

Lamorinda Women Use Ancient Art as a Creative Outlet to Escape Stress

Submitted by Charlotte Gruebele



Troupe Lafayette at August Carnival of the Stars in Richmond, from left: Surreyya Hada, Azmina Koorji, Lori Maher, Charlie Gruebele, Stri Zulch, Andrea Moore, Fran McNamara, Melanie Giedlin, Alissa Scanlin, Stacie Gerson Photo Provided

What do a Lamorinda VP of marketing, a priest, a doctor of psychology, a nurse practitioner, a grandmother, stay at home moms and college students have in common? Every Monday night, they escape the stresses of their daily lives and enter the world of belly dance at the Lafayette Community Center. Their instructor, award-winning professional belly dancer Surreyya Hada, has been teaching belly dance in Lafayette for the past six years. In addition to teaching classic Egyptian and Turkish belly dance techniques, Hada coaches her beginner-to-intermediate level students about costuming, stage presence and self-confidence; giving them opportunities to perform on a stage as a troupe, or individually at neighboring restaurants like El Morocco, Tanjia and Bijan. Last August marked the third annual performance of their dance troupe, Troupe Lafayette, at Carnival of Stars at the Richmond Civic Center Auditorium. Individual dancers in the troupe will be performing Sunday, October 14 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Tanjia Restaurant in Oakland. Reservations are recommended as last year's performance quickly sold out. Watch for future performances of Troupe Lafayette throughout the East Bay.

Bluegrass Baseball: A Year in the Minor League Life

Campo Grad in Orinda for Book Discussion and Signing Oct. 13

By Jennifer Wake



Author and Campolindo alum Katya Cengel

Photos provided

Campolindo High School alum, journalist and author Katya Cengel hasn't always been a baseball fan. But when her editor at the

Courier-Journal in Kentucky assigned her a series on Louisville's minor league baseball team, the Bats, she was hooked.

In her book, *Bluegrass Baseball: A Year in the Minor League Life* (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), Cengel profiles four Kentucky minor league teams and tells the story following two players from each team through a season. The author spent evenings and weekends meeting up with the different teams and tagging along to road games or following players into their homes.

Each had unique qualities, she says.

"The Lexington Legends had a very colorful president at the time who pulled crazy stunts like eating cat food and camping out in the stands when the team lost," she says. "It also had Jose Altuve who was an all-star with the Houston Astros this season. Louisville had a Cuban

transplant throwing a 100-plus-mile fastball and a bunch of other guys on the cusp of the big time or at the tail ends of their careers."

Before reporting on minor league baseball, Cengel didn't realize how difficult the life is for minor league players.

"Most players get a day off a month if that," she says. "For the play-

ers every day was the same, the only difference was whether they were playing at home or taking a bus on the road. They knew what time they had to be at the field or the bus but seldom remembered whether it was a Monday or a Saturday because it didn't make much difference to them. I was fascinated by their transitory existence."

About all they have time for besides playing during the season is sleeping and eating, she adds. And yet every day they must perform at some of the highest levels of athletics.

"Their chances of making it to the Big Leagues are slim and even

if they make it they probably won't stay," she says. "I never realized that just because you make the Bigs doesn't mean you are set. You could be back down in the minors the next day."

The lesson she learned from the players, however, applies to aspiring athletes as well as to writers young and old: "to follow your dreams as far as they will take you."

Cengel will discuss and sign copies of her book at noon Saturday, October 13 at Orinda Books. For information, visit www.orindabooks.com.





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Questions with home care?

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Ask Vanessa

DEAR VANESSA,

I am 70 years old and looking for help at home. I know what RNs, CNAs, and caregivers are but recently I have been hearing about HHAs. I am not sure what they are and the duties that they are responsible for. I was hoping you could inform me about what an HHA is and the parameters in which they work. Thank you. JULIE

DEAR JULIE,

It is good to know that you are proactive and ready to ease into a transition of lifestyle. Living longer is not without its challenges; many seniors value their independence and privacy but may eventually require some level of care and assistance.

A Home Health Aide (HHA) is a trained professional who provides non-medical health services. She helps patients recovering from a hospital stay, people who are disabled, chronically ill, or cognitively impaired, and older adults who need assistance with activities of daily living. Most aides work with elderly or physically or mentally disabled clients who need more care than family or friends can provide. An HHA can teach clients and their families how to cope effectively with a particular condition. In the context of a home health agency, an HHA works under the direct supervision of a medical professional, usually a nurse. She observes the client and keeps records of services performed and of client's condition so other members of the health care team can review the client's progress. The HHA can provide light housekeeping and homemaking tasks such as laundry, shopping, meal planning and preparation, and improving the overall safety of the home environment. She can also help with simple prescribed exercises (as instructed by a physical, occupational or speech therapist) and assist with medication administration. She may help clients get out of bed, bathe, dress, and groom. An HHA is trained to provide some basic health-related services such as checking patients' blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and respiration rate, and reading fluid intake and output. With special training, an experienced HHA may also assist with medical equipment such as ventilators, a catheter or ostomy product, and administer first aid until medical help arrives.

A home health aide can also just be a good friend and companion--with services ranging anywhere from a few hours a day to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. She provides instruction and psychological support to her clients; she can accompany clients to doctor's appointments or on other errands. She keeps her clients mentally healthy and alert by having conversations with them, playing games (crossword puzzles, scrabble, cards, etc.) and assisting them to be as physically active as possible.

It would be wise to hire a home health aide who is part of an organization that meets all state standards and whose HHAs are employees who have been thoroughly screened, not subcontractors. A licensed home care agency guarantees that its HHAs are eligible to work in this county, have a valid driver's license and social security number, and have no criminal record. Its HHAs are all bonded and insured so you are always protected. A licensed home care agency is in the business of providing care for the long term--as your needs increase, which is often the case.

You did not mention if you are living with a chronic condition. A home health aide will generally do whatever is needed for clients who can't live alone without help so they can remain in their homes. I hope that what I shared with you will help you in reaching an important caregiving decision to ensure your own safety and comfort. May you find a home health aide who has a genuine desire to help people--compassionate, sensitive and patient--someone who will see and treat you like her own 'family'. VANESSA