

ELUSIAN FIELDS

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Tap Dancing to Bethlehem

The French doors separating the living room from the "sitting room" in my grandparents' home open slowly, and there is the 1936 Welsh family Christmas tree. Sparkling with bright glass ornaments and hung with silvery icicles, it towers over the pile of gifts stacked on the floor.

I am six years old, my sister Carolyn four, and we are spending the holidays with the grandparents because our mother is sick. She has been in Mercy Hospital for almost a week. Carolyn and I miss her, but Santa must know we do and has given us lots of toys so we won't be too sad. Carolyn runs to a new tricycle with wood blocks already on the pedals so she can ride right away. I see twin doll beds, just the right size for our Shirley Temple dolls. The beds are dark wood and have low posters. They match our real beds. There are two trunks, too. I open one of the little doors. Inside are dark red coats with velvet collars just like the new ones that Mother made for us. I wonder when Santa came and got the scraps? And there are shiny black tap shoes with black ribbons, and they are our size!

Daddy sees me trying to tie the ribbons and whispers, "After breakfast, I am going to take you and Carolyn to visit Mother in the hospital."

"Can we wear our new tap shoes?" I ask. "Mother would like to see us dance for her."

We go in Uncle Kennedy's car. Sister Veronica is waiting for us when we get there. She smiles and asks us to sing and dance for some of the sick people. Carolyn and I dance, making lots of clicking noises on the hard tile floor. Then, we sing "On the Good Ship Lollipop."

Next we go to Mother's room. But there is a mistake. The bed is high and flat, and there are tubes that look like soda straws falling over the side of the bed. The straws are fastened to big jars. I am afraid, and Carolyn steps backwards into the hall and grabs Daddy's knees. Sister Veronica scoops me up, and her stiff white habit crinkles like paper

against my velvet dress. "Give your mother a kiss," she says, leaning forward to the thing in the bed.

"This isn't my mother!" I scream. I kick and kick against Sister Veronica. "Put me down; let me go." I don't want to look at the doll in the bed. The eyes are closed, and it is making a snorting sound like Granddad's snoring.

My father has rushed into the room, Carolyn still hanging onto his leg. Sister Veronica puts me down on the floor. My tap shoes make awful scratching noises. "Come on, Carolyn. Take my hand. Don't look at that thing in the bed. It will scare you." We run into the hall, slipping and sliding on the shiny tile floor.

Sister Veronica and my father are whispering, but I don't want to know what they are saying. At the end of the hall, there is a beautiful parlor with a Nativity scene and lots of spicy, green pine around it. A light shines on Baby Jesus in the manger. "Come on, Carolyn," I say.

And holding hands, we tap dance down the hall toward Bethlehem.

—by Liz Wildberger



A Working Woman

Betty McMurry is still working at age 80. She loves the travel business and helping people plan exciting trips. She has always liked helping people. She grew up learning that one should give back to the community.

Betty was raised in Phoenix, AZ, where her father was connected to the government as a civil engineer. She had an older brother, an older sister, and other relatives close-by. Phoenix was a relatively small town of about 100,000 in those pre-air-conditioning days. In the hot summers the children visited grandparents in Prescott, at a higher and cooler elevation. The whole family always spent a month at the California seaside.

Betty attended college at the University of Arizona in Tucson, majoring in elementary education. She was a member of Pi Phi sorority, and when she started college, things were relatively normal. Then Pearl Harbor happened, and college life changed. Davis Monthan Air Base was close-by, so the girls still had a social life.

In spite of her degree in education, Betty decided she wasn't quite ready for teaching, so she got a job at Luke Field near Phoenix, and there she met Mac, an officer in the Air Force and her future husband. Later, she went to work for American Airlines at the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. She was the secretary in the maintenance department, organizing the chaos of tools and parts into numbered bins. She enjoyed working for American, especially the perks of free trips. Seeing New York City for the first time was a revelation to the small-town girl.

After a year with the Air Force in the Aleutians,

Mac went to see Betty before even going home. They were married in June, 1948. As a civilian, Mac decided to finish college under the G. I. Bill, and Betty finally used her education degree, teaching in the river town of Freeport, CA. All too soon the Korean conflict began, and Mac was recalled from his reserve status. That time he decided to stay in the Air Force and had a twenty-year career. They lived in South Carolina for seven years, dur-



ing which time their two sons were born. The two sons have given them four granddaughters. While still in the service, the family also lived in Wichita Falls, Texas and Denver, from which Mac retired.

Betty's brother, an amputee from World War II, had gone into the travel business in Vallejo, and he told Mac he could use him at the travel agency at the Travis Terminal. The McMurrays returned to Vacaville, where they had lived when Mac was

stationed at Travis early in their marriage. Betty also pitched in at the office whenever she could find a few free hours and learned to love the business.

She was involved in volunteer activities as well. She was a den mother for Cub Scouts and saw one son all the way through to becoming an Eagle Scout, as his father had been before him. She was a member of P.E.O., taught Sunday school at their church in Vacaville, and was a "Gray Lady" at the old Travis Hospital on the hill, under the auspices of the Red Cross.

Mac died after a long illness in 2001. Betty continued to live and work in Vacaville until she moved to PVE in '02. Being so close to her old home enables her to see long-time friends often and to continue her interesting job as a travel agent.

—by Joan Teague

The Navajo Code Talkers

During my practice of medicine for 35 years, I had many memorable patients, surprisingly so for a little town south of San Diego – Chula Vista. One of the most memorable ones was Philip Johnston. I got to know him, as I did all my patients, and



found that he was the developer of the concept of a code based on the Navajo Indian language for use in the armed forces. The Japanese were especially good at breaking our communication codes, and something needed to be done.

Philip Johnston was an engineer for the city of Los Angeles at the outbreak of the war. He had spent a major part of his life on the Navajo Reservation and spoke the language fluently. His life there began at the age of four when his Protestant missionary father, William Riley Johnston, and his mother Margaret took him to the reservation, where he was raised. During those early years, he had only Indian children to play with and learned their language, songs, and traditions.

The idea of using the Indian language for code started when he saw an article in the paper about an armored division trying out a secret communication system using Indian personnel. This had been tried but had not worked because the Indians had no words in their vocabulary that were the equivalent of military terms.

Mr. Johnston, however, had a plan, not to use the translation of the Indian language but to build up a code using Indian words such as “fast shooter” for machine gun, “iron rain” for a barrage, and “turtle” for tank. The Navajo language is extremely difficult

to master and, as such, is an ideal language for a code system. The words must be pronounced with a precision that is almost impossible for any adult to master, particularly because of the complexity of the verb forms of the language.

After the usual red tape of the military, the plan was approved, and 29 Navajos were recruited to be trained as “code talkers”.

They used the 211 words most frequently used, along with an alphabet to spell out words and names not in the syllabus. The words for the alphabet were mostly animal names. The names for the airplanes and ships were particularly interesting to me: dive bomber – chicken hawk, observation plane – owl, fighter plane – hummingbird, bomber – buzzard.

For ships we have: battleship – whale, aircraft carrier – bird carrier, submarine – iron fish, destroyer – shark, transport – man carrier.

At the end of training, 27 code talkers were shipped out to Guadalcanal, where they were invaluable. Another 400 were eventually trained as code talkers. The Japanese never broke this code.

Philip Johnston and I became good friends, and he gave me an autographed copy of a book written by Doris A. Paul, who has beautifully documented the story, as well as information on many of the Indians. A fascinating man with a fantastic story!

—by Ray Lawton

Community Garden

“Raindrops keep falling on our heads,” so we haven’t met together. Please try to spruce up your plot after the rain, and prepare for spring planting. Roses will need pruning soon. Using white glue is a simple way to seal the freshly cut stems.

We won’t meet again until spring arrives in Fairfield.

—by Jan Holderness

A French Noel



Christmas in Paris! It was hard to believe, for Otto's business had brought us here in March of 1956 with our three children for a stay of six weeks. Due to the vagaries of life, we were still there a good many months later.

The decorations in the streets and stores and the bustling of the shopping season were too contagious to ignore. Though we were without our lights and ornaments, we decided to visit the flower market, where we were told that we could get a tree. All five of us piled into the car and drove through the snowy streets. The flower market was a fairyland. There were lots of evergreens and trees that we were used to, but there were also many blooming trees and shrubs and plants in all colors and exotic shapes and sizes. The very damp and earthy smells mingling with the excitement of the shoppers made it an unforgettable experience. We chose a tree that would go nearly to the ceiling of our apartment.

We couldn't justify the expense of lights and ornaments, nor did we want to pack one more thing into our belongings, so we thought we would just enjoy a woodland tree. We didn't count on the children. They remembered paper chains and strings of popcorn, and soon our tree began to look festive with its simple garlands.

Then, what a stroke of luck! Otto had to make a short business trip to Innsbruck, Austria, and came home with a huge box of cookies decorated with colored frostings and foil wrappings and ribbons to hang on the tree. We spent a whole afternoon decorating. Now it was perfect!

We had a little afternoon party for the children and their friends, who each chose a pretty cookie from the tree to take home. Cheered by this party, we made some phone calls and had an evening party for some adult friends, who nibbled cookies with their wine punch.

By the time Christmas was over, there were only paper chains and tired strings of popcorn to take off, but we loved that tree. It gave us one of the most memorable Christmases we ever had.

—by Ellie Vasak

December 7 again

Everybody was somewhere 63 years ago on 7 December 1941. I had flown a Douglas B-18 bomber from Ladd Field, Fairbanks, Alaska down to McClellan Field in Sacramento to have an experimental surface combustion heater installed by the air depot experts and was having breakfast in the officers club when news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor broke. We were two-and-a-half time zones ahead of Hawaii.

I was in the company of several crews from Hawaii, who were waiting for the depot to release Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers to take home. Field artillery batteries moved in, dug pits, installed their guns, and then rain filled the pits.

Believe you me, those depot mechanics got me out of there in a hurry. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day we loaded our B-18 and got away the following Sunday. At that time of year, weather was not favorable for flying up the coast to Alaska. The prescribed route was through Pendleton, Spokane, Great Falls, and Lethbridge, Edmonton, Peace River, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, and White Horse in Canada.

When I got home on 30 December, all windows had been blacked out, all dependents had been ordered out of the Territory, and Japanese were expected to be approaching from the south and west.

Everybody in Fairbanks enjoyed Christmas and New Year's Eve like everybody else, worldwide.

On 11 January 1942, I flew Genevieve, our son, Terry, and Jule McLain to Juneau to board a ship of the Alaska Steamship Company for the trip to Seattle. By the middle of February, the last of our military families had been flown down to Juneau.

—by Ancil Baker



2004 Holiday Gala

It's that time of the year again! The Paradise Valley Estates Annual Holiday Gala will take place on Thursday, December 9th, from 5:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Community Center.

“Home for the Holidays” is the theme selected by your resident Holiday Gala Committee. This should be a nostalgic night as we “trip the light fantastic” to the sounds of the Big Band era and enjoy the “sing alike crooners” of Frank Sinatra & Tony Bennett. Music will be available in both the Main Dining Room and the Multi-Purpose Room.



Our Executive Chef and his staff will be presenting an array of traditional delectable delights to please even the most discriminating palate. We will be serving identical menus in both the Main Dining Room and the Multi-Purpose Room, along with complimentary red and white wine. All other beverages will be available at the “no host” bars located in The Club and the Multi-Purpose Room. Our festive wait staff will be available to provide assistance with food and beverages for any resident who may require it.

To satisfy the sweet tooth, stop by The Café, where Chef Dwayne will be preparing spectacular flaming Crepe Suzettes and Cherries Jubilee for dessert. A buffet dessert table will also be available in the Main Dining Room.

Our “Home for the Holidays” gala celebration would not be complete without a visit to the “train depot”. The Meeting Room will be transformed into an Alpine Village, where you can enjoy an old-time model train set-up and enjoy being a spectator as it

Big Band Music

Do you like to listen to good big band music with just a touch of jazz? KKSM Palomar radio is streaming live on the web!

If you have a PC computer with Internet access, you can listen to *Doug Best Swings* each Saturday morning from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. It broadcasts live from Palomar College, KKSM 1320 AM in Oceanside, CA. To listen, go to www.palomar.edu/adtextkksm.htm. Click on “Click here to enjoy KKSM live.” Doug Best is a long time friend that I used to work with on his broadcasts when I lived in Oceanside. Call me at 426-9422 if you need assistance in getting the broadcast.

—by Jack Albrecht



chugs through the Bavarian Alps with Conductor John Leins at the controls.

For those who enjoy a more intimate setting, The Club will offer the place where you can enjoy the camaraderie of friends while listening to the vocals and guitar of Emil E. Vinet and sip your favorite libation.

As always, we have a few elements of surprise that you can anticipate! (But these are a secret!) That's why we are encouraging all of you to come enjoy this wonderful celebration with your friends, neighbors, Premier Club members, the NCROC Board of Directors, and staff as we all enjoy coming “Home for the Holidays”.

Cocktail attire is suggested.

—by the Holiday Gala Committee

What's Coming Up

- ◆ *Holiday Shopping in Walnut Creek and Union Square (with lights)*
- ◆ *Napa Valley Symphony with San Francisco Boys Choir, Napa*
- ◆ *North Bay Opera Chorus at PVE*
- ◆ *Solano Winds at PVE*
- ◆ *Christmas Lights Tours and pie at Marie Callendar's*
- ◆ *"The Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya" Exhibit at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco*

What We're Working On

- ◆ *"Forever Tango", San Francisco*
- ◆ *"Glamour: Fashion, Industrial Design, Architecture" at SFMOMA, San Francisco*
- ◆ *"Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo" at the Marin Center, San Rafael*
- ◆ *Winter Afternoon Tea*
- ◆ *Renee Fleming, Mondavi Center, Davis*
- ◆ *Comedian Tony Castle @ PVE*
- ◆ *Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Luther Burbank Center, Santa Rosa*
- ◆ *"Big River" – Best of Broadway Series, Sacramento Community Center Theater*
- ◆ *"Noel and Gertie" – Center REP, Dean Leshner Center, Walnut Creek*
- ◆ *"Fly Me To The Moon" – Smuin Ballet at the Leshner Center, Walnut Creek*
- ◆ *KORET Fashion Show*
- ◆ *"Giselle" – St. Petersburg Ballet, Marin Center, San Rafael*
- ◆ *Snow Train to Reno*
- ◆ *Lang Lang and the China Philharmonic, Mondavi Center, Davis*
- ◆ *Vienna Choir Boys, Marin Center, San Rafael*
- ◆ *"Singing in the Rain" – Best of Broadway Series, Sacramento Community Center Theater*
- ◆ *Elliott Kennin Dixieland @ PVE*
- ◆ *Great Composers Concert with pianist Dickran Atamian, Solano Symphony*
- ◆ *"Candide in Concert"- Festival Light Opera, Dean Leshner Center, Walnut Creek*
- ◆ *Nadia Solerno-Sonnenberg and the Assad Brothers, Mondavi Center, Davis*

- ◆ *Napa Valley Symphony with soprano Cyndia Sieden*
- ◆ *"The Importance of Being Earnest", Solano College Theater*
- ◆ *Morgan Lawrence "Great Trains" @ PVE*
- ◆ *"Peter and the Wolf" – Napa Valley Symphony*
- ◆ *Solano Symphony's annual Pops Concert*
- ◆ *"Man of LaMancha" – Davis Musical Theater Company*
- ◆ *"Oh, Kay" at Spreckles Performing Arts Theater, Rohnert Park*
- ◆ *Andre Watts with Napa Valley Symphony*
- ◆ *Audra McDonald, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley*
- ◆ *"Frankie & Johnny" – Smuin Ballet at the Leshner Center, Walnut Creek*
- ◆ *"The Lion King" – Best of Broadway Series, Sacramento Community Center Theater*
- ◆ *"Zarzuela" – Jarvis Conservatory, Napa*
—by Lise Hansen

Christmas Dinner, 1930s

I stood on a chair next to the kitchen counter so I could watch my mother. She was preparing the turkey for Christmas dinner. There was no Raley's down the street where we could buy a frozen turkey, and it was the Depression. My dad had done the preliminaries – catching, killing, cleaning, and now it was Mother's bird.

I watched her get it ready to cook. She sliced the turkey's abdomen and removed a lot of things I didn't want to look at. She saved the kidneys and the gizzard to chop up to make gravy, which I later refused to eat. After washing the inside and the outside, Mother put a wonderful stuffing into the turkey. It went into the oven, and several hours later it was ready for Christmas dinner. Everyone else put gravy on their mashed potatoes. I ate mine with butter.

—by Marjory Parker

An Unforgettable WWII Memory

On May 10, 1942, my brother George and I were captured by the Japanese in the Philippine Islands. He was shipped to Japan by the Japanese army six months into our internment. I remained in the Philippine Islands. I received five letters from home while a POW, but none of them indicated that my family knew what happened to George.

At the end of the war, I was in a POW camp near the town of Toyama on the island of Honshu, Japan. I was returned to military control on September 5, 1945, when I boarded the hospital ship USS Rescue. One of the first things I did was check to see if any other POWs were aboard. There were a few, but none knew George. After a few days of processing, I was transported to Atsugi Air Base. Here, I finally located one individual who said he knew George. He told me that about a year ago a guard had come out to their detail one day, ordered George to go with him, and they departed. George never came back while this individual was in the camp. This was not a good omen – from experience in my own camp, if a guard took an individual away, he seldom came back. However, I now knew that he had survived the trip to Japan and was still alive a year ago. I refused to give up hope.

On or about September 12, I was flown to the island of Okinawa. We were taken to a huge “tent city” and assigned to a specific area and tent. Temporary electric lights were used for general lighting. It was just enough so you could see the paths at night.

Here, we were processed in a more thorough manner in that our full name, unit, home state, and branch of service were noted. This information was posted on a huge bulletin board under the various headings. This made it easy to find a particular individual if you knew any details about him. New lists were posted every couple of hours.

Ever since my liberation, I had been on an adrenalin rush of elation. I had beaten the odds! I kept looking for people who may possibly know about George. Except for the one individual at Atsugi, I had nothing. I was so hyped I could only sleep an hour or two at a time. Too restless to remain in bed, I would get up, check the bulletin

board for the newest updates and interview new arrivals who might know George. After a few hours of this, I would again be able to sleep for a bit. This kept me in constant fluctuation between a high and a low, a high when I would find someone who knew George and another low when all they knew was that he had been alive, but none of them had seen or heard about him in the past year.

About 2 a.m. in the morning of my second day on Okinawa, I was returning to my tent from another futile round of searching. In my stupor, I stumbled into another person. Without really looking, I said, “I’m sorry, I didn’t see you.” Out of the darkness came, “Ray?” I literally froze. I knew that voice! George was alive! That is how we found each other after three-and-a-half years as POWs...a moment I will never forget.

—by Ray Heimbuch

Dining at PVE



The Dining Services Committee has noted a general deterioration of attire in the formal dining room. Adherence to the suggestion of neckties for the gentlemen on Saturday nights adds to the “special occasion” atmosphere.

Also, it has been observed that some residents in the formal dining area are walking to the casual area to help themselves to items intended for casual diners or even asking servers to procure items for them. Please note that the above practices are not acceptable.

On the plus side, most residents are pleased with the service our wait staff is providing. The incentive program continues to work well. Rosalie was October’s big winner.

—by Madelynn Wolfe,
Chairperson, Dining Services Committee

Bocce Ball at PVE

The 2004 bocce ball season, PVE's first, has to have been considered a success. The court was completed by June 1. Lessons were conducted during the ensuing month, exposing some 45 residents to the game. Some who thought they were too old, too stiff, or too disinterested in the game were delightfully surprised.

Official league play began with six teams of four players each. Ranked according to the number of wins, the six teams were:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Al Kocher Andy McClanahan Rusty McClanahan Isabel Redfield | 2. John Kroyer Elaine Schmidt Paul Schmidt John Barber | 3. Ed Millson Millie Healy Duncan Kelly Joan Kelly |
| 4. Lorne Hillier Hal Carter Airo Gonnella Bud Griffin | 5. Russ Bowen Gay Bowen Pat Palmos Bill Johnson | 6. Phil Knebel Gloria Schwoeffermann Bill Stoneberg LaVerne Elwood |

League Team Standings

| | Won | Lost | Won | Lost |
|----|-----|------|-----|------|
| 1. | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | 7 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. | 5 | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| | | | | 9 |

Plans for the 2005 season: In March of 2005 the intent is to renovate the court as soon as the winter rains stop. Further efforts will be made to include those who were interested in playing this year but were unable to form teams for league play, as well as other residents who have expressed interest in the game. All are welcome!

—by John Kroyer



Wind From the Sea

It's bitter cold in "the Windy City",
That bustling burg by a large lagoon;
Their bone-chilling air can ne'er compare
With the bland breezes at Fairfield-Suisun.

They say that the Indians named it
For the wind that blows in from the sea,
With caressing currents of warmth and love,
To our sheltered cove at PVE.

—by Jack Sorrelle

Holiday Lights

Kick off the holiday season at PVE's first annual holiday lighting ceremony!

Join us on the patio in front of the Recreation Center on Friday, Dec. 3rd, starting at 4:30 p.m.

Come and enjoy a warm beverage as a local children's choir serenades us with melodies of the season, and at 5:00 p.m. Ron Ridley will throw the big switch to officially light up PVE for the holiday season!

Busy Hands, Warm Hearts



Whoever originated the claim, “You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear,” hadn’t reckoned with the talents of our PVE Arts and Crafts group. Twenty-six knitters and crocheters and six quilters have given the lie to that old adage.

With bits and pieces of what they jokingly call “garbage,” they work wonders.

Never one to pass up an opportunity for coffee and cookies, and maybe a bit of chitchat on behalf of *Elysian Fields*, I took advantage of the Arts and Crafts November Open House invitation. Arriving early, note pad clutched conspicuously in hand, I was greeted cordially by Janice Abrams, who proceeded to usher me around the exhibit and identify the maker of each artistically crafted contribution.

Long tables were heaped with vibrant multi-colored knitted and crocheted squares that had been individually crafted and later transformed into lap robes or throws by additional knitting and crocheting. Laurel Love and Corinne Ekern were responsible for much of the finishing. Destination for the throws will be Mission Solano, a local organization that will distribute them among the poor and homeless in time for a bit of winter comfort.

Scattered on another table were handmade shoulder wraps, most of which are destined for Laurel Creek Health Center. Resident Mary Peterson, who happened to be sitting near that table, told me she had received a wrap during a recent stay at David Grant Hospital. It was cozy then, she told me, and is cozy now that she’s back home.

Serene Miller was quietly monitoring a table of crib-size handmade quilts, every one of them unique, elegant, and colorful. They were for sale, the proceeds to be used for material for future hand-crafter projects. One was sold to a gentleman while I stood there, and I could picture a chubby little baby happily sucking a thumb and snuggling into that lovingly produced “blankie.”

I ran into Lily Pattison at the table of baby sweaters, some of which she had made. Lily, a

standout in a handmade red, white, and blue sweater with great swaths of white stars front and back, loves to share her craft by teaching.

Helen Wiley has been an ongoing contributor of materials and finished products for years, with her primary goal being to add a bit of color to life at Laurel Creek. Only a few of her handmade pillows were exhibited, but she admits to having crafted fifty of them for the Health Center.

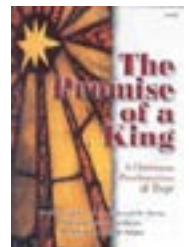
By the time I was ready to leave, the room was crowded. Al Abrams’ camera had flashed dozens of times. I could hear the “oh’s” and “ah’s” of admiration for the handicraft. I had just a minute to ask Janice, who had acted as my docent, what her official title was. “Oh,” she said modestly, “I’m just the one with the key to the cupboards where we keep all our material.”

PVE owes a big round of applause to all our diligent handcrafters. They do us proud!

Jingle, Jingle, Jingle

The PVE chorus has plans for heralding the Christmas season. On Sunday, December 12th, at the 10:00 a.m. church service in the Multi-Purpose Room, they will sing *The Promise of a King*, a Christmas cantata.

Under the capable direction of Carol Block, the chorus will give a second performance in the MPR on Monday evening, December 13th, at 7:30 p.m. In addition to a repeat performance of the Christmas cantata, the program will include new and old favorite Christmas carols.



Audience participation will definitely be encouraged by the Jingle, Jingle song leaders. Carol says, “Let our voices resound to the rafters.” She continues enthusiastically, “The group has been working diligently for months on the program and we hope you will enjoy the music.”

Christmas Customs

When I was a kid in the 1920's, we always had a large evergreen tree for Christmas. Even though the ceilings in our home were high, my father always overestimated what we needed in the way of a tree – and he always had to cut off about two feet of tree height.

The tree would be a spruce with stiff branches to hold lights, ornaments, and other goodies. The goodies were imported cookies and candies from Czechoslovakia and were especially designed for hanging on the tree. This was an old Bohemian custom, which visiting children enjoyed. When my friends came to our house, they were invited to take cookies and candy from the tree. This practice added an extra, festive touch to the celebration of Christmas in our Chicago home.

—by Otto Vasak

Computer User Groups (CUGs)

Instead of our annual social happy hour for our members, we are saving our limited funds this year so we will be able to buy some accessories and up-to-date software when it comes on the market.



The main purpose of CUGs is to provide a format so all members can learn from each other. These meetings are not only for beginners. To be successful, it is important for those who are computer literate to attend these meetings to share their knowledge with other members. Starting in January 2005, we will have a new signup sheet in the Green Book for our three CUGs.

—by Jack Biederman

Clerisy Meeting

A cozy little group of thirteen gathered around the round table in the Round Room on Thursday night, the 21st of October, to discuss the book they had all been reading, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by Mark Haddon. Eric Daniel led the discussion, stating this was an “extraordinary” book. It is the fictional story of a 15-year-old boy who is autistic with a high IQ, being a whiz at math.

The title of the book is a quote from Sherlock Holmes in a Conan Doyle book. Haddon has a degree from Oxford and had worked with the handicapped. In analyzing the book, Eric Daniel asked, “Does it ring true to what autism is?” Autism was discussed very thoroughly around the table, it generally being believed that it is, above all, genetic. Most of the book lovers seemed to have enjoyed the book. The MIND group at U C Davis felt it gave an accurate picture of autism. *The Curious Incident* was a best seller.

Bill Gum will be the next group leader for the 250 page book, *The Jane Austen Book Club*, a novel by Karen Joy Fowler. Each chapter is about one of six members of the book club. “Incidentally”, said Bill, “the author, Karen Joy Fowler, will be in Vacaville in November, so be on the lookout for her in the papers.”

There will be no Clerisy meeting in December, and Liz Wildberger has agreed to chair the meeting in January, when the book will be *The Kite Runner* by Kahled Hosseini.

The group meeting was from 7:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. this month. No bus runs after 8 p.m., so one must make other arrangements to return home.

—by Bev Clemson



On the Links in November

November was not a good month for golf. Most of the players succumbed to the threat of rain after looking out the window and seeing the wet streets and cloudy sky. That factor, on top of staying up most of the night to see who won the presidential election, was my downfall. There were six brave souls who ventured out on the golf course and were rewarded with reasonably good conditions.



Since there are no results to report from the PVE November golf tournament, I thought we could use some brushing up on our *Rules of Golf* as approved by the United States Golf Association and The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland. Let's start with etiquette:

Consideration for other players: The player who has the honor should be allowed to play before his opponent or fellow competitor tees his ball. No one should move, talk or stand close to or directly behind the ball or the hole when a player is addressing the ball or making a stroke. No player should play until the players in front are out of range.

Pace of play: In the interest of all, players should play without delay. If a player believes a ball may be lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds, to save time he should play a provisional ball. Players searching for a ball should signal the players behind them to pass as soon as it becomes apparent the ball will not easily be found. They should not search for five minutes before doing so. They should not continue play until the players following them have passed and are out of range. When the play of a hole has been completed, players should immediately leave the putting green. If a match (team) fails to keep its place on the course and loses more than one clear hole on the players in front, it should invite the match following to pass.

Priority on the course: In the absence of special

rules, two-ball matches should have precedence over and be entitled to pass any three-or-four-ball match, which should invite them through. A single player has no standing and should give way to a match of any kind. Any match playing a whole round is entitled to pass a match playing a shorter round.

Who is going to be the next **Intrepid Golfer**? Better come to the golf party at 1700 hours after the golf game on Wednesday, the 1st of December, in the club and find out. Don't forget to bring a good joke or story to tell. John Kroyer is thinking about canceling the January 5th tournament but, if enough of us are interested in playing, he said he would be willing to try. Be prepared to give your opinion at the party. Winter is here, so dress warmly and keep your jackets handy. Until the next golf game, have your caddy clean up your clubs and eat lots of greens.

—by John Gearhart



Rain, Rain, Rain

Are we having early rains this year? Well, it may look like it. Here are the rainfall records of mid-November for PVE back to the year 2000. We certainly have had some rain this year, and we need it — so let it fall!

| | |
|------|-------------|
| 2000 | 2.75 inches |
| 2001 | 3.30 |
| 2002 | 4.30 |
| 2003 | 1.45 |
| 2004 | 5.70 Wow! |

—by Bill Johnson,
substituting for the “cruising” Pete Palmos

Wellness/Fitness

As 2004 draws rapidly to a close, it is a time of reflection and looking ahead. Motivation for healthy living comes from more than making a personal commitment to improving your health. Think about the wide range of motivators in your life: your spouse, a friend, a mentor, an event, your culture, your environment.



As health professionals in aging, we can become motivators by refining our work as facilitators, not just teachers. Our work includes developing key partnerships that inspire and help to bring about change. Bringing new programs to our community is part of this motivation. Recently, we brought the NeuroFit exercise program to Paradise Valley Estates. This was due to the generous donation by Jean Myers to fund the entire cost of this program. Jean will leave a lasting legacy here at PVE to all residents involved in this program. As the year ends, it may be a time to consider leaving your own legacy with a donation to a worthy cause or program close to your heart. The NeuroFit program launch was a huge success thanks to the participation of our PVE residents. We will be incorporating the program in our Fitness in Paradise calendar in January.

Our monthly support groups will be held as follows:

Parkinson's Support Group Monday, December 6th 2:30 p.m. in the ALDen LCHC, Caregivers' Support Group Wednesday, December 8th 2:30 p.m. ALDen LCHC, New Beginnings Support Group Tuesday, December 21st at 2:30 p.m. SMPR.

Also, please mark your calendars to attend our fitness holiday potluck, which will be held on Friday, December 17th at 11:30 a.m.

Please bring your favorite holiday main dish or appetizer to share. Dessert and drinks will be pro-

Winter Solstice

When the sun is at the lowest zenith point in all the year,
The cold comes creeping on us in the northern hemisphere.
From olden times we've searched for light in all these darkest days,
And history recalls for us so very many ways.

The Jews have Hanukkah, about the lamp that kept on burning.
The Greeks told of the dying god that always kept returning.
The Romans, for a bright spot, had their sunny Saturnalia,
When they would celebrate in all their toga-like regalia.
The Christians celebrate the birth of a wee baby boy
Who would bring light into the world; we call it Christmas joy.

And thus we search for different ways to brighten up the gloom,
With candles in our windows and hothouse flowers in bloom.
Winter needs a happy time, a break for celebration,
At home, in stores, in city, country, and around the nation.
So, as we have our galas and our holidays together,
Let's wear our hats and coats and gloves. Enjoy the wintry weather!

—by Elly Vasak



vided.

The entire fitness staff wishes you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

—by Jan Olsen, Your Fitness Manager

Déjà vu

Déjà vu occurs when you feel you've been somewhere before, but reason tells you it couldn't be, because you never have. This happened to me in Wales. I had a three-day pass and wanted to see Liverpool, where my father had preached thirty years before as a Mormon missionary.

The bus schedule was perfect. By leaving early in the morning, it was possible to get to Liverpool, some 200 miles from Cardiff, and back by late afternoon. This provided a few hours to sightsee in Liverpool.

The road from Cardiff, on the Bristol Channel, wound through lush green fields and over the beautiful Cambrian Mountains. It was a series of green valleys and steep ridges with an occasional quaint old village. It ended in Liverpool, on the Irish Sea.

As we neared the end of the trip, only one last steep hill separated me from a view of Liverpool. As the bus climbed the hill, an image formed in my mind's eye. It was a clear and detailed outline of a large city with many buildings, spires, and chimneys. Liverpool, though, was still over the crest of this last hill and completely hidden from sight. At last we cleared the top of the hill, and there at the foot of the road was Liverpool. It was exactly as I was seeing it in my mind, complete in every detail. My mind was boggled. How could this be happening?

Not much is remembered of what was seen in Liverpool that day, as most of my time was spent puzzling over what had been pictured in my mind while climbing that last hill.

I consider myself a scientist with over forty years of experience in many parts of the world, but this had me stopped. Never before had I experienced this. Was it hallucination? Could Stonehenge not far away have had any influence? To this day, some sixty years later, the image is still sharp in my memory. But it is still an unexplained mystery. Was it déjà vu? Can you explain it?

—by Dick Clawson

News from your library

A special thanks goes to those who have paperbacks and graciously give them for our combat troops in Iran. We have another box ready to go now, and Freddi Miller sends some in her box to her cousin in Iran.

You must know that magazines are gratefully accepted in the library, and the duplicates or outdated magazines go to our own health center and David Grant hospital. Our health center especially likes the *National Geographic*. You might be interested to know that we have computer magazines, too, to be found in the back computer room.

We are thankful that so many of you like to read and do read so many of our books. The bottom shelf books sometimes go a-wanting, however. Do reach down and get one, even if you have to drag a chair over to do so. We have some good ones down there.

—by Bev Clemson



Move-ins since the Last Issue

Marschall, Barton "Bart", Col., USAF(Ret) & Eula
4010 Constitution Avenue
Peoria, AZ

Shay, Michael, Lt.Col., USAF(Ret)
2213 Estates Drive
San Francisco, CA

Not a Creature Was Stirring

Except one little mouse

Time: December 24-25, 1955.

Location: Lake Tahoe.

Characters: Jim and Linda Faraday, daughters nine-year-old Jane and three-year-old Val. Setting: a two story log cabin in the woods tucked into 18 inches of iridescent snow.

Mood: ecstasy all around – for a while.

Narrator: Linda Faraday

Scene 1: Gamboling playfully through the snow, we unloaded the car. I promised the girls a cup of hot chocolate as soon as our food was unpacked. I opened the fridge door, totally unprepared for our first challenge. The previous tenant had properly turned off the electricity but had improperly left a stash of fish and a carton of ice cream in the freezer. The stench nearly knocked me off my feet. I stuffed our own perishables into plastic containers, and the girls tucked them into the snow outside the back door.

Scene 2: The refrigerator had to be sanitized immediately. Not only was there no hot water, there was no water at all. The pipes were frozen. A drive into town produced some quick fix groceries and a plumber, who freed our water with his vibrator at Christmas Eve prices.

Scene 3: Jim built a fire, and we propped a door against the stairwell to keep the meager heat from escaping upward. We found several electric heaters, which we proceeded to plug into every available outlet. The fuses blew. We groped around in the darkness, retrieved a flashlight from the car, and finally located extra fuses. Jane and Val slept in the single downstairs bedroom. Jim and I slept on a hide-a-bed in the living room.

Scene 4: Christmas Day, time for a good hot breakfast. The girls went outside to retrieve our stash of goodies. They returned carrying bits and pieces of smashed plastic, looking completely bewildered. A quick inspection revealed that a native predator had requisitioned our bacon and steaks and vegetables, leaving a trail that led into the woods. We had a hot breakfast in town. Most of the rest of

the day was joyous.

Scene 5: It was just a *little* mouse. Jim later insisted it was really quite a pretty thing. I think I first saw it running across the living room floor. I didn't actually *see* it. It was more that I picked it up with my peripheral vision as it scooted by. Much like silly stereotyped cartoon characters, I shrieked. "EEEEEEEEEEK!" My first instinct was to save my children. "Girls," I screamed, "get in bed and don't come out until I tell you." I slammed their door.

Scene 6: Armed with a broom, Jim was valiantly pursuing the dragon only halfheartedly, while I kept telling myself, "Mickey Mouse is a lovable character, Mickey Mouse is a lovable character."

Sometime during the fracas, the door that had been propped against the stairwell fell, hitting Jim squarely on the head. I did have the presence of mind to show concern, though I didn't leave my perch on the sofa to inspect the damage. "Are you all right, Honey?" When I heard "Dammit," I knew he was conscious. The mouse escaped.

Scene 7: We moved into a cozy motel. During the next few days, we dined in warm restaurants and enjoyed a show at an upscale hotel. Val memorized, "The Cat in the Hat." Jane looked forward to regaling her friends with tales of her adventures. The lump on Jim's head disappeared, mostly. I recorded that family holiday, and I'm happy to relive it now. Thank you for letting me share it with you.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!

—by Linda Faraday





A Royal Performance of Rob Roy

While I was on active duty with the U.S. Air Force in Edinburgh, Scotland, the base commander gave me two tickets so my wife Mary and I could attend a special performance of *Rob Roy*, a national drama with music by Mr. Isaac Pocock, based on the novel by Sir Walter Scott.

It took place at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in October 1962 and was given in honor of His Majesty the King of Norway and in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. We dressed for this festive occasion. I was in my rented tux and Mary in her new pink silk gown, which was specially made for her by our 80-year-old seamstress and “kid sitter”.

It was a lovely night as I skillfully maneuvered our blue 1962 Volkswagen into a small space between a Cadillac and a Rolls Royce, albeit a great distance from the theatre. After a mighty spirited walk, we arrived breathless, on time to claim our balcony seats. The seats were just great, affording us a fine view of both the attending royalty as well as the gala performance of *Rob Roy*, our first experience with theatre in Scotland.

—by Alton Falling

REMEMBERING . . .

Lt.Col. William G. Broome, USAF (Ret)
Loving Husband and Father
Arrived at PVE: September 22, 1998
Departed: November 1, 2004

Mrs. Anne Broome
Loving Wife and Mother
Arrival at PVE: September 22, 1998
Departed: November 2, 2004

Mrs. Billie George
Loving Wife and Mother
Arrived at PVE: December 14, 2000
Departed: November 15, 2004



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 of the subject matter editors or the editor.

Daylight Requisition

We've all heard of "midnight requisition." The exigencies of military transfers often result in unusual living arrangements. In 1955, with six little ones to house, we were lucky to acquire a place to live in Verona, North Carolina, near New Bern, which was near Camp Lejeune. If you were ever stationed there, you may remember the deserted old two-story red brick hotel which sat just at the railroad stop and across the road from the little white church. It was deserted, except that the upper floor, where all the hotel rooms were, had been converted into an apartment. It was perfect for our family. The ceilings were 12 feet high.

We have always had the biggest tree that would fit in our house, but this year a 12-foot tree seemed impossible. Not for this Marine dad! One afternoon, after school, the kids came yelling up the stairs, "Mother, come quick! There's a helicopter landing out in the street." It was not just any old helicopter. It was a helicopter full of a 14-foot Christmas tree. Obviously, Santa's "Elves" had been out to the woods doing some daylight requisitioning.

—by Pat Miller

The Garden's Still Pretty

I took a little jaunt over to the community garden the other day, and most plots are still quite nice. Hal Carter has done some terracing with red blocks. Another party has some Swiss chard planted in neat rows. Al Kocher is growing some very green basil. In several places lovely roses are in evidence, some of which even have a good scent. Garden paths are kept weeded, except in a very few places. It is a great place to have a little quiet walk.

—by Bev Clemson

ELYSIAN FIELDS STAFF ORGANIZATION

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
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| Make-up, Layout, Publishing | Marj Parker, and Joe & Angie Sanner and Jackie Peterson |
| Photography | Jack Albrecht and Jack Biederman |

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- (1) **Biographies of PVE residents**
Joan Teague
- (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
- (5) **Fitness feature writer** Jan Olson
- (6) **Poems** Elly Vasak

True Christmas

I don't believe in Christmas
That's mainly under the tree;
I believe in year 'round Christmas
That's in the heart,
Bringing endless joy
To you and me.

—by Jack Sorrelle