

# NEWSLETTER



Volume 2017, Issue 4

July/August

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:

### Mental Workouts Can Help Maintain Cognitive Abilities

What do jogging and a crossword puzzle have in common? They are both forms of exercise, one physical and one mental, but each one can help to keep you in better shape.



Crossword puzzle  
"workouts" may help

Of course, physical exercise is promoted

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Contact Villages of San Mateo County at: 650-260-4569 or [info@villagesofsmc.org](mailto:info@villagesofsmc.org)

Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village are two local villages under the umbrella 501(c)(3) nonprofit called Villages of San Mateo County

## SAVE THE DATE

All Villages of San Mateo County Members and Volunteers  
are invited to wear their 'Island Attire' and join us for a  
Hawaiian Luau BBQ Lunch!



**DATE:** Saturday, August 19, 2017

**TIME:** 12 noon to 2 pm  
(Doors open at 11:45. Lunch served promptly at 12:15.)

**LOCATION:** American Legion Post 585  
1159 Bush St.  
San Carlos, California

**RSVP:** No later than August 11 to [info@villagesofsmc.org](mailto:info@villagesofsmc.org) or 650-260-4569.  
Please indicate whether or not you need a ride. If you wish to bring a guest, the charge is \$20 payable by check in advance, space permitting. Please make the check payable to Villages of San Mateo County, write "Luau" on the memo line, and mail it to P.O. Box 813, San Carlos, CA 94070.



## DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sequoia Village wishes to extend its deep appreciation to Sequoia Healthcare District, West Valley Federated Women's Club and Trinity Presbyterian Church for granting us with significant donations for yet another year.

Your individual contributions to our program have greatly helped us fulfill our mission to our members. By helping us to provide our members with resources and services that strive to maintain personal safety and independence, our members are confidently able to remain in their own homes as they age.

Our Members and Volunteers wish to extend their sincere APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE to SHD, WVFWC and TPC for the support and confidence you have demonstrated with your financial contributions to our organization!

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## SHOPPING AT AmazonSmile

When you shop on *AmazonSmile*, Villages of San Mateo County can receive 0.5% of all eligible purchases. You just shop as usual, then VSMC and you both benefit!

Here is how it works:

- Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) (save in your bookmarks)
- It will ask you to write in your charity (Villages of San Mateo County)
- No special apps needed

Then, all future purchases automatically go towards VSMC until you indicate otherwise. The key is to always visit *smile.amazon.com* first and then...just go shopping!



## SAFE & COMFORTABLE AT HOME

As you may know, Villages of San Mateo County is a nonprofit membership organization that older adults join so they may remain in their homes as they age. Services such as home safety inspections, basic home repairs and improvements, and referrals to pre-screened contractors are provided by enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to an ever-growing population of seniors in Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, San Mateo, Hillsborough and Burlingame. Here are a few examples of the assistance these volunteers provide to people like you -- and the reasons they are committed to this program of Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

"I really enjoy talking with older adults," says **Jerry Georgette**. "Even though my handyman skills help ensure that Village members are safe and comfortable in their own homes, what I enjoy most is hearing people's stories and sometimes discovering that we have similar interests -- art and photography, for example. One woman was formerly an archeologist who worked on digs near Tuscany, where my people came from."

Jerry will retire this summer after working 33 years at the Palo Alto V.A. Hospital as a nursing professional. His passion for fixing things combined with his love of people, especially older adults, endear him to his clients.

**Ruth Tucker** is a retired computer engineer and a full-time volunteer. "I had the good fortune to retire early. Volunteer work is my appreciation for this gift. Being a regular volunteer for a nonprofit organization like the Villages of San Mateo County -- one who can be counted on -- assuages any guilt I may feel for not having to earn a living."

Like Jerry, Ruth has a special interest in conversing with older adults. As for her interest in fixing things, she was the first girl after four boys had been born into her family. Her dad could fix anything, and she learned at his knee. "I've taken down walls, put in toilets - - you know, things like that." "I am also very interested in technology," she says, which gives her another way to contribute to Villages' members' needs. "I'll go in to do one thing and in no time, I'm asked about why the TV or computer isn't working. By the time I leave, I may have fixed six devices.

**Eric Hanson** has been volunteering at Mid Peninsula Village for about a year. He found retirement to be an abrupt end to many of his interpersonal relationships which had centered around his work. With a Ph.D. in Physics, he spent his career managing a central research lab work group whose members were widely scattered across the globe. Volunteering with an organization such as Mid Peninsula Village, whose motto is "Neighbors Helping Neighbors," builds his network in the surrounding community and gets him into contact with folks he never before had a reason to know.

Eric enjoys the wide variety of projects, which has included rebuilding handrails to make them safer, repairing different types of plumbing fixtures, programming electronic

*(Continued on page 5, Safe Home)*

devices, and much more. He feels a great sense of satisfaction when he can alleviate the obstacles that may prevent them from living comfortably and safely in their homes. However, when the remediation calls for more than Village volunteers can undertake -- for example, a client asked him to fix the roof leak causing rainwater to enter her house -- handypersons give homeowners referrals to prescreened vendors.

**Bob DeFranco** is a jack of all trades; a former Ph.D. chemist who professionally moved from medical research to diagnostic research, to DNA manufacturing, to chemical manufacturing, to intellectual property management, then to technology development. "I need to shift gears every five years, he says, or I'd go stale."

Among the many jobs he's done in the year and a half he's volunteered at Sequoia Village, he has fixed a homeowner's porch light, reintroduced sound to a client's TV, and walked a woman through the steps required to install her new VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone. Before that, he spent more than 10 years doing construction twice a week for Habitat for Humanity.

"Quite frankly, I come to talk to people. And, you know, some people are longing to talk to someone who is fascinated with their lives. I can spend anywhere from one to three hours on a 'repair assignment.' I keep a sharp eye out for anything in their home that could be dangerous, and I correct that. But it's the conversation I find most stimulating."

"**Scott McMullin** (Sequoia Village co-founder) is the brains behind the Member Handyman Service," Bob says." He introduced the concept of bringing together small teams of people working together, and it's taken off."

In 2014, Scott was part of the initial team to develop Sequoia Village (which later became the umbrella organization called Villages of San Mateo County, which now includes a second village, Mid Peninsula Village). He says he is very impressed with the skills and energy that our volunteers have brought to this program. "It is gratifying beyond words to see the appreciation and joy of both members and volunteers as the village mission is fulfilled."

~ written by Linda Thomas

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## **A NEW CENTENARIAN: STEADY AS SHE GOES**

In a world best characterized by change, there are two things you can count on — Helen Long's Monday, Wednesday and Friday attendance at her Sit and Be Fit class and

*(Continued on page 6, Steady)*



## VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES

### VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Linda Burroughs*

### PRESIDENT

*Scott McMullin*

### MID PENINSULA CHAIR

*Deborah Flaherty*

### SEQUOIA VILLAGE CHAIR

*Linda Thomas*

### MEMBERSHIP

*Sandra Neff*

### OUTREACH

*(empty)*

### FUNDRAISING

*Susan Gerard*

### NEWSLETTER

*Victoria Kline*

*Wani Wynne*

### VENDOR

*Lisa Sharek*

### VOLUNTEER SERVICE COMMITTEE

*Randi Kutnewsky*

*Irene Liana*

*(Steady, continued from page 5)*

her three hours of volunteering each Saturday at San Carlos' Family Tree thrift shop. She has been a volunteer at thrift shops in Palo Alto and Menlo Park for the past 20 years. On turning 100 years young on April 27, "I like to keep busy," she says. VSMC says, "Happy birthday, Helen!"



Helen was born in San Francisco's Mission District. After she married, she moved to Burlingame, then to Redwood City. Following a divorce, she became the single mother of four girls and two boys. Helen's dressmaking skills were advanced enough that she made clothes for her daughters, including their wedding dresses. In 1961, she went to work full-time at Eimac, inspecting specialty electron tubes used primarily in broadcasting and industrial markets. Helen retired in 1985, after 24 years of service.

Helen shares her home with a 10+-year-old Chihuahua, Hami, who has his own chair in the living room and will stare you down if you sit in it. On Sundays, with her daughter, Judy, and her son-in-law, Nick, she makes a point to try a variety of local restaurants.

~ written by Linda Thomas

## Don't Be Fooled By Scams

Many of us have had the e-mail experience of being asked to confirm certain personal bank account or credit card account information. Warning: DO NOT respond to such an e-mail as it is likely not coming from your bank or credit card company. If you feel you must respond, *initiate your* response directly with your bank or credit card company. You might anticipate such e-mail scams by downloading into your address book the banks' security contacts, and having them conveniently available for forwarding any such scam requests.

I recently received an e-mail offer to be a "secret shopper." Since a friend had been acting as a secret shopper for some time, I decided to respond. Within a few days I received a priority mail package with registration and other instructions, along with a

*(Continued on page 7, Scams)*

## SEQUOIA VILLAGE DONORS

*Sequoia Village* extends its sincere appreciation for the generous financial support and in-kind gifts received from the following individuals and organizations:

- *Charis Fund*
- *City of San Carlos*
- *Danford Foundation*
- *Dignity Health*
- *Howard & Martha Girdlestone Foundation*
- *Kiwanis Club of San Carlos*
- *Mid-Peninsula Vineyard Christian Church*
- *Peter & Paula Uccelli Foundation*
- *Redwood City Parks and Recreation*
- *Rotary Club of San Carlos*
- *Sequoia Healthcare District*
- *Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Carlos*
- *West Valley Federated Women's Club*

*(Scams. continued from page 6)*

cashier's check in the amount of \$1,785. The package was sent from Utica, NY, the cashier's check was drawn on a real Des Moines, IA, bank, and I was to make a wire transfer, via "Moneygram" for about \$750 each, to two different people in Texas after notifying the sender. I decided to *test* the honesty of the "secret shopper" email by filing a mail fraud complaint with the U.S. Post Office's Inspection Service.

AS SENIORS, WE NEED TO BE PARTICULARLY AWARE OF THESE TYPES OF SCAMS. OUR AGE CAN MAKE US UNNECESSARILY VULNERABLE.

Scammed? Report It! Call the Department of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-953-5210.

~ written by Frank Hildreth

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*(Mental Workouts: continued from page 1)*

by the medical community, as well as society in general, as an important part of the routine necessary for leading a healthier and more active lifestyle. The cerebral type of exercise, not so much. However, that is starting to change. Studies continue to discover and validate that mental workouts can improve cognitive function. So more and more seniors are integrating exercises for the brain into their daily routine. At the same time, they are also adding more confidence, dignity and enjoyment into their lives. Here are some mentally stimulating suggestions:

- Puzzles, board or card games of all kinds.
- Reading and writing.
- Dancing and playing a musical instrument.
- Computer games.
- Challenging daily chores.
- Using sight, smell, sound or touch to arouse the senses, referred to as 'reminiscence therapy.'

(Sources: Elder Care News, Aging News, SeniorJournal.com, Alzheimers.About.com; www.KeepsakeCompanions.com)

## NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Bob DeFranco, SV volunteer, and Mary Masko, SV member, are standing under a recently installed porch light that has a motion detector. Bob said, "It turned out to be a not-so-simple task." According to Bob, "Mary was pleased as punch!"



Bob DeFranco and Mary Masko

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Left to Right: Jerry Georgette and Bob DeFranco admire, with pride, their repair on a fence they worked on for one VSMC happy member.

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## TESTIMONIALS

*"Sequoia Village has done for me so much, my way of paying back is to open my home for member celebrations"....**Marilyn M.***

*"My parents and I are so very grateful to all the volunteers who have provided assistance to us over the past 2 years. From helping with home repairs, to providing transportation, to cleaning out our house prior to its sale, they have done it all with a smile and have been wonderful to work with"....**Sue F.***

*"One of the most difficult aspects of volunteering...we become a sort of extended family, and, as such, suffer when we lose a family member"....**Bob D.***

### In Loving Memory:

The Villages of San Mateo County community is deeply saddened over the recent passing of:

Kent Foster

Frank Jonas

Stanley Magulac