

ELUSIAN FIELDS

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A Bride Experiences Pearl Harbor

At a meeting one December 7th, a man asked Muriel Jenkins the inevitable question, "What were you doing on Pearl Harbor Day?" Muriel replied, "I was there." This is her story.

We had been married in Honolulu for a little over a month. The Naval Academy had decreed that graduating ensigns could not be married for two years, so Chuck and I had waited. At the proper time Chuck sent for me and I arrived on October 30, 1941. We hurried to the government office and paid extra to get a license to be married that same day. The small wedding was at a Methodist church. We spent our wedding night at the Royal Hawaiian for \$16.50.

The next day we moved to the studio apartment Chuck had rented out near Diamondhead. The complex was filled with young Navy couples. On December 6th some of the wives planned to have a picnic the next day when our husbands would be off-duty. That evening some of us went out to the ship, the Nevada, for dinner. I hadn't learned all the ropes of Navy etiquette and was scared that I would humiliate Chuck. Boy, did we scramble when a senior officer's wife arrived!

On Sunday morning I was waiting for Chuck to get home so we could go on the picnic. The radio program was interrupted, telling all personnel to report to their stations immediately. I was too dumb to realize what that meant. Later the announcement came that Pearl Harbor was under attack, and the emblem on the planes was the rising sun. I didn't know that meant Japan. Some of the savvy wives got hysterical, but I hadn't realized the full impact. That afternoon some of us crawled under barbed wire to get to the beach for a swim. Dependents were told to try to find shelter in the hills, so I went to some friends of the family. A hastily recruited Hawaiian patrolman came storming into the house,



bayonet drawn, ordering my hosts to turn out the lights immediately. They complied.

To prevent rising hysteria, the woman manager of the apartments rounded up the wives and put them to work counting sheets. Food was hard to find. The prices had tripled. I said to the store owner, "These eggs cost too much." He replied, "Lady, do ya want the eggs or not?" I took them. A friend found three potatoes and gave me one. We were issued WW I gas masks to wear anytime we went outside.

On Tuesday Chuck finally called and told me he was all right. The Nevada, moored right next to the Arizona, had managed to get underway. The public had not been told the fate of the Arizona.

We wives were told we would have to evacuate and we would receive orders. Under no conditions were we to tell anyone when they came. We devised a clever code, we thought. We would say casually, "I'm going to see Mother." In April my orders came, and I went aboard a Matson liner which zig-zagged across the Pacific. I was in a cabin designed for two along with two other adults and two babies. I had left Pearl Harbor.

— by Muriel Jenkins

A Busy Man

Here at Paradise Valley Estates, George Wyman serves on three committees in addition to several other activities. He was a busy child as well. His father was General Manager of Central Casting in Hollywood, so nepotism played a part in George's working as an extra in the movies. He appeared with Charlie Chaplin. When he was ten or eleven, he portrayed a "powder monkey" in "Old Ironsides", a film shot at Catalina. The school year was still in progress, but the boys had a leave of absence on the island. They went to a studio school in the mornings and did their movie jobs in the afternoons. In this idyllic childhood he also had a pony, which he could ride in the hills around Hollywood. In Mark Twain style he enlisted neighborhood friends to help in the clean-up, offering pony rides as the reward.

The opportunities to be an extra in the movies continued while he was in high school and during vacations when he was a student at Stanford. He was also in the R.O.T.C. in both high school and college, graduating as a 2nd Lt. There is a long military history in the family extending back to the revolution. George recently became a member of the Sons of the American Revolution. His grandfather was in Andersonville Prison during the Civil War, and his father was an army officer in both WW I and WW II.

In spite of this military background, George chose a career in social service when he graduated from Stanford at the depths of the depression. He worked in San Francisco in the Works Progress Administration and later moved to Merced as Director of the County Welfare Department. There in Merced he met Achsah, his wife of 63 years before her death in 2003. After going together for three years, they eloped to Las Vegas. It took George a week to get around to announcing his marriage to his parents. Achsah was bolder, informing her family right away.

George went on to a series of jobs in social service, in San Bernardino and after WW II in Sacramento, Washington, D.C., Pasadena, and finally as the Commissioner of the State Department of Social Services in Albany, NY. The progress was halted by service in the military immediately after Pearl Harbor was bombed. He served in Kodiak, Alaska



and then trained to be part of the occupation team in Japan under General MacArthur. He learned to speak Japanese with intensive study.

He was separated from the service in 1946 and went back to his career in social service. After ten years in New York he retired, and he and Achsah took the long route back to California going down the east coast to the tip of Florida, around the entire Gulf Coast to Texas, across the west stopping at points of interest. The whole trip took them two months.

George and Achsah have one daughter, two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, all girls, in whom George delights. They all agree that their parents and grandparents made a wise decision in moving to PVE in 1998. George especially enjoys the people he has met here, appreciating the camaraderie and the concern residents have for one another. This busy man is an asset to the community.

—by Joan Teague



That Day of Infamy

December 7, 1941. The audience was applauding another polished performance by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in New York City. As usual, John Barbirolli had conducted masterfully. Enthusiastic applause was expressing the audience's appreciation.

I was sitting in the topmost balcony, where I had enjoyed several years of subscriptions to the Sunday afternoon broadcast series. I was a senior at New York University and looking forward to graduation the following June, at which point, I naively assumed, I would begin to live happily ever after.

At the height of the applause, the general manager of Carnegie Hall appeared on stage with his hands raised, obviously to make some kind of announcement. To my knowledge that had never happened before. There was instant silence.

"We have just received word that Pearl Harbor and the Philippine Islands have been attacked by the Japanese," he announced.

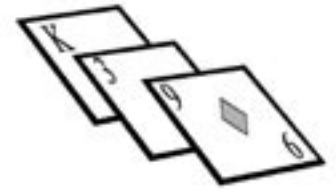
The collective gasp of a stunned audience was audible. Barbirolli then turned back to the orchestra. He lifted his baton, paused for a dramatic second, and, beginning with his next gesture, conducted the New York Philharmonic in "The Star Spangled Banner". That occasion surely validated one of the most timely, most heart rending questions in the history of our national anthem. "Oh, say does the Star Spangled Banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

—by Linda Farraday



Shanghai

This is a card game and is not to be confused with Mah Jongg. Here at PVE it is played every Thursday afternoon starting



at 1 p.m., except the third Thursday and holidays. It is essentially a progressive rummy game.

Usually four people play and use a double deck of cards. If there are more people, it takes longer and uses more cards. As it is, it takes about two hours. Everyone gets 11 cards for each round of play. There are many implications, but if you are interested in playing cards, this is a good one to learn. Come and join us on Thursday afternoons, and someone will help you get started. The rules are available if you care to look them over. Call Ken Jones at 432-5906.

Arts and Crafts

The crafts group, which meets every Wednesday morning, has just finished working with Bette Peterson's china painters, who were all making Christmas ornaments for PVE decorations.

Usually, the crafts ladies knit, crochet, and stitch various items for the Laurel Creek Health Center – lap robes, shoulder shrugs, throw blankets, and pillows for wheel chairs. Virginia Noordyk prepared some cosmetic bags, and the ladies completed them. Quilts for cribs and children's beds were made and given to the Fairfield Fire Department and the Fairfield Crisis Center. Some of these items were spied by PVE grandmothers, and they were purchased by them, thereby providing a little funding for the group.

Generally, the crafts group uses donated fabrics and yarns. Should you have donations of these items, please put them in the arts and crafts room with a little note. Janice Abrams, leader of the group, says new workers are always welcome, and new ideas for sewing projects are welcome, too.

—by Janice Abrams

Wellness Health Faire a Huge Success

The PVE Wellness Department is pleased to announce that our 2003 Health Faire held on October 29th was a huge success. The event was presented by Wellness with over 20 participants including Queen of the Valley Hospital, Northbay Healthcare, Burger Rehabilitation Services, Laurel Creek Health Center, and many others. According to Julie Petray, Wellness Director, over 250 residents attended the Health Faire.

Queen of the Valley Hospital reported doing 125 cholesterol and glucose checks for our residents. Residents also had the opportunity to try our Nu-Step seated stepper as well as have a foot massage performed by Cereza Cook, CMT.

Many handouts with valuable information to keep our residents healthy were also provided as well as T-shirts, pens, notepads and, of course, healthy snack for residents to enjoy as they made their way around the Health Faire. Thank you everyone who made the event a success.

— by Janet Olson
PVE Fitness Coordinator

Military Talk: Find all sorts of books in our Library:

Many wives here at PVE were with their husbands in the military service, except when their husbands were in the actual war zones. They understand the military talk, the abbreviations, the acronyms, the protocol, and all the rest. They even know that if you talk about the Franklin Delano Roosevelt, you are talking about an aircraft carrier.

I had no knowledge of any of this and felt dumb as a post when military talk was going on. I did know that an APO was some sort of post office and the FPO was fleet post office, but that was the extent of it. This all has now changed. I have found a book explaining at least the Navy part of these mysteries. The book came into the PVE library the other day, and I immediately grabbed it and took it home to read.

I almost wish I had left it alone. The poor wives of naval officers had to go through so much! There was the protocol of calling cards, of entertainments, of who outranked whom, and all sorts of intricacies of navel life. There was even the question of when one wore a hat or gloves. I could understand the idea of not disgracing the Navy and being modest and dignified at all times. This was brought out very plainly in the book, which by the way is called *Welcome Aboard*.

Florence Johnson, the author of the book, wrote



Hal Carter, , Marianne Walleen, Nancy Stoneberg, , , Joan Teague, Bev Clemson

details of how to address others, what to take when transferred, the question of servants, the excitement of going to overseas duty, even about what colors to have in clothing. Mrs. Johnson wrote this in 1954, and I wonder how much of it has changed. Hats are not worn to cocktail parties, surely.

In the way of household goods, she suggests moderately priced glasses, so they may be replaced if broken. Incidentally, she writes a lot about cocktail hours and drinking in general. It seems the Navy is pretty great for these types of parties. She suggests not buying anything except sterling flatware. Does that still stand?

Well, I now know a great deal more about military matters, but I still don't understand what CV stands for. It is said to mean aircraft carrier, but these initials don't match.

—by Bev Clemson

Christmas in Vermont

I opened my eyes and turned to observe my 14-year-old sister Noel still asleep in our shared cozy four-poster maple bed. The curtains had not even been drawn the night before, as we had hopped into our pajamas and flopped exhausted into bed, simultaneously snuggling under Grandmother's flower garden quilt. I placed an arm over my eyes to shield them from the brilliant sunlight. I scurried to the window and checked on the outdoor thermometer that indicated 30 degrees below zero! The sky was deep winter blue; the snow, unmarred by footprints, sparkled like an endless field of diamonds as far as I could see

It was a week before Christmas. Noel and I, city girls, had traveled from the St. Louis, Missouri, Union Station to Albany, New York, by Pullman train to spend the holiday with our paternal grandparents, who were waiting when we arrived. We drove in their large Buick to the small village of Glover, Vermont, well over 100 miles away. During that long drive, my mind took a sentimental journey to the 15 delightful summers spent there with friends who had permanent homes in Boston and other eastern cities. They had migrated annually, as we had, to summer cottages that dotted the shores of Shadow Lake in northeastern Vermont.

Our fragmented family life during my growing up years had prompted this special Christmas holiday with Grandma and Grandpa Davis. I was 16 years old, preparing to leave for college the following fall. My patriotic father had given up his years of medical practice in St. Louis to return to military service during World War II. That Christmas he was in London as chief urologist for the 55th General Hospital. He would later join General Patton at the landing at St. Lo in France. Mother was in Santa Monica, California, with our two younger sisters. My grandparents, whom we were visiting this Christmas, were spending their retirement years in Vermont.

During the week before Christmas, I had a chance to renew acquaintance with the town: the typically New England steepled church, the general store on Main Street that doubled as a post office and grocery, dispensing everything from Montpelier crackers and pickles in a barrel to shoe strings and creamery cheese.

On the days before Christmas, using a large darning needle and heavy thread, we strung cranberries and popcorn to decorate the fresh-cut cedar tree. We bundled in warm parkas and fur lined boots to crunch through the snow to sing Christmas carols. One morning we had a visit from Dr. Buck, a cheery, roly-poly man, decked out in fur hat and raccoon coat, pulling up in his horse-drawn sleigh. Christmas Day included church services, opening gifts, and a wonderful, traditional New England holiday dinner.

I have traveled to many places as a military wife for other Christmas holidays, but deep in my heart, I cherish that step back in time in an unspoiled village for Christmas in Vermont.

—by Jackie Roemer



Flu Shot Update

With the cold and flu season upon us the Wellness Department reports that over 250 flu shots were given during our flu shot campaign. The flu shot campaign was held on Monday, November 3rd, and Wednesday, November 5th, here in our multi-purpose room. Sutter (VNA) Visiting Nurse Association also provided flu shots for Laurel Creek Health Center on October 30th.

Researchers report in the latest issue of Arthritis Today that the flu vaccine could do more than fend off fever, aches, and chills. More than 250,000 people aged 65 or older were studied, and it was found that hospitalizations for pneumonia, heart disease, and stroke were significantly shorter for those who had received flu shots compared to those who had not. Remember other precautions to prevent getting the flu, including frequent hand washing, eating properly, and exercise. So why not join a fitness class today?

— by Jan Olson
PVE Fitness Coordinator

Laurel Creek Assisted Living Saddles Up

On October 20th, ten residents of Assisted Living and four PVE ‘Angel’ volunteers were given a private tour and picnic lunch at the Windfall Farm in Suisun Valley.

Earlier in the year, Ed Gunderson, a resident of Assisted Living, asked his daughter and son-in-law, Gry (pronounced ‘gree’) and Duncan McFarlane, whose business is to train European show horses, if it could be possible to have residents of the Health Center see their operation. Plans were made for the residents to visit in October.

Although the farm is not open to the public, the McFarlane’s accommodated us. Gry described to the residents various methods of competition, while her husband Duncan, a New Zealander, rode on his horse ‘Eazy’ through an obstacle course in the corral, jumping over several spaced bars. What is especially noteworthy is that Duncan will ride ‘Eazy’, representing the United States, in the 2004 Olympics in Greece.

The McFarlane’s have 35 show horses, each horse having a different owner and ranging in value from thirty-five thousand to over a million dollars. The show horses travel by plane, train, and over the open



road to compete in various national and international events.

The residents enjoyed feeding the horses baby carrots and petting them on their necks and noses. The horses are well pampered by receiving acupuncture and massage sessions, plus having glucosamine in their feed, which is a buffer for the joints. The residents also watched a blacksmith shoe the horses in the barn.

On the veranda overlooking the corral below, the residents enjoyed their picnic-style meal and commented what a lovely warm October day it was. Cottonwood leaves above them were turning yellow, and in the barn nearby, there were beautiful horses of different breeds gazing back at the residents.

—by Deborah Dow

Where I was on December 7th, 1941

On that fateful day, I was a student attending the University of Hawaii and a member of the ROTC. Almost immediately after the attack, the commercial radio stations announced the bombing of Pearl Harbor and called the off-duty military, nurses, doctors, firemen, police, and other crucial people to duty. Members of the ROTC were to report to the University military science building. I took the family car and went straight to the school, where I, along with other members, was sworn into the Hawaiian Territorial Guard.

We were immediately assigned to strategically located places around the island of Oahu, such as

power plants, water-pumping stations, and intersection control on the streets. My assignment was to guard a water-pumping station that overlooked Pearl Harbor. The site was devastating – sunken ships, burning facilities, smoke rising from the Arizona and other ships.

Honolulu was immediately blacked out that night, but not Pearl Harbor. It was lighted, as repair and rescue workers worked desperately to restore order.

Because I had taken the only car in the family, my parents did not know where to find it, and the military authorities would not divulge the location any of their personnel, so there they were without a car and without a son for two weeks. It was a chaotic situation all around.

—by John W. Clemson

Christmas at Grandma's House, 1938

Christmas was always a gala affair. I remember 1938 in particular because Hale, my uncle, took photographs with his fancy camera and floodlights. I still have these pictures to remember the occasion. All the relatives and my grandparents' friends attended the celebration. After breakfast, we gathered around the large tree in the living room and opened our gifts. That year I received something special from Ted and Betty Mershon, friends of the family. Ted was "rich". He and his wife lived in a suite of rooms in the Olympic Hotel in Seattle, and their meals were brought up from the dining room of the hotel. Ted did not work but lived on his stock market investments, we were told.

I knew that a gift from the Merchons would be a good one, and it was - a beautiful stamp album, not the usual little album for children, but a four-inch thick album for stamps from the entire world. A very large packet of stamps accompanied the album. This introduced me to the world of philately and a life long interest in collecting.

While the women were preparing dinner, the men would settle into the little den off the living room and play Pinochle until dinnertime. I remember this as a smoke filled room with everyone smoking cigars.

Dinner was a grand affair. My grandmother set the table on Christmas Eve to seat twenty guests. There was a traditional centerpiece of Santa Claus riding in a sleigh with eight reindeer. I could name them all. Grandma was a great cook, and the feast always included a turkey stuffed with dressing inside the bird, a gelatin salad, Parker House rolls, mashed potatoes and gravy made from the giblets, and creamed onions. There were mince and pumpkin pies for dessert. During dinner that year, Ted Merchon offered me and my cousin Bobby Jane five dollars if we would eat a raw oyster. We managed to do this with great difficulty, and the money was ours.

I have always wanted to revisit my grandparents' home, and finally in 2002 I was able to do so. There had been no changes in the dining room, den, or living room since I was last there. The oak beamed ceilings with the hanging Tiffany lamps and

the Tiffany windows at the end of the room are the same as they are in the photo I have. This opportunity to see such a memory-filled house was a wonderful holiday gift.

—by Raymon E. Lawton



Fairfield Library

The newly renovated Solano County-Fairfield library reopened November 15th to a very large crowd of about 150 people, in spite of the rain. Ann Cousineau, Director of Library Services, was introduced by Duane Kromm, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, after introductions of various city and county officials. Ann told about the new conditions in the building.

The theme was "Blow your socks off!" and the library truly emulated that theme. It is spacious, with many windows looking onto the pond and low stacks to the front of the space. Kim Bodfish, the interior designer, said the coloring was gold and amethysts, but it seemed to be mostly light gray and soft shades of several colors.

There is a total of 60 computers throughout the library, with some in the study room and some in the children's library. The book store for the Friends of the Library is at the front entrance, with not much more room than before, but it does look much better. There are four self-service machines for checking out books; that's an innovation.

All in all, it is pretty impressive, and it was open officially Monday, November 17th. All that was lacking was a biography of Chief Solano. I guess one of us will have to write one.

—by Bev Clemson

The Christmas Tree in the Play-pen

I stepped from the yellow school bus into a snow bank! Occasionally, the bus driver missed the plowed path to the kitchen door. I was twelve years old and my arms were loaded with books and a battered, black trumpet case, my pride and joy. My red boots were full of snow, but I made it to the warm kitchen door where the heavenly aroma of baked bread filled my nostrils.

A chubby little boy with black ringlets all over his head sat in the kitchen. His name was Jimmy. He was eighteen months old, and he came to us because his mother could no longer care for him. My mother, a nurse, took care of a few foster children who needed special nursing care, and Jimmy was one of them. He was a mischievous little guy. He loved to tear paper, destroy articles that were on a table, and run around through the rooms of our house.

I walked into the living room to place my trumpet in the corner by the piano and saw our Christmas tree. It was jammed into the old dilapidated play-pen! I ran back to the kitchen to ask my mother why she had done this horrible thing to our beautiful tree. The explanation was brief. Jimmy had knocked the tree over and most of the ornaments were broken. He was curious about shiny ornaments and colored electric lights. The solution to the problem came to Mom: find the play-pen and put the tree in the pen.

Mother saved some of the ornaments and hung them back on the tree. Bits and pieces of glass had broken away from some of the ornaments, but they still could be hung high on the tree. The tree would have to stay this way until Saturday, when Dad could go to the Five and Dime store to buy more ornaments. The tree looked sad. Dad put the electric lights back on, but the glow was gone. We decided to put a gate across the door to the living room, to protect the



entire room from little hands that wanted to touch everything.

Saturday came; the new ornaments were purchased and placed on the tree. They sparkled, and the tree came to life. We older kids would lie on the carpet and look up at the tree and dream of all the things we wished Santa would bring for Christmas.

Christmas Eve, we went to the church party and said our “pieces” as they were called in those days. We sang Christmas carols. Jimmy’s eyes were as round as saucers. He squealed with delight when one of the church elves brought him a gift to tear open.

We returned to our quiet home, went to bed, and slept with our precious dreams. The next morning a bright red kiddy-car was under the tree for Jimmy. There were other toys for Jimmy too. We older kids were pleased with our new strap skis. All was well on Christmas morning. The tree in the play-pen sparkled with shiny ornaments and bright electric lights, while a happy little Jimmy played with his new red kiddy-car.

—by Carol Block

Precious Gift

‘Twas the night before Christmas, our own
Christmas Eve.

The gifts were all wrapped for each one to receive.
Candles in windows, to guide, there were some,
For two weary travelers and the Baby to come.

‘Tis oh, so symbolic, but feelings are such
As they were long ago, and the trip most too much
For the couple expecting their very first child,
The Blessed young Mary, so meek and so mild,
Joseph, who worried just where they would sleep,
And the angels above with their vigil to keep.

‘Twas ages ago, that bright night of His birth,
And yet He is worshipped all over the earth.
So let us remember, at church or at home,
The Present God gave us for our very own.

--by Elly Vasak

On The Links with PVE Golf Club

November's golf tournament, played at Rancho Solano Golf Course, was a typical scramble requiring each team member to use his or her drives off the tee, at least four times during the 18 holes played.

Six foursomes were scheduled to play and, despite the gloomy weather, most of the players did show up. Rumor has it that when next spring comes around the only excuse that will be accepted is a death certificate. I hope they are only kidding. Anyway, though the golf course was a little wet, it really was not bad at all. The temperature was in the high 60's, but no wind, so playing wasn't bad if you wore a sweater or jacket.

At the PVE Golf Club's monthly get-together (held after each tournament in the Lounge), John Kroyer extended his appreciation to yours truly for my support to the Golf Club. He presented me with a golf club pillow that read "GOLFERS NEVER DIET, THEY JUST EXIST ON GREENS". Thank you sir, I guess I can chuck my Atkins diet now.

The Intrepid Golfer Award for October was given to Wayne Elwood for his excellent golf and great leadership, which have placed his teams in the winners circle numerous times. Wayne's exemplary sportsmanship and team spirit are true traits of an INTREPID GOLFER.

These are the lucky winners for this month's tournament: First place team; Duncan Kelly, Freddy Miller, Glenn Dow and Bill Armentrout. Second place was taken by Jack Biederman, Betty Tylutki, Earl Graham and Carl Johnson. Third place winners were John Gearhart, Winky Wirrick, Phillip Yaggy and Bill Ekern.

We hope to see you all at the December tournament. Until then, keep your clubs dry & eat lots of greens.

—by John Gearhart



Bocce Chiuso

The bocce court is now closed for the rainy season. My hope is that people will stay off the court so that wind, rain, and time will harden the surface a little more. Occasionally, a work force may be noticed on the court, which will be our way of helping nature make the improvement. Rain permitting, by March some refresher events will be scheduled. If enough interest is evident, I shall try to organize a league and have regularly scheduled games.

—by John Kroyer

I Had These Gifts at Christmas Time

I had these gifts at Christmas time: family, stars in the pre-dawn sky, creatures in the wild.

The family came from near and far, San Diego, San Juan Capistrano, Washington, Coxsackie, and Cotati. We missed the absent ones from Hawaii and Michigan. Laughter filled the house, jokes, puns, shared memories, music. Just before dawn I was startled by the brilliance of a star in the east, so huge I could see the points like the star that hovered over Bethlehem. It was Venus, big, bright, and beautiful. At Borrego Springs we saw the big horn sheep that had eluded us for over forty years. We had always known they were there. Borrego means "sheep." They blended so perfectly with the rocky terrain, their white rumps like the boulders, their wool like the desert sand. Only their movements gave them away. Another day there were twelve of us at a picnic table at Torrey Pines. Twelve frisky dolphins cavorted in the ocean in front of us, in and out of the cresting waves.

On Christmas Eve at San Juan Capistrano we heard a click, click, click. No, it wasn't Santa on the rooftop. Three rare white owls flew in to rendezvous on the branches of a eucalyptus tree, their nightly custom. We shone a powerful beam of light on them. The three wise owls stared.

—by Joan Teague

Just Another Old-Fashioned Christmas

During the fall of 1945, my brother Kenneth and I looked forward to returning to the United States in time for Christmas. We met in Wichita, where my father lived, and planned to go to north central Kansas where my Aunt Thea and Uncle Jim lived in the old family home that my grandfather had homesteaded back in the 1800's.



The day before Christmas, Kenneth, my father, and I took a bus north to Salina, then caught a little gas/electric train to go west and north to the hamlet of Vesper. This was the rail stop closest to my grandfather's farm.. The farm was about ten miles into the country on unimproved rural roads. We expected my Uncle Jim to meet us at Vesper and drive us to the farm.

My father was the first passenger to leave the rail car, and we heard him exclaim: "Rude Voss, is that really you?" Years before, when we had lived in that area, the Voss family had been our good neighbors. But where was Uncle Jim? As we stepped down from the train, we hit what seemed like two-foot deep snow drifts. What a shock! Quickly we got into the Voss car and Rude explained the situation.

A sudden and severe snow storm had come out of the northwest. In a couple of hours, snowdrifts were blocking roads, and Uncle Jim could not get his pickup truck out of the driveway. Aunt Thea called my Uncle Bob who lived about a mile closer to Vesper and asked him to try to pick us up, but the snowdrifts were too much for Uncle Bob's Chevy, and a broken axle resulted. In almost total desperation, Aunt Thea called the Voss family for help. Could they possibly meet the train? "Yes," he answered. "A good neighbor remains a neighbor." Mrs. Voss invited us to stay with them while the storm raged. She made up three beds in their spare bedroom, and prepared supper for us.

During the night, the storm abated, and Christmas Day dawned completely clear of winds and

clouds. The sun shone as bright as only a white world could make it. Snow banks and drifts sparkled and glittered in the warmth of the sun.

Uncle Bob got out his John Deere tractor and drove through the snowdrifts to Uncle Jim's, making a path through the snow. Then he returned, followed by Uncle Jim in his pickup truck. By 9 a.m., Uncle Jim was at the Voss home. Before mid-morning, we all arrived at the farmhouse, our Christmas destination.

Shortly after we arrived, Uncle Bob and Aunt Minnie drove up with all the special cakes, cookies, and salads that had been prepared for our dinner. Then she and her sister, my Aunt Thea, went about preparing all of the other food we were to enjoy. The day became a grand reunion time for all of us. We probably all overate; I know I did. All of the events and activities made that Christmas in 1945 a special day, but it was also just another old-fashioned family Christmas.

—by Cletus Nelson

Legislative Committee

On October 30th, the Legislative Committee sponsored a debate on the so-called "Save Travis" Measure "L" voted on during the elections on November 4th. A proponent and an opponent debated the issues of the measure before a sizable resident audience. The turn-out was appreciated by the committee as a representative service for the residents.

The Registrar of Voters reported 214 residents voted in person with 182 absentees for 79% of 501 eligible to vote. Measure "L": Yes-147, No-57. City Council: Batson-99, Farley-90, Parsons-51, Robertson-35, King-25, Merrell-20, Randhawa-14. (Differences in vote totals are listed as blank and over votes.)

John Vernon briefed the committee on priority veterans' issues in Congress, including improving access to VA clinics.

The committee had preliminary discussions on developments in Lagoon Valley and the potential effects and influences on the area are along the west boundary of PVE.

—by Carl (Lee) Miller

Computer User Groups

The Macintosh Group hosted a meeting on October 21st for all computer users, and all residents, for that matter. An assembly of about 27 was given an excellent demonstration on the use of Photoshop Elements. Marjory Parker and Jackie Peterson made the presentation.



We were shown how to improve pictures taken with digital cameras, but the procedures work equally well with film camera photos once they are put in digital form. We learned how to correct for horizon distortion, color balance, cropping, posterizing, and how to prepare a slide show. Jackie even showed us how to lose a couple of pounds, if only in print. Ever taken a picture of a structure from too close so that it loomed overhead? We were shown how to correct perspective for much more pleasing results. A handout was given us covering these and other techniques so that we could follow the presentation without taking a lot of notes. Copies can probably be obtained for those who did not receive them.

The December computer meeting will also be a joint meeting for PC and Mac owners. We have a guest speaker from Microsoft coming to talk to us about word processing. This meeting will be December 5 at 1:30 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room. All are welcome.

—by Jack Lindeman

Golfers Not Let Off

Golfers, take note. You will not get off that easily. The regularly scheduled first Wednesday of the month games will occur barring some cataclysmic weather conditions. Do not despair; some team will eventually beat Duncan Kelly's Teams.

Move-ins Since the Last Issue

Anderson, Fred
1113 Estates Drive
Sonoma, CA
Referred by Ector

Swenson, Theodore "Ted," LtCdr., USN(Ret)
1207 Estates Drive
Simi Valley, CA

Graves, Marjorie
3107 Estates Drive
San Rafael, CA

Brockhouse, Jack & Margaret
3111 Estates Drive
Paso Robles, CA
Referred by the Myers

Where Were You on December 7, 1941?

Imagine if you will, a car rumbling over the Golden Gate Bridge above San Francisco Bay at 10:10 a.m. on a Sunday morning in December with the radio on. Suddenly, we heard the news of Pearl Harbor being bombed on the island of "Ohua", according to one reporter. He didn't even know where Oahu was nor how to pronounce it. We were shocked, and my dad put his foot to the gas pedal, and we whizzed off that bridge very quickly. Were the Japanese going to continue over the Pacific and bomb the mainland? We didn't know for sure, and we weren't taking any chances. This was the moment that changed the world.

—by Bev Clemson

The New Year's Eve Buffet

I don't remember exactly when we started to make our own family New Year's Eve party, but I think it was in the fifties while we were living in that tiny house



on Ranger Road in Lexington Park, Maryland. I know we did it regularly when we lived in Del Rey Oaks, California, and from then on wherever we lived until all the children were too old to be willing to stay at home with their aging parents on New Year's Eve. I guess we wanted to make the evening something of a celebration that the children would enjoy, and that would have an adult appearance about it – at least from the children's point of view.

I'm sure the whole thing was Liz' idea. In any case, she persuaded the kids that this was just the way adults have parties and that they would really enjoy it. She certainly did most of the work in the preparations, although everybody helped. All day was spent preparing a variety of dishes that included each one's favorite. The table was set with our best linens, china, and silverware. At first the children made all our decorations. Then, when we became more affluent, flowers were ordered from the local florist, but the younger children continued to craft some of the décor. The preparations were usually complete by late afternoon. If the weather permitted, we would all go out and play until dark. If it was too uncomfortable outside, we would play some board games indoors.

Then we would clean up and dress in our best party clothes. The food and drink would be arrayed on a sideboard or counter. We would all line up, oldest child first and parents at the end, to help the littlest. We would sample all the dishes in the buffet and take our plates to the table. Seconds were encouraged, but as the conversation waned, the older children would clear the table while Liz and I brought out the desserts.

After dinner entertainment varied with the ages of the children at the time. It might include reading aloud to the youngest ones; singing as Liz played the piano, more games, or even a brief theatrical production, based on something done at

school. Later on, we might watch other New Year's Eve revelers on TV. The time difference was right for watching European celebrations when we lived in Maryland or watching the ball come down in Times Square, New York, when we lived in California. By the time the local midnight had arrived, we would all be sound asleep.

As the children grew up, one by one they begged to be excused, to spend New Year's Eve with their friends. Finally, only Liz and I were left, and it was hardly worthwhile to prepare a sumptuous buffet for just the two of us. But our children all remember our New Year's Eve buffets very happily, so our grandchildren have been experiencing them too.

—by Marty Wildberger

A Christmas Celebration

Jingle, jingle, jingle! You might have heard Christmas music as you walked into the Community Center any Tuesday during these autumn months. That's the day the PVE Chorus rehearses for upcoming performances.

Under the direction of Carol Block, the group is currently learning the music for "Let Us Adore Him," a Christmas celebration, music by Robert Lau. A narration weaves throughout the cantata.

All residents are invited to attend one or both of the performances in the Multi-Purpose Room. The first is on Sunday, December 7th, at the 10 a.m. worship service and the second on Monday, December 8th, at 7:30 p.m. This second performance will include a sing-a-long. Don't leave your seats, because Rudolf and his elves will be prancing up and down the aisles encouraging you to sing.



What's Coming Up

— Lise Hansen

- ★ *Frontier Holiday Gala* featuring Carol Lawrence, Reno Hilton Hotel
- ★ *Air Force Band of the Golden West* at the Center for Creative Arts, Fairfield
- ★ Shopping at Union Square, San Francisco
- ★ *"The Lion in Winter"* – Solano Community College
- ★ *PVE Chorus Christmas Program and Sing-A-Long*
- ★ *Solano Winds* at PVE
- ★ *Christmas Lights Tours*
- ★ *"Tartuffe"* – Napa Valley Repertory Theater
- ★ *Dorothy Bench* musical program at PVE
- ★ *North Bay Opera Guild Mask Ball*

What We're Working On

— Lise Hansen

- ★ *Ballet Folklorico* at the Mondavi Center, Davis
- ★ *Juan Diego Florez*, tenor at Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley
- ★ *Degas Sculptures* at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco
- ★ *Stars on Ice* at Arco Arena, Sacramento
- ★ *Bay Model and Shopping*, Sausalito
- ★ *Mrs. Grossman's Paper Company and Antiquing* in Petaluma
- ★ *"H.M.S. Pinafore"* – *Lamplighter's Theater*, Dean Leshner Center, Walnut Creek
- ★ *Calico Winds* – Spreckles Performing Arts Theater, Rohnert Park
- ★ *Happy Birds* at PVE
- ★ *Sheraton Palace Hotel Tour*, San Francisco
- ★ Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Mondavi Center, Davis
- ★ *California Symphony* – Dean Leshner Center, Walnut Creek
- ★ San Francisco Rooftop Gardens Tour
- ★ *Smuin Ballet*
- ★ *Hendry Winery Tour and Tea at the Victorian Blue Violet Mansion*, Napa
- ★ *"Solid Gold Cadillac"* – Willows Theater, Concord

- ★ *Cache Creek*
- ★ *"Cinderella"* – *Moscow Ballet* at the Marin Center, San Rafael
- ★ *Crocker Art Museum & Towe Auto Museum*, Sacramento
- ★ *"Nonsense"* – Vallejo Music Theater
- ★ *Snow Train to Reno*
- ★ *North Bay Opera Opening Night Opera Dinner*, Fairfield
- ★ *"Great Composers"* – Solano Symphony
- ★ *Napa Valley Symphony with cellist Zuill Bailey*
- ★ *"The Time of Your Life"* – A.C.T., San Francisco
- ★ *"Richard III"* at the Mondavi Center, Davis
- ★ *Air Force Band* at Vacaville Performing Arts Theater
- ★ *Solano Symphony Annual Pops Concert*
- ★ *Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony* at the Mondavi Center, Davis
- ★ *"Thoroughly Modern Millie"* – *Best of Broadway Series*, Sacramento
- ★ *"The Producers"* – *Best of Broadway Series*, Sacramento



Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg, as it is played today, is a national game originating in New York. In the beginning, it was played only by men until Amy Tam authored a book that contended that women should play also. Each year the women who play here at PVE send for their cards, which cost them \$5.00 each. This money is donated to charities such as children's hospitals.

Lorraine Packard, organizer of the PVE group, now adding up to twelve or more women, said she learned to play in Saudi Arabia. A complicated game played with tiles, it is not easy to learn, but once learned, one becomes addicted to it. This can be proved by taking a glance into the card room on Tuesdays at 1 p.m. and watching these ladies having their fun.

—by Muriel Jenkins

Signing Up For Activities

Sign up sheets for trips are in the “Green Book” at the Reception Desk in the Community Center. When a new sign up sheet is placed in the book a notice will appear on PVTV, Channel 78 and in the Friday Flash announcement. Each sign up sheet contains the date of the event, the cost of the event, and the deadline for signing up and/or canceling. Residents may sign up for all trips that they would enjoy. All residents must sign up for themselves. The signature on the sign up sheet is an authorization to bill their account and a commitment to pay.

Calendars and schedules should be checked before the commitment of placing a name on the sign up sheet. If something comes up, and the need arises to cancel, residents may cross their names out on the sign up sheet, initial, and date. This must be done the *before* the deadline. When the deadline is reached, the sign up sheet is pulled out of the book. Tickets are then purchased, tours and meals paid for, etc. There are no cancellations or refunds once this is done. Exceptions to this policy will only be made if a resident is hospitalized or passes away and is therefore unable to attend.

REMEMBERING . . .

Bernice Cresse
Loving Wife and Mother
Arrived PVE: February 24, 2000
Departed: October 24, 2003

Col. Franklin A. Heasley, USAF (Ret)
Loving Husband and Father
Arrived PVE: March 27, 2000
Departed: November 16, 2003



Laurel Creek Preserve Update

Thanks to all of you who called to wish us well on our project and to those who volunteered to help. We appreciate your interest and encouragement.

During the last week of October, three owl boxes were installed along Laurel Creek: one located on the northeast side of the creek in the 4000 area, another on the southwest side of the creek near the northeast corner of the 3000 building, and the last on the north side directly behind the Bowen's home. We owe a big thanks to George Yeoman for building these boxes. We hope all of you will keep an eye on them to see if any barn owls adopt them for their winter estates.

The barn owl is the specie we are attempting to attract with those boxes, as the owl is the natural enemy of mice, of which there are large numbers in the area. I received a report that a pair of the owls, long time residents, had been seen this week in the nest (branch hole) of the old white oak tree on the southwest side of the walk bridge. I have personally spotted a barn owl several times on dark evenings along the creek area this past week.

Our next project this winter will be to install four or five covered areas for quail protection from predators.

We are sill waiting out the mast (acorns) to fall for use in our seedling growth project. Please keep watching for them on the ground and report your finds so we can nurture them into mighty oaks for the future.

—by Bill Cox

ELYSIAN FIELDS STAFF ORGANIZATION

Editor	Hal Carter
Associate Editor	Liz Wildberger
Copy Editor(s)	Madelynne Wolfe and Miz Lively
Make-up, Layout, Publishing	Marj Parker. Jackie Peterson and Joe and Angie Sanner
Photography	Linda Faraday and Marty Wildberger

Editorial Assistants/Writers

- (1) **Biographies of PVE residents**
Joan Teague and Betty St George
- (2) **Life at PVE (human interest stories about travels, hobbies, and incidents)**
Linda Faraday and Liz Wildberger
- (3) **Memories (of past events and significant happenings)**
Liz Wildberger and Miz Lively
- (4) **Organized activities and events at PVE**
Bev Clemson and Ceil Bellinger

Instructions for Submitting Articles to Elysian Fields

The **Elysian Fields** staff invites contributions from all PVE residents. Articles should be legible, typed if possible, original, signed, and not exceed 500 words. Submissions by e-mail, on floppy disks, or CDs are welcome but not required. Submissions should be directed to one to the four subject matter editors or the editor.

Precipitation

The rainfall at PVE through November 19, 2003 totals 2.08 inches. This compares with 1.76 inches at Travis AFB, which is the official Fairfield recording station. The normal season-to-date precipitation at Travis is 3.42 inches.

PVE has averaged 4.1 inches of rain by this time in the previous years. We have had quite a lot of unsettled weather in the area during the month, and rain has been recorded in the nearby areas. Most of the rainfall has bypassed PVE.

—by Pete Palmos



How Does Your Garden Grow?

We're still alive and well after the big wind, even though we lost our cover. Hopefully, it can be repaired for spring planting. We have four new sturdy benches, and new nameplates have been made for the new and old donors. Think "BRICKS" in our beautiful brick patio for a Christmas gift to honor a friend. We'd love to have new residents be recognized there. Contact Jan Holderness at 426-9288 or Pat Child at 422-2992 for ordering.

—by Jan Holderness

