

# “Make Music Day” Celebration is a Rollicking Hit for Lafayette Residents

By Adam Blake



Photo Adam Blake

Canopy tents, tie-dye tapestries, and colorful blankets garnished Lafayette’s Plaza Park lawn as locals braved the heat to come together and celebrate live music. Lafayette was not alone however; people from all around the world took part in the festivities for international “Make Music Day” on June 21.

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Music organized the event, which included mini-ukulele lessons, music crafts, izzyA’s frozen custard truck, free popcorn, and of course live music. Lamorinda Music storeowner Colleen McCormick also arranged for live acts to play at eight restaurants and two senior living facilities around town to expand the celebration.

“I think it went well considering that it was a Tuesday night and super hot outside,” McCormick said. “It seemed like a good turn out for a first time event with very short lead time since we only decided to do it a few weeks ago.”

Make Music Day’s origins go back 34 years to France where the Ministry of Culture established the national holiday to celebrate free, live music throughout the country. “Fete De La Musique” has since spread throughout the world and is celebrated in over 700 cities across 120 countries.

Three weeks prior to the event, McCormick suggested Lafayette participate in the holiday to Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Jay Lifson and Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk.

“We both were enthusiastic and said, ‘of course.’ This is Lafayette. This is a music town,” Lifson said.

At the center of the festivities was local Tom Petty tribute band The Big Jangle, who served as an energetic, highly entertaining backing group for live Karaoke. Lifson initially came up with the idea of doing live

Karaoke last year and seized this opportunity to bring it to life. Karaoke singers (and musicians) signed up from a list of 100 songs the band could play—Lifson referred to friend and lead guitarist Paul Cotruvo as “the human jukebox.”

Twenty-five brave souls took the stage including several local celebs such as Stanley Middle School Music Teacher Bob Athayde and founder of BAM (Bay Area Music) Magazine Dennis Erokan. Lifson got to experience five minutes of rock-stardom himself with a nostalgic rendition of “U.S. Blues” by the Grateful Dead.

“Yes, I am just an old Dead Head and wanna-be hippie,” Lifson said.

The night seems to have succeeded in bringing out many community members’ “inner-rock star” and according to Lifson there has already been talk of Lafayette celebrating the event again next summer. Even Falk got into the spirit of the evening, crooning in his fedora hat.

Colleen McCormick shared that her highlight of the night was when local journalist Mike Zampa and Falk led the audience in a cheerful sing-along, capturing the communal essence of Make Music Day.

“I loved when the folks in the plaza stood up and all sang together, especially God Bless America. Mike Zampa is really good at getting a crowd excited about singing,” McCormick said.



Lafayette’s Mike Zampa and City Manager Steve Falk get in the spirit of Make Music Day. Photo Peggy Spear

# Making Homes Safe for Those Who Suffer From Alzheimer’s Disease

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

Having a dementia like Alzheimer’s puts more people at risk when living alone or living with a family member. Early in this journey, often the only risk is forgetting an appointment or maybe taking the trash out on the right night. But, as this disease progresses, risks start to increase from forgetting to take important medications, to remembering how to use appliances including garden equipment safely or cooking appliances that could cause a fire.

For those living alone, the following tips can help reduce some of the risks associated with loss of memory, sequencing, and judgment:

1. Using technology that notifies you when someone leaves the home, uses kitchen appliances, uses the bathroom, and takes medications can be very helpful in the early stages of dementia. Technology can also let you know if they are doing the “normal activities of daily living” with timely alerts.
2. Early on in the process you might want to remove from the home ladders, garden equipment, poisons used in and around the home and maybe even some dan-

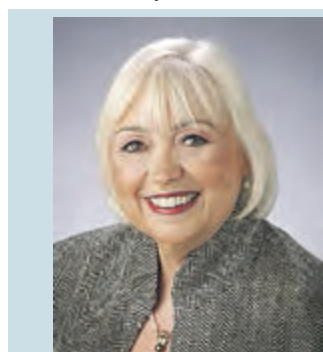
gerous tools.

3. Having meals delivered prevents accidents while cooking. A main meal that is provided for lunch allows for more finger foods in the evenings. Monitoring the refrigerator is good at this stage – it lets you know if they are still getting good nutrition.

Some more tips for those living with a companion or spouse:

1. Remove all sharp knives and scissors from eyesight. You might need to take the knobs off the stove and only put them on when you are cooking.
2. Medications should be kept in a locked cabinet and given only as directed by the primary caregiver.
3. Showers need to be adjusted for temperature before the person steps in. Often using a shower seat and a hand held shower wand is preferred for safety. A Care Manager can help you create a safe way to bathe your family member.
4. Wandering can be a big problem with dementia. Early on provide your family member with the Alzheimer’s Association bracelet. GPS devices are becoming more frequently used – the Alzheimer’s Association has a store for these items on their website.
5. Black mats in front of doors sometimes turn people away from the door – they see the mat as a hole in the floor. Delay egress systems with a buzzer can alert you to those coming and going. Some families have put signs on the back of doors that say “this is not an exit,” and that can deter escaping.
6. Driving is an issue that can come up earlier in the disease due to disorientation, reaction times, and the likelihood of getting lost or being involved in an accident. If driving is an issue, we have an excellent booklet from the Hartford Insurance Company – call our office for that information or a copy of the booklet.

The other major issue on keeping those with dementia safe is to provide activities that keep them engaged without frustrating their abilities. Daycare programs are a good solution providing activities and giving family respite, as is having a personal assistant trained in dementia care activities.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She is the Founder of Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company doing business since 1989. Linda’s new e-book “7 Steps to a Healthy Life for You and Your aging Parents” can be found on Amazon.com.

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