

ELUSIAN FIELDS

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A Commercial Break

The idea for the TV commercial popped up during a brainstorming session with Leo Burnett, our Chicago-based advertising agency for our company, Memorex. One of us recalled the legend of Caruso shattering a glass. Crazy Jim, the chief “creative” from Burnett, latched on to this at once and, after some discussion, we came up with the following scenario. Assuming we could find a way to break a glass with a live voice, we would demonstrate that a recording of this voice made on our tape would break a glass just as easily.

The first step was to find a glass that could be broken. I thought the likely candidates would be high-quality wine glasses that sang vigorously when their rims were rubbed by a wet finger. I visited all the major stores in the Bay Area searching for singing glassware. The wet-finger test made me very unpopular, and so I resorted to whacking glasses with an eraser-tipped pencil and listening to them sing. The sales people still thought I was nuts.

Back at the lab, we failed to break a single glass. Fortunately, in the interim, the agency had hired an acoustical consultant (and amateur magician) called Peter, and he found the magic glass that broke. It was surprisingly big – more like a water goblet. We bought the entire stock of the small Swiss manufacturer, and the experimental program took off. The key event was when an operatic tenor, an understudy at the Met whom I will call Enrico, shattered some of Peter’s glasses.

It finally came time to make the commercial. The key players, headed by Peter and Enrico, set

off for Hollywood. The studio was an untidy place, crowded with unionized studio hands, including one whose sole job was to dust our glasses with a rag pulled from the hip pocket of his jeans. Dusty and his buddies had no incentive to work fast, and we weren’t ready to roll until late afternoon. Enrico was cued on the pitch he had to hit, the camera whirred, the clipboard was displayed, the studio’s finger specialist started the cassette recorder, and away we went. But the glass didn’t break. A second try failed. So did a third. Poor Enrico was almost in tears, and he was beginning to sound hoarse. It was time to



take a rest.

When we resumed, Enrico looked pale but resolute. When the time came, he hit the final note and destroyed that wretched glass! There was a spontaneous standing ovation! We clapped, cheered, and shouted “Bravo!” Unfortunately, all this noise ruined the take. We had to try again. This time Enrico was confident. He broke the glass, and the recorded tape broke its mate. To be on the safe side, we made two more takes, and both were successful.

It was time to celebrate. We toasted Enrico and Peter before they flew home. Three of us remained and, led by Crazy Jim, continued to celebrate until we anesthetized the homing instinct.

The commercial ran nationally for several years; one version starred Ella Fitzgerald.

—by Eric Daniel

The Skier

Phyllis Schmal still skis way into her retirement years. A few broken bones along the way have not slowed her down. She has a whole display cabinet full of her trophies and a cupboard overflowing with the medals she has won. She is proudest of a real gold medal she won as a U. S. National Slalom Champion. She first learned to ski in her teens while living in her native Oregon. What better place could she have chosen to have lessons than Mt. Hood?

Aside from her childhood memories of skiing, she treasures recollections of her summers spent on Oregon farms with aunts and uncles, all of whom had grown up as future farmers on her grandfather's farm. She enjoyed everything about farm life, especially taking care of animals.

Phyllis went to high school in Portland and graduated from the University of Oregon with a political science major. During her summer vacations, while in college, she had jobs in local shipyards, as a pipe fitter for sub chasers and then as a welder building ships for the Merchant Marine. After graduation she went to work for the government in the atomic energy field. She was at the facility in Hanford, Washington, in Los Angeles, and finally in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where she met Fermi. Her next assignment was in Washington, D.C., under Admiral Rickover, working on designs for the first atomic submarine. She had high security clearances in all these jobs.

Next, working for the Department of Defense, she was posted in Munich, Germany. She stayed in Munich for six years. It was an ideal location for

skiing in the Alps. Among her duties as public relations director for the Seventh Army Leadership Academy was producing a local radio program and a television documentary, which she saw for the first time after her return to the United States.

She left Germany following her marriage to

Bob Schmal, whom she had met in Munich. They were married at Fort Monroe, Virginia, where Bob was then stationed. His next assignment was Korea, so Phyllis decided to wait for him in Squaw Valley, where she watched the 1960 Winter Olympics and could ski much of the year. They bought a house there with a group and used it for vacations during the years after Bob's retirement from the Army. Phyllis still goes to Squaw Valley frequently.



They also owned a house in Los Gatos, convenient to the aircraft companies, where Bob was employed as a contract negotiator for the Department of Defense. Phyllis established her own business as a legal services representative. She served subpoenas on both individuals and business executives, sometimes using creative solutions to finding them in person. She was also involved with many volunteer activities supporting the community. She and Bob both enjoyed painting and attended various art shows to display their work and sometimes sell a painting. The walls of Phyllis's apartment are impressive with the original art work.

A year after her husband's death, she decided it was time to move to a retirement community and chose Paradise Valley Estates.

—by Joan Teague

Farewell to Manzanar

In the summer of 1975, we saw an ad for extras for a movie they were making about the 1942 internment of the Japanese-Americans. The movie was based on the book entitled



Farewell To Manzanar. It was an autobiographical account of Jeane Wakatsuki-Houston, who was sent to Manzanar Internment Camp as a child.

Since my husband was on summer vacation from teaching school, and being a “ham”, he thought it would be fun to see how movies were made. He was interested in what an internment camp was like, since he was born and raised in Utah and was never interned.

We drove to Tule Lake on the border of California and Oregon. The reason Tule Lake Relocation Center had been chosen as a setting for the movie was because it was one of the few camps which had barracks and a watchtower still standing.

We were assigned motels in Klamath Falls, Oregon, about 20 miles from Tule Lake. Every morning a bus would pick us up, and we would go to the set. I was surprised to see painted facades of barracks intermingled with the rows of old barracks. From the distance, it actually looked like a hastily built camp.

The wardrobe department outfitted us in cotton dresses and other clothes of the 1940s or whatever was required for the day’s shooting. Once I had to wear bobby socks and saddle shoes. My husband had to wear a dark suit for a scene calling for a group of friends lowering a grandma’s coffin into a grave.

In one scene, the mother of a soldier had received word that her son was killed in action in Europe. They had to shoot the scene over and over again until the director was satisfied. Some mornings, they would show the scene that was shot during the previous day at an old movie theater at Tule Lake, which had been closed for many years.

Many of the scenes we appeared in were cut from the film, but nonetheless, it was an interest-

ing summer we spent as movie extras, actually getting free meals and paid for having fun!

The movie brought back many memories, both good and bad, of the days I spent at Tulare Assembly Center and Gila River Relocation Center long ago.

—by Grace Miyagishima

Happy Days Are Here Again

Solano Winds, Fairfield’s community concert band, will present a concert at PVE on Tuesday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m. The theme for their 2006-2007 season is “Happy Days Are Here Again” and emphasizes the joy and celebratory nature of music in the life of our community. This first concert of the season will feature selections relating to school, football, and the Halloween holiday.

Robert Briggs, conductor and director of Solano Winds, has announced a program that should provide a joyous evening of band music for PVE residents. “The Academic Festival Overture,” by Johannes Brahms will open the program, followed by a medley of college football signature marches. Included are fight songs or alma mater music from Michigan, Ohio State, Illinois, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Washington, Oregon, Stanford, and California (Mr. Briggs’s musical home for 28 years), and the service academies.

Homage to the Halloween holiday will be recognized with the playing of a traditional favorite, “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” made famous in Disney’s film, *Fantasia*, and a new piece, “Ghosts,” by composer Stephen McNett, described as a complete fantasy, featuring themes of haunting and spectral occurrences. The program will conclude with Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance No. 1”.

Solano Winds has performed a complete season of concerts for PVE residents since 1998, and a partnership of musical enjoyment has existed since the initial concert. Residents Otto Vasak and William Preston are members of the band, and Liz Wildberger announces the selections.

—by Liz Wildberger

How I Failed Spying 101

Assignment for October Elysian Fields: Report on overheard cell phone conversations.

We've all overheard bits of conversations as we've gone about our daily chores away from home. This assignment appeared to be a breeze. A food market might be a good place to start. Trader Joe's should be a natural.

Enter the store with purse in cart, pad and pen in hand, spontaneously becoming psychologically transformed. I am Hercule Poirot, Dick Tracy, Monsieur Clouseau, shifty eyed, sneaky. I must act casual, toss a few random items in my basket.

Pay dirt. I spot three women, "Desperate Housewives" types, huddled over a phone. I edge up. "We're in some place called Fairfield," one giggles into her phone. That's it? I check out my groceries, noticing with declining spirits that I have included something called Cilantro Garlic Pesto Pizza. Ugh!

Safeway next, same routine. Again, I need something in my cart to make me look legitimate. Walking through the beer department, I consider something to kill the taste of cilantro pizza. I turn to a good-looking gentleman standing beside me. "What do you think of Russian stout?" I ask. (Chatting with interesting strangers is one of the valid perks of the job.)

"Very dark," he answers with a mischievous grin.

Not a cell phone in sight, I toss the bottle in my cart, pay and leave.

A few days later, still undaunted, I give the Commissary a shot. The only cell phone in sight is

held by a man, the conversation in Spanish.

Another day I cruise the mall, drawing a blank except for a free See's truffle that accompanies the box of lollypops I've bought. Lollypops can be very comforting, and I'm beginning to need comfort.

My daughter, Jane, who lives near Seattle, birthplace of Starbucks, naturally suggests I try Starbucks. "I've seen lots of people doing phone business there." (Our kids can be really useful sometimes.)

The music at the Starbucks near Raley's is so loud, I wouldn't be able to eavesdrop. I back out, head for Starbucks at the mall. As I enter, I mentally thank Jane for her brilliance as I focus on two mid-thirties, button-down-collar types anchored in front of their coffee, their laptops, and yes, their cell phones.

I invest in four dollars worth of latte and coffee cake and set up shop at a table within earshot of the two. After several minutes, one cradles his phone in his ear. My pencil is poised over my yellow pad. My heart is pounding.

"Yes, we'll be back in the office by noon," I hear. I glance at my watch. It is now 11:50!

As they pack up their gear and leave, I sadly sip my coffee, nibble my coffee cake, and review my fruitless efforts to complete my assignment. What have I done wrong? I come to two conclusions. 1) Eavesdropping can be successfully accomplished only when the target is sitting down waiting, as in a bus station or airport boarding area, and 2) the next time I'm sent out on an extended assignment, I'm not moving an inch until my editor assures me in writing that I'm working on a generous expense account.

—by Linda Faraday



Learning to Fly for the Army Air Corps



In the late 1930s, my family lived near enough to the flying school base at Randolph Field, Texas, to see the training planes flying over our area. During high school and college, I would look up at the trainers

flying over and would say to myself, "I am going to fly those planes one of these days."

In September, 1930, after two years of college, I was accepted in the cadet training program at Randolph Field. I had to wait a few months for training class 40H to begin. During this wait, I was given some rides in one of the trainers with instructors as pilots. They knew I had been accepted as a cadet, so they proceeded to give me the works. They did every acrobatic move the airplane could take. When we landed, I got out of the plane smiling. They seemed disappointed that I had really enjoyed the flight.

At that time, the Army Air Corps was just beginning to expand the cadet program. The primary training was done at civilian bases with civilian instructors. I was assigned for training at Tulsa, Oklahoma, and there my problems began.

My instructor was a former crop duster pilot who had no instructor ability for training new pilots. He expected the cadets to fly solo after minimum time in the plane.

We started with eight trainees, and the instructor began to "wash out" people with very little flying time. Very soon, we were down to six cadets. Then, there were three and soon only one — me.

This instructor was noted for his profanity in the air and could be heard on the ground above the noise of the engine. As the last in my group, I was not exactly enjoying the flying. One day the instructor yelled, "Land this blankety-blank plane and let me out. If you are going to kill someone, it's not going to be me!" He got out of the plane and said, "Go kill yourself." That really gave my

confidence a boost.

Once I was rid of that instructor, I soloed, and that was the beginning of my flying career. I flew solo most of the remaining time in primary training. When I graduated to basic training at Randolph Field, the instructors were Army Air Corps second lieutenants. I sailed through both the basic and advanced training programs and got my wings.

Before graduation, we were given three choices for unit assignments. I chose fighter planes first, bombers second, and instructing third. I got my first choice and was assigned to a fighter squadron at Selfridge Field, Michigan. There the real fun of flying began.

—by Tom Winburn

Clerisy

Willa Cather's superb, *My Antonia*, which has been on every best American novel list since its publication in 1918, is the choice for our discussion on October 19, our usual third Thursday meeting.

This is an inspiring and heartbreaking story of an immigrant from Bohemia, Antonia Shimerda, who, like thousands of other immigrating Europeans, sought a new life in the fabled land of America. Like them, Antonia became a homesteader on the limitless plains of Nebraska in the late 1800's. There, like the other homesteaders, she struggled to survive — at times on sheer hope — in a land which was like "the bush that burned with fire but was not consumed."

The prairie becomes a powerful protagonist in this spellbinding elegy to all the proud, hard-working immigrants who, like the unforgettable Antonia, built our country. Joan Teague, a long-time devotee of Willa Cather, will lead the discussion.

Remember, everyone who is interested is welcome to attend the discussion; it is not necessary to have read the book.

—by Gaylon Caldwell

Autumn Rhapsody

PVE fashion models are poised to come down the runway in the latest fall and winter fashions, as an “Autumn Rhapsody” luncheon and fashion show gets underway on Saturday, October 7. The Multi-Purpose Room at the Community Center will be transformed into an autumn garden, and one hundred fortunate guests will be invited to enjoy a seasonal luncheon, designed and prepared by Chef Dwayne and Dining Director David Kalbaugh.

The event begins at 11 a.m. with a no-host bar, and an opportunity to purchase raffle tickets on more than a dozen “theme baskets,” ranging from an Aloha collection through a grandparents’ basket. Raffle tickets will be available at \$5.00 for six tickets. Guests may deposit raffle stubs in boxes next to their favored choice of basket.

Guests are reminded to bring cash or a check-book, since raffle tickets and clothes purchases cannot be charged to a resident’s account. A separate highlight raffle is a three-day, two-night, show-included, package at Johnny Ascuela’s Golden Nugget Casino/Hotel in Reno/Sparks. Tickets for this raffle are available at three for \$10.00.

Modeling clothes from “Specially for You,” are PVE residents, Marie Klaver, Pat Okawachi, Edna Biederman, Pat Benacquista, Felice Gibson, Wanda Godsey, Linda Faraday, and Constance Gum. Coordinator of models is Jan Holderness. Before and after the fashion show, clothes, accessories, and jewelry will be displayed and are available for purchase.

Sign-up sheets are in the Green Book, and the guest list is limited to 100 persons. Cost of the luncheon/fashion show ticket is \$35.00 and will be charged to the resident’s account. All proceeds benefit the PVE Benevolence Fund, as generous community members continue to “take care of our own” while having an entertaining afternoon. Betty Mengotto is chairing the event for the second year.

—by Liz Wildberger



Spinal Health & Fitness



October is National Spinal Health Month. How can we incorporate successful aging with spine health?

To prevent back pain, learn correct posture and body mechanics for standing, sitting, and sleeping. Make sure your work area is good for your back; this includes proper low back support in your chair and a work surface that is at a comfortable height.

Some common causes of backache include sleeping on a soft mattress, sitting on the wrong kind of chair, stress, poor posture, sleeping on your stomach, accident or injury, arthritis, and kidney problems. When possible, avoid these causes of backaches that we have control over.

Chronic back pain can profoundly influence your quality of life. One way to help prevent further injury and lessen the symptoms of pain is through yoga and stretching. Yoga engages your body, mind and spirit, which may lead to a feeling of self-reliance and control over your pain. It also provides long-term preventive relief through improved posture, breathing, and stress reduction. It can make you more aware of your body, your balance, posture, and proper alignment. It also strengthens your abdominal and leg muscles and increases blood flow, all of which benefit your back.

Learn proper lifting techniques. Bend your legs not your back. All too often, we bend and lift incorrectly, which causes injury and pain.

Do back strengthening exercises. According to Glora Miller, our Strengthen Your Core and Fit Ball instructor, the spine is “the powerhouse of the body.” All of the back and abdominal muscles must be equally strong to help stabilize the spine.

If you have not yet done so, try out the Strengthen Your Core, Fit Ball, or Yoga classes. Check your fitness calendar for days and times. Your back will be stronger, and your quality of life will improve.

—by Jan Olson, Fitness Manager

PVE Golfers



John Gearhart has retired as golf reporter, and Glenn Dow has volunteered to serve.

The weather was great for the September PVE Scramble. Twenty-three golfers participated, and then they and their “better halves” met for refreshments

in the Club at 5:30 p.m. Walt McDaniel, the new PVE golf manager, took pictures of all players at tee-off time. Walt hopes to post winners in the lobby as a possibility in the future.

Money awards went to:

1st place, with a 76: John Kroyer, Dinny Fisher, Ted Lindley, & Phil Yaggy.

2nd place tie, with a 78: tiebreaker went to Duncan Kelly, Earl Graham, Glen Grewe, & Fletch Fletcher.

3rd place: Warren MacQuarrie, Bettyann Fritz, Wayne Elwood, & Larry Clayton.

Members agreed that the Intrepid Golf Award be retired with John Kroyer being honored as the last recipient. Everyone present thanked John for his many years service as the PVE golf manager.

Money had been collected at the August game to pay for appetizers for John Kroyer’s retirement party. Marybeth Dow suggested that the excess funds collected be donated to the PVE Benevolence Fund. A round of applause indicated approval.

We hope new PVE residents will join our PVE Golf Group Tournament, held once each month.

—by Glenn Dow

Library Questions and Answers

Here are some of the conversations we have had in the library:

Q. Do you keep all the books you are given?

A. No, we don’t have room. We select what we think you folks would like and give the best of the rest to the library at Travis Air Force Base. We also give some books to Friends of the Library at the Vacaville Public Library and Fairfield Public Library.

Q. What about magazines? How long do you keep them?

A. We keep the latest two months or weeks’ editions of any magazines we receive. You may take them out of the library, but we expect you to return them quickly.

Q. Do the lights turn on automatically in the computer room and the paperback room?

A. The lights are on motion detectors and *should* turn on automatically. If they don’t, you can reach up on the wall toward the main room and press those little buttons. We chanced on one poor lady in the computer room with a flashlight recently. She thought the lights just didn’t go on anymore.

Q. Do you have talking books and CD’s?

A. Yes, we do. Please do try these items. We also have a CD player you may borrow.

Q. Why is the table so cluttered with newspapers and books?

A. We are trying to accommodate 506 people who live here, and we need space for five people to read at one time, and the books are the latest contributions to our library. We are, after all, a small place.

Send in your questions, and we will answer all of them.

—by Bev Clemson



The Shopping Cart Mystery



Have you ever felt like you were “losing it”? The “it” that I’m talking about is the short-term memory. The other day when I returned from shopping at Raleys, I was very puzzled at finding a shiny, colorful bag of Ghirardelli chocolate squares with white mint filling amongst my fresh fruit, milk, and orange juice. As much as I love chocolate, my self-discipline keeps me from buying

candy. So how did this bag of chocolate get into my shopping basket?

I just knew I hadn’t put it into the cart, or was I indeed “losing it”? Could I have knocked the candy into the cart without knowing it? Perhaps another shopper dropped it in thinking it was her cart? If so, why didn’t I see it as the clerk was checking out my groceries? Beginning to feel paranoid, I thought, “Are there gremlins having fun in the aisles at Raleys?”

Well, back to being sensible, I pulled out the sales slip to see where the candy was listed. No, I couldn’t find any mention of candy. Looking for some support, I told my husband, Bill, “I just know that I didn’t put that candy into my cart. But will you please check the sales slip because I’m totally mystified.” Bill agreed. No candy was listed. Then he came up with a new idea. “Perhaps the customer just ahead of you bought it, and the bagger didn’t get it into her grocery bag.”

It happened that the customer ahead of me had been a neighbor. I called her saying, “This may seem like a strange question, but was there anything missing from your shopping bag when you returned home?” She said that she hadn’t noticed anything missing. Then I asked if she had bought some Ghirardelli chocolates. When she said “Yes”, I felt a great sense of relief. My mind was back in working order.

But as I returned the chocolates to their rightful owner, I did so with some regret. Who wouldn’t love getting an unexpected bag of chocolates?

—by Constance Gum

Camping Memories

The campfires now have all burned down,
And just the embers glow.
Black tree tops brush against the sky,
Where stars begin to show.

The magic of the night is felt
As man sounds disappear.
The river’s far eternal sound
Now seems to be quite near.

A cricket chirps and so begins
A concert in the grass,
While overhead bats dip and dart
With small squeaks as they pass.

A great owl with a soft hoo-hoo,
The ghost bird of the trees,
Joins other forest voices.
Yet, the loveliest of these,

The loveliest of all, is still
The far-off phantom one,
The a capella chorus
Of the coyotes as they run.

Their lilting singing swells and fades,
And as they harmonize,
The last remaining campfire coal
Flickers once and dies.

—by Althea Lubersky
LaPine State Park, OR



Air Corps Cadet — 1943

I shouted in elation as I tossed my new air corps officer hat into the air. With 147 classmates at the Army Air Force Technical Training Command (AAFTTC), Yale University, I had just received my certificate of graduation and would be commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps. What an experience I was having that warm and beautiful 23rd of August.

A few months before, in March, I had arrived at Yale as a cadet ground student, following my basic officer training at Boca Raton Club in Florida. At Yale, I would take advanced training to become an engineering officer for duty in an air force squadron.

My cadet group was assigned residence in a large, stone, four-story structure, a one-block size rectangle building called The Old Quadrangle. Two arched entrances through those walls provided air police with a way to control cadet access and egress of the Quad.

Our class schedule was eight hours per day, plus homework. Class subjects included military law, protocol, administration, various sheet metals and their properties and how to work them by forming or welding to repair planes, use of wood products in maintenance, airplane operating systems, engines of all types, airplane design and structure, air force organization, world politics and countries. Daily physical training included swimming, track and field, long distance running, strength training, and military drill formations

Each day, we marched to a large building for lunch. Over 2000 cadets were fed, each sitting in response to the command, "Seats, Gentlemen". That long open and high hall had a small second-level balcony under large windows. To our surprise and pleasure, a military orchestra played popular music each day for us from a balcony. We learned that newly appointed Captain Glenn Miller was forming a special air



force band at Yale. His band members were being recruited from civilian orchestras, and our benefit was their practice. Also, during our daily drills, that band would lead us in marching all around the New Haven Commons with snare drummers mounted on jeeps. It was great. One of the songs we often heard was "The Whiffenpoof Song," Yale's signature. One evening, I took a brave step. I exchanged my cadet shirt and collar irons for a plain khaki shirt. I put on an enlisted man cap and went to the guarded entrance to Old Quadrangle. The guard didn't show any interest, and I passed through and out onto the sidewalk. I walked to Temple Street looking for "the Temple bars I loved so well," but I didn't find Maurie's there that time. Another evening, I again went out, down a side street, and into a tavern. There was singing and laughter of many young folks. At last, I had found "the tables down at Maurie's," and they were real. However, I never found "the place where Louie dwells."

Today, as I think of that graduation and commissioning, I often "serenade our Louie, while life and love shall last" and know that one day, I too, will "pass and be forgotten with the rest".

—by Cletus Nelson



The new assisted living building progresses. Soon Estates Drive will be paved and available for traffic.

Skipping Sixth

The main reason that I was delighted when I skipped sixth grade many years ago was that my best friend was three years older than I, and I had spent my entire childhood trying to catch up with her.

We lived on a country road in Illinois, she across the way from me, and we had trudged the half mile to school each day together until she left me behind to go to high school. Skipping, therefore, meant that I'd get to high school a whole year earlier!

I felt no triumph at the promotion to seventh grade instead of sixth, moreover, for it seemed to me it was more a matter of convenience to the teacher than proof that I was a genius. In our one-room school, the grades were taught in "twos." In fifth grade, I had been taught with the sixth graders, and so it seemed natural to continue on with them into seventh. Somehow, a year's work was really skipped, but I never knew which year it was, or what information I lacked – geography, I suspect.

I had lots of reasons to love school, but they were mostly to do with play. Goodrich School sat on top of a gentle hill, and in winter when there was snow and ice on the ground, we would bring our sleds to school so that we could go coasting at recess and at the noon hour. And after school, with a mighty running start, we could belly flop and coast half way home!

There were so few of us for games that gender was not a factor. We girls loved baseball, Pompom Pullaway, Red Rover, and other games as much as the boys did. I was genuinely surprised when I discovered in high school and college that girls weren't given the same opportunities to play as were the boys. Our little country school was ahead of its' time.

I did like being ahead of myself, particularly when two families with girls my age moved to our neighborhood when I was a teenager. Each of them had skipped a grade in schools elsewhere, and I would have felt really dumb if I hadn't done the same!

So all in all, the early decision my parents made to let me skip had always worked out perfectly for me until...until...

Suisun Slough Cruise

In August I read about the new cruise boat in Suisun. Early in September when my son, Jim, was visiting from Sacramento, we decided to try out the cruise. It was a pleasant diversion from everyday living, and at just \$10 for an adult ticket, I recommend it.

Here are some facts about the boat and the itinerary. The Thiemann family's boat is a two deck, twin diesel with the lower deck enclosed. About 25 years old, it has been overhauled and freshly painted, so it looks quite attractive. We departed at 3 p.m. and headed southwest down Suisun Slough. The tide was high-high, and the wind was fresh from the west, making a delightfully refreshing ride. We cruised among wilderness islands, isolated farms where they had to generate their own electricity, maze-like canals, happy fishermen, jet skiers, and expensive yachts.

Our most interesting view was of the new wind farm in the Bird's Landing area. All the myriad turbines were spinning merrily. The allotted one-and-a-half hours passed speedily, and we returned to the dock. For information call (916)-289-8375

— by Douglas Woodward



This year I sent 80th birthday cards to many of my friends, all of whom I had known since high school and college days, and I, too, received some for my April birthday, but a whole year early. I didn't like that at all!

—by Nancy Stoneberg

Praying for Pumpkins

“What is he doing?” I whispered to the National Park ranger standing beside me. We were at Mesa Verde in Colorado, observing a demonstra-



tion of how the Ancestral Puebloans lived and worked.

“He’s offering special prayers for the crops,” the ranger answered. Later, I read how the agrarian members of a cliff dwelling would climb to the top of the mesa via precari-

ously pitched ladders, plough the surface soil with a blunt-ended stick, and then chant incantations to the spirits, asking for blessings on their work. There were prayers for digging, prayers for planting seeds, and prayers for rain, sunshine, and a successful harvest. In addition to the chanted prayers, dances were performed, and songs about especially fertile farmland were sung. Corn, beans, and pumpkin-like squash flourished.

I thought about my newly-planted pumpkin patch at our PVE Community Garden. Surprisingly, I had followed the Ancestral Puebloans’ technique: loosened the soil, built “hills” twelve inches high and twelve inches in diameter, and dropped exactly six pumpkin seeds into the top of each hill. The prayers, dancing, and singing had not occurred to me.

On reflection, I can see a great deal of similarity between the cliff dwellers’ community and our own. We are as aware and caring a population as were the *Anasazi*. We ask for good weather, good health, and good food as earnestly as did these ancient peoples. We appreciate the contributions of our fellow residents, grateful for the skills they bring to our community that we

Trips

We used to take trips we would look forward to.
A cruise down the Danube admiring the view,
Some time in the Islands was pleasant to do,
And we often took grandkids to Fleishaker Zoo.

Now we garden a little so we’ll have some blooms,
Or look at a movie about Pharaohs’ tombs.
We read the newspapers about dooms and glooms,
And for kicks we take trips to emergency rooms.

—by Elly Vasak

Move-ins During September

Hines, John, Capt., USN(Ret) & Lois
to 2212 Estates Drive
from Livermore, CA

Martin, John, Col., USAF(Ret) & Ann
to 5407 Victory Court
from Litchfield Park, AZ

ourselves might not possess. And now, watching the new Assisted Living Facility rising, we thank the builders whose knowledge and diligence will provide comfortable living quarters for some of us.

I do not plan to make myself some yucca sandals and whittle a long stick to use for a digging tool when I next prepare my garden plots, nor do I intend to startle dog walkers by leaping about and waving turkey feathers. But I *am* giving serious consideration to praying for pumpkins. It appears to be an effective agricultural tool.

—by Liz Wildberger

Bocce Ball

The first season of bocce ball league play has been completed and has to be considered a re-sounding success. Games were scheduled each morning except Sunday. Eighteen teams of four players per team played a total of 153 games during the official league season. Almost every player agreed that the sport was a lot of fun. No one was an expert at the beginning of the season, but most everyone improved, some becoming quite good.

At the conclusion of the season, all teams were listed in order of number of wins. Every player received a copy of the listings. Space here permits announcing only the first and second place teams. Each team played 18 games. Two teams were tied at 14 each so they share a combined first and second place. One team was Ed Millson, Duncan Kelly, Joan Kelly, and Millie Healy. The other team was Hal Carter, Jan Carter, Jack Lindeman, Airo Gonella., and Loren Hillier.

Congratulations go to all participants for their enthusiasm, and especially to the first and second place teams. Let us do it again next year. Notices will be posted.

—by John Kroyer

Lines!! What Lines?



Many of us watched the U.S. Open tennis matches and noticed the line calls, some of which were challenged. The matches had linesmen to call whether the ball was in or outside the white line. Sometimes the call was challenged, and we saw the replay, which showed the ball had barely blipped the white line so the ball was good.

Sometimes the ball was just barely out, so then the call was overruled by the replay.

Unfortunately, we have to call our own lines. If you cannot call the line, then the ball is good, and your opponent wins the point. The only one who can call a ball out is the person receiving the ball or his partner. Sometimes the partner will correct the call. The opponents can not make a line call for the receivers but can do so only if asked.

Court quote: "Guess it's time to use the other side of my racket!"

—by Millie Healy

Precipitation

The chart below summarizes the rainfall recorded at PVE for the past eight years:

Year	Rain (inches)	First Rain	Last Rain	Most Rain
1998-1999	24.34	Oct. 24	April 9	Feb. 10.11
1999-2000	30.21	Oct. 28	June 7	Feb. 13.97
2000-2001	20.18	Sept. 1	April 20	Feb. 6.95
2001-2002	31.19	Sept 24	May 20	Dec. 13.08
2002-2003	32.98	Nov. 7	May 3	Dec. 16.95
2003-2004	26.10	Aug. 22	April 20	Dec. 9.93
2004-2005	33.33	Sept. 19	June 9	Dec. 6.85
2005-2006	49.75	Oct. 26	May 21	Dec 19.88

—by Peter Palmos



Frogs' Legs

During my grammar school years, I lived in a small town called Oakdale on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley. The town was on the banks of the Stanislaus River.

The high school boys enjoyed a sport called frog-gigging. They took a long wooden pole and put a sharp gig in the end of it. Then with the gig and a flashlight, they would go down to the river at night to gig bullfrogs. The flashlight would mesmerize a frog, and the boy could spear it with the gig.



There was a rumor around town that the Winstons (us) actually *ate* those things! So, every now and then, in the morning we would find

a wet burlap sack filled with bullfrogs on our back porch.

Bullfrogs are quite large – perhaps 18” long stretched out. Their legs are long and large. Dad would cut the legs off the bullfrog, cut off the feet, and remove the skin. Mother then put the legs in an egg batter, rolled them in cracker crumbs, and sautéed them in butter. I would stand on a chair next to the stove so I could watch. The legs kicked and jumped around the pan as they cooked.

One of my best childhood memories is how delicious those frogs' legs were!

Years later, in the 1950s, when I was stationed in Wiesbaden, I was selected to escort the National War College on their European tour. The tour started in Paris, so I decided to get there a day early and explore the city. I raced through some of the tourist spots and found myself at lunchtime near the Eiffel Tower. I knew there was a restaurant there and decided to try it out.

Frogs' legs were on the menu! I ordered them. I knew these would be better than my mother's. After all, I was in France, where eating frogs' legs was invented.

State Quarters for Picnic Table

In the process of bringing the picnic table that is near the DeLong Pavilion to its present condition, over 27 PVE residents have contributed to the collection of coins and paper money that are presently embedded and displayed in the table top. Along these lines, the following is a list of the state quarters that are needed to complete the collection. A few have not been issued yet by the Federal Government.



If any resident can provide any one or more of the ones listed below, we will give that donor full public credit for such contribution. Thanks for your help!

Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Utah.

—by George Yeoman



But what a disappointment! The frogs' legs were quite small – like the legs on the frogs in the garden. And, they lacked the delicious flavor of Stanislaus River bullfrogs, or perhaps my mother did something special when she cooked them.

I would like to try frogs' legs again and have considered putting a comment in the Dining Committee's box suggesting that, since we have escargots and huitres, we should also have cuisses de grenouilles.

—by Marjory Parker

Dining at PVE

The September meeting of the Dining Services Committee was important for us as we selected three new members for the committee. We are pleased to welcome Becky Thomas, Virginia Kirkwood, and Laura McCoy. The three members leaving the committee, after offering their wonderful services for the past three years, are Madelynn Wolfe, Helen Preston, and Dick Bart. Also selected were the committee chair and vice-chair, not nearly as suspenseful as selecting new members. You're all going to have me as the chair and HM Kocher as the vice-chair again, and HM as head of the flower committee.



There were 247 signed comment cards with 98.7% happy with the service and 93.5% satisfied with the food. It gets better every month. David says he feels that the current wait staff is the best that we have had for as long as he has been here. I think most of our residents would agree. Our award servers for the month have been winners before, so special congratulations are in order for Christina Biama and Gary Autunaro.

We continue to have outstanding feedback on the wine dinner we enjoyed near the end of August. However, there have been requests to explain what *confit* meant for the duck leg. It is a French cooking term that translates to “preserved.” The *confit* is cooked in duck fat at a low temperature, approximately 200 degrees F for about five hours. This slow cooking renders all of the fat out of the duck leg. It is completely cooked but will not have changed color so it still looks raw, but it is fully cooked. It is then used as is in soup or casseroles, or it can be pan seared to give it a cooked color. This cooking also melts off all the remaining fat clinging to the leg. Some good news is that duck fat is lower in cholesterol than beef, pork, or lamb.

Occasionally we also have a dish with *panko* in the name. Dwayne informs me that this is a coating of Japanese flaked bread. It is a supplier product and is not made in-house. For those who have

had it, I think that they would agree that it is an excellent product. For those who like the berries for dessert, the huge raspberries and blueberries come from Oregon. Also, there are some who have commented on the coffee being “too strong” or “too weak,” so David gave us their recipe: 28 oz. of coffee brewed with three gallons of water. Those who are sharp at arithmetic can do the reduction to decide if the strength is right for them.

Again, that’s about it for this month. We hope everyone is continuing to enjoy the flowers, because it looks like they are here to stay. The arranging teams continue to grow in numbers.

Don’t forget to sign the comment cards, and *Bon Appetit*.

—by Fred Montanye

Bingo Winners

Jackpot winners over the summer were:

7/11/06 Dorothy Lindeman

7/25/06 Jeanie Reavis & ‘Ceil Bellinger

8/01/06 A three-way split: Angie & Joe Sanner
& Dorothy Lindeman

8/08/06 Grandma Liz Wildberger

8/22/06 ‘Ceil Bellinger

8/29/06 Jeanie Reavis & ‘Ceil Bellinger



Dandelion Wine

The annual wine pressing ritual in the nearby vineyards here in Solano County brought back memories of my first experience as a wine maker. I remember my great-grandmother Engelthaler and her dandelion wine. I must have been about four-years-old the first time I went picking dandelion blossoms with her for the wine. The blossoms could not be fermented into alcohol. They were only used for flavor and color. Sugar and yeast were needed as the main ingredients for the production of the alcohol.



We would walk south of our home on the east side of Oak Park Avenue in Berwyn, Illinois, looking for dandelions. This was not difficult. Although the neighbors' lawns were lush with grass, they were also full of dandelions. This was long before the advent of herbicides. These lawns were great picking grounds, especially the vacant lot about four houses south of ours. Great-Grandmother and I would bring the basket of blossoms home, and she would start making her concoction for the production of dandelion wine.

Water, sugar, dandelion blossoms, orange and/or lemon juice, plus citrus peels, and maybe some other seasoning, were all boiled together and then filtered through cheesecloth. She put the liquid in an earthenware crock, let it cool slightly, and then added yeast to carry out the fermentation. This mix was kept in a cool, dark place for several weeks. It was then ready for imbibing.

One warm summer evening my parents were in the backyard visiting with our neighbors, the Spilmans, across our side-yard fence. While my parents were outside, Frank Smetana, who lived across the alley, came over to our house. My brother Fran, Frank, and I decided to sample great-grandmother's dandelion wine. It was still in the crock on the pantry floor and hadn't been bottled as yet. We took several sips of the brew, and although we did not particularly like the wine, we felt like big shots who were getting away with something.

—by Otto Vasak

REMEMBERING . . .

Cdr. Francis Maples, USNR (Ret)
Loving Husband and Father
Arrived: December 30, 1999
Departed: August 15, 2006

Cdr. John Wash, USN (Ret)
Loving Husband and Father
Arrived: December 15, 1998
Departed: September 9, 2006

Dr. Howard Burns
Loving Husband and Father
Arrived: February 24, 2005
Departed: September 18, 2006



Thank You

Your cards, phone calls and offers of help at Carl's passing have made a difficult time less difficult. I am deeply grateful.

Ann Johnson

Beginning Year Four

The October issue of the *Elysian Fields* marks the beginning of the fourth publication year by our current staff. As that trite old saying goes, "Time flies when you are having fun." If you venture by the Round Room after lunch on the first Friday of each month, you will likely hear laughter and a spirited discussion from the EF staff. We critique the current issue and lay plans for the upcoming issue. The good news is that all remain friends and enthusiastic about making the next issue even better. Articles submitted by residents are essential and valued for our PVE newspaper. New authors are especially prized by our editors.

Freddi Miller is a new addition for our Memories section, joining Liz Wildberger and Miz Lively. Welcome Freddi!

For the November issue only, channel all memory articles to Hal Carter (5116) because of vacations and health leaves.

— Ed.

Employee Appreciation Fund Drive

Contributions may be placed in the Resident Council box in the mail room or lock box at the reception desk. Make checks payable to RCOF and note Employee Appreciation Fund.

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 no later than the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

ELYSIAN FIELDS STAFF ORGANIZATION

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Photography	Dick Betchley Marty Wildberger
Technical Advisor	Marty Wildberger

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- (1) **Biographies of PVE residents**
Joan Teague
- (2) **Life at PVE (human interest stories, organized activities and campus events)**
Bill and Constance Gum
- (3) **Memories (of past events and significant happenings)**
Liz Wildberger,
Miz Lively and
Freddi Miller
- (4) **Feature Writer**
Linda Faraday
- (5) **Fitness feature writer**
Jan Olson
- (6) **Poems**
Elly Vasak

To get the *Elysian Fields* in color on the Internet, go to the PVE Website: <http://www.pvetates.com> and Select "Lifestyles" from the options at the top.

Go to the bottom of the page and click. If you want to see back issues, click on "Archives."