two dust collection systems, a chop saw, two band saws, a table saw, a router table, a planer and joiner, a scroll saw, horizontal and vertical sanders, and a drill press. Additionally, we have a plethora of hand and portable power tools. Did I mention the stacks of wood and hardware available free to members? It is truly an incredible workshop.

We have a refinishing department for small furniture. The Dining Room podium and Lazy Susans are the work of Termites. We refinish end tables, side tables, small chests, dining room chairs (*no upholstery or caning*), and small drop-leaf tables. We do not strip furniture, nor do we have a paint booth. We do not refinish large or intricate furniture. We repair small furniture, tighten screws on tables and chairs, and repair table legs.

One of our specialties is building lifts under chairs and couches to raise them two or three inches so it is easier to get in and out of the seats. The round apparatus is a three-inch lift for a Scandinavian recliner. It works quite well.

We also shorten shelves and stools and make toaster tongs, window openers, and door stops. We can sharpen small gardening tools, and we recently



Painted a pickleball court onto a tennis court. We also build and repair planter boxes. The only way to know if we can do a project is to ask.

We do not make furniture, do electrical and plumbing work, interfere with Maintenance, punch holes in walls, or weld. If a table has a veneer top that is marred, the only solution is to paint it since veneers will not take stain once scratched through (see photo).

For information about joining the Termites or potential projects, call the chair of our Recruitment Committee, who is also the chair of our Project Committee: Bob Lunning at 925-413-0030.

—Bob Lunning

Groundhog Day

February 2 is traditional Groundhog Day. It is celebrated in Canada and the United States and originates from a Pennsylvania Dutch superstition. The groundhog (woodchuck) emerges from its

burrow and, if it sees its shadow due to cloudless skies, retreats and winter will last six more weeks. If no shadow due to overcast, spring will arrive early.

To quote *Wikipedia*: “The weather lore was brought from German-speaking areas where the badger is the forecasting animal. This appears to be an enhanced version of the lore that clear weather on the Christian Holy Day of Candlemas forbodes a prolonged winter.”

Obviously, there is no scientific basis for the correlation of an animal’s behavior with weather. And no way to know the animal’s perception of the sky or its conclusions, if any. Any claim by the animal’s handler to know otherwise is a case of pure imagination. However, the woodchuck called Punxsutawney Phil is a local celebrity one day each year, and the local community and visitors all take time to enjoy the tradition.

—Ian Lanouette



Shutterbug Photos to Enhance Laurel Creek

The PVE Arts Advisory Group (AAG) is working with the management team to undertake a project to improve the ambience of Laurel Creek. Over the past eight months or so, the group has reviewed more than 100 photographs taken by Shutterbug Club resident members. From those submissions, more than 40 images were selected for placement in the hallways. The goal is to help change the “institutional” look and atmosphere of our Health Center into a more friendly and welcoming environment.

The AAG has selected a theme for each nursing station at Laurel Creek. Station 1 will feature photographs of oceans, Station 2 will have

photographs of flowers, and Station 3 will feature pictures of mountains, lakes, and rivers. The photographs displayed in January in the main hallway of the Community Center are samples of the images that will be hung at Laurel Creek as soon as the hall walls are repainted and new lighting is installed.

A parallel AAG project is a total make-over of the entrance lobby to the Health Center. Currently in progress, this change entails relocating many of the items in the area, repainting the walls, adding more-modern seating, and enhancing the walls with

large landscape canvas photos.

—Dick Feaster



Precipitation at PVE

Rain is beginning to fall with a series of storms set to hit the Bay Area over the next few days as we write this on January 18. Last year at this time, we were deluged with rain and had total rain of 21.75 inches. We are nowhere near that amount this year. We currently stand at 10.25 inches, about half of what we had last year at this time. In the past month, we gained 5.40 inches.

While recent storms increased snow in the Sierras, the snow pack remains short of normal for this time of year. As you probably know, our water supplies come to us via snow melting in the spring. Less snow equals less water to our reservoirs.

The reservoirs that send water our way are Shasta, currently at 70% capacity (last year 51%); Oroville at 70% (56% last year); and Berryessa at 78% (64% last year). The reservoirs are quite full since we had such a “great winter” for rain last year. It would be nice to have a repeat performance, but Mother Nature will do what she will do, and we can’t do very much to change that.

Weather fact of the month: The world’s largest snowflake was recorded in Montana in 1887. It was 15 inches wide and 8 inches thick. Pretty sure we won’t have any snowflakes at PVE this winter.

—The Rain Guys

Music and Me

As I start to write, I am surprised how deeply music is a part of my soul, my being. I had forgotten about all the aspects music represents in my life.

I played the piano and took lessons. While I was no genius, I sure loved playing. I would sway back and forth; the teacher could not stop me. He did, however, give me a lesson that I have carried through my career. When I would get stuck over and over at a certain place in a piece of music, he would have me take a walk around the piano. When I played again, I could pass that one problem. (As a side note, I provided this advice to my employees whenever they were stuck.)

I also took ballet and modern dance lessons. We had a phonograph, and I would play all the LP records. We had lots of classical music but also had many musical movie sound tracks. When we played the musicals, I would sing along (terribly off key) and even dance. I knew the words to *Oklahoma*, *Guys and Dolls*, and so many others. My favorite was *Brigadoon* because it allowed my imagination to soar.

As a pre-teen, I would sit in the living room in the dark listening to a romantic song and wonder if that might happen to me. Would I meet Mr. Wonderful? Were his kisses perfect? Lots of dreams.

My parents also played piano but rarely. Dad loved *Moonlight Sonata* while mom liked *Für Elise*. Only once did I see my parents dancing, in the kitchen. They danced a tango! Wow, they were so smooth, floating on the floor.

As I became an adult, I fell in love with jazz music. Paul Desmond played his saxophone notes so smoothly, Dave Brubeck in *Take Five*, and my favorite group was the Modern Jazz Quartet.

I have been told that listening to music helps as we age. I think I will age well with all this music.

—Claudette Brero-Gow

Election Year

The campaigning is really well under way,
And who knows what all the voters will say?
The frigid temps have no effect,
So they won't decide who we elect.
But we won't like the choice on Election Day

—Bill Rawlinson

Did You Know?

The Technical Support Help! Line

Based on questions received, the Tech Support Help! Line program is not well understood. If you are thinking about getting a new computer or need help fixing your existing computer, the number to call is 707-207-7878. This line is monitored from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Leave a message about your problem with your name, unit number, and phone number, and the person monitoring the Help! Line will contact one of the resident tech gurus to call you to help fix your problem.



Besides helping residents who have issues with their existing computers and or phones, the Help! Line gurus have done, can, and will be happy to:

- Assess when a resident might benefit from a new computer – sometimes the problem is software, not the age or condition of the hardware. Sometimes, a low-cost addition of built-in memory does wonders.
- Recommend and guide residents to buy – with their own funds – a new computer.
- Set up a new computer with all the logins, accounts, and internet connections needed.
- Transfer data files from an old to a new computer and, if required, transfer “everything” using migration software that involves an additional cost for PCs or utilities that come installed on Macs.
- Residents are frequently generous and want to pay our volunteer helpers. Volunteers direct that payment to the PVE fund of the resident’s choice.

We hope this helps you better understand what is available when you call 707-207-7878. That number is also on your large green “Help!” coaster/mouse pad.

—Wolf Schaechter

It Is Grand (Jury, That Is)

Being new to the county, I wanted to find out as much as I could about my newly adopted home so I responded to an ad stating that Solano County was looking for civil grand jurors for the 2023/2024 term. I filled out and sent in my application, was called in for an interview, and found that I was in the pool of prospective jurors.

On June 29, I reported to the designated courtroom at the Hall of Justice and watched as my name was dropped into the rotating bin. The clerk pulled random names one at a time and announced them as she went. I was the ninth of the ten new jurors, and we would join nine holdovers from the previous term. All would serve for the next 12 months. Like the other jurors, I would serve on three committees.

Joyful All Ye Nations Rise

At present, nations do not rise all together joyfully
We ask, will they ever or continue the role of bully?
The respite from all wars and rumors remains on edge
Prayers keep streaming as peace remains on the ledge.

—Joanie Cloughesy

Unlike criminal grand juries, the civil grand jury term is one year and deals with county residents' complaints about government services. The criminal grand jury is convened at the pleasure of the county district attorney and focuses on a single criminal matter. Its term is for as long as it takes to hear evidence, deliberate, and choose whether to indict.

Civil grand jurors are sworn in by the presiding judge. Their oath includes a vow to keep anything heard or learned in complete confidence and that includes their spouses and close friends.

There are multiple meetings each week in addition to on-site tours and inspections of various facilities. Jurors spend 20 to 30 hours each week dealing with all aspects of the cases on which they work. There is a per diem of \$20 for each day you work on-site on a case plus mileage is reimbursed.

The path to the final report includes many steps involving in-person interviews with county department heads, outsiders, legitimate internet sources, and perhaps others. All persons interviewed are admonished not to speak of anything about their interview until a report has been published.

Then, report-writing starts. The report is reviewed and edited by committee members until a consensus is reached by a majority of the committee approving it.

From there, the report is presented to the entire body and must be approved by 12 of the 19 jurors. Prior to publication, it is sent to the appropriate department head for a final fact check to be sure the facts are correct and then it is published.

Yes, it is a lot of work, but the jury is your watchdog and takes its charge very seriously.

More information can be found at <https://solano.courts.ca.gov/divisions/grand-jury/about>.

—Al Brill

Save These February Dates

- 02 | Ladies Luncheon, Rawlinson Hall, 10:30 a.m.
| Groundhog Day
- 03 | First Saturday, Club, 5 p.m.
- 08 | Battle of the Creeks, Rawlinson Hall, 10 a.m.
| Dance Class with Angie, Group Exercise Room, 12:30 p.m.
- 10 | Chinese New Year
| Chinese New Year in the Club, Red's Blues Band, 4 p.m.
- 11 | Super Bowl Party, Rawlinson Hall, 3:30 p.m.
- 13 | Mardi Gras
- 14 | Valentine's Day
| Valentine's Day Concert, The Fabulous Cruise Tones, Rawlinson Hall, 4 p.m.
- 15 | MOAA Meeting, Rawlinson Hall, 11 a.m.
- 19 | Presidents' Day
- 26 | Town Hall Meeting, Rawlinson Hall, 2:30 p.m.

Thinking about a Trip?

If it involves air travel, here are some things to consider:

- Air tickets are expensive. An occasional special can pop up but watch out for restrictions. If it involves a cruise, the cruise line can either provide the tickets as part of the cost or for an added charge, and you can come up with tickets on your own. For example, Regent includes business and first-class tickets depending on where the cruise will be. Silversea and Viking Cruise Lines provide economy air tickets but are happy to get you business-class tickets if you pay the difference in cost.

Find out before committing to a cruise or tour exactly what is covered by the price and what you will need to pay for separately. Cruise lines and tour companies are generally able to beat any air ticket price you can come up with on your own due to their bulk buys and relationships with some airlines. Should problems develop later with flights or the cruise, having tickets through your travel agency or cruise line can save you a lot of anxiety.

- Okay, you've got your air tickets so what's next? Commercial flights now require close contact with our Transportation Security Agency (TSA). That's not something travelers look forward to, other than appreciating the enhanced security it offers those flying. Entering a TSA line gives you the opportunity to immediately see other options.

There are TSA-Pre and, perhaps, CLEAR lines that appear to offer a speedier experience, but neither are free. Pay for a first-class ticket and you normally get TSA-Pre access; apply for global entry for a fee and, following an investigation, you may be granted membership in the Global Entry program, which includes TSA-Pre plus expedited processing when re-entering the United States. CLEAR is offered at some airports but carries a higher fee.

Regardless of which line you find yourself in, it's definitely not the place to make remarks about the security process, procedures, or staff.

- We have three airports relatively close to PVE: San Francisco (SFO), Oakland (OAK), and Sacramento (SMF). When researching air fares, check the options at each airport. Cross-country flights are available at each as are flights to Hawaii, but SFO leads in the most direct flights, including numerous international options.

Although SFO has the advantage of the most flights, you have to factor in the time of day and its impact on traffic – and at the other airports as well. You may want to begin your ticket search by going to a website such as *Expedia* or *Kayak*, which can show multiple airlines offering your destination and allow you to compare times, routes, and costs. A follow-up check on the airline's own website can show other options and prices.

Plan ahead, make that plan well ahead, and don't forget to expand and read the annoying fine print before committing!

—Ken Lyon

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