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## Lafayette Reservoir Walking Group's Focus on Fitness

By A.K. Carroll



From left: Vicki Breton, Valerie Briscoe, Maynard Clark, Dudley Braun, Alise Gillman, Toni Lewis, Giulia Massari and Jim Scala  
Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette resident Don Jenkins. After reading an article about Scala in a local newspaper, Jenkins asked if Scala would join him for a stroll around the reservoir. Following the walk, Jenkins talked to Lafayette Senior Services about his experience. They asked Scala if he would lead a group of reservoir walkers. "Of course I said yes," said Scala. "I'm always in favor of that."

As a former adjunct professor, fellow in the American College of Nutrition and consultant for two U.S. Olympic ski teams, Scala is well acquainted with the benefits of activity. According to WebMD, the social support that comes from walking with others can help to increase stress resilience, lower cortisol and decrease blood pressure.

"I've always been a person who not only respects physical fitness but understands how important it is, right down to the roots," Scala remarked. "It's a part of me and what I do."

The reservoir walking group has been meeting since January, every Thursday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. At the end of the walk, Scala leads group members through "easy yoga" poses and breathing exercises on the band stage overlooking the water. Afterward, many of the group members stay to share a brown bag lunch at the reservoir picnic tables. It's an added time of fellowship that Scala thinks will stick. The group is even talking about adding a second day to provide more options for those who want to walk.

"My ambition is that they will slowly but surely recognize the importance of keeping in shape and understand the importance that fitness can play in their health and longevity," Scala said of his fellow walkers. He noted that as people get older they tend to sit back more and get out less. It is his goal to help others see the importance and ease of being active.

"There's nothing difficult about any of this," he said.

An added benefit of walking with a group (as opposed to walking alone) is the accountability and conversation that goes with it. "What do we discuss? You name it," said Scala. "We talk about a lot of things ranging from relatively mundane stuff all the way through politics."

Scala is pleased with the direction the group is taking and grateful for the chance to share one of his great loves. "From my point of view it's one of the most beautiful places in the world," he said. "And it's right here for everybody."

Life can be stressful. That's no secret. But the solution can be as simple as getting up, getting out and taking a stroll. Author, biochemist and nutritional expert Jim Scala understands this. He recently started a walking group at Lafayette Reservoir through Lafayette Senior Services designed to build cardio vascular health and camaraderie.

Scala has been walking the reservoir for decades. "[My wife and I] have lived in Lafayette for 37 years now," he said. Scala used to regularly jog the 5.5 miles from his house around the reservoir and back, but "as you get older, you sort of slow down," Scala laughed. "Slowly but surely I started walking the reservoir and have been doing it ever since."

Walking is one of the Mayo Clinic's recommended forms of exercise. It can help you to meditate, boost your endorphins, increase your energy and reduce your level of stress.

The idea for the walking group came from

Anyone interested in joining the reservoir walkers can call Lafayette Senior Services at (925) 284-5050 to add their name to the email notification list. They can also contact Scala at [jscala2@comcast.net](mailto:jscala2@comcast.net).

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

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