

A touching tribute built at Moraga care home

By Cathy Dausman



Moraga Retreat Care Homes owner Ana Blaj, left, enjoys the new planter box with residents Joan (in pink) and Nora. Photo Cathy Dausman



From left: Andrew Logan, Kyle Leuteneker, Kyle Davis, Grant Larsen, Spencer Larsen, and Isaac Pugh. Photo provided

Grant Larsen always enjoyed his grandfather Vince Jones' company – whether he was mowing his grandfather's lawn or chatting with him after a Campolindo High School football game. The two continued to meet even after Jones suffered a stroke and went to live at Moraga Retreat Care Homes.

It was while visiting him there that Larsen formed an idea that would become his Eagle Scout project. He decided to beautify the care home landscaping and build a wheeled, raised planter box for its residents.

"I hoped to complete the project while he was there so he could

enjoy and watch my work," Larsen said, "but his health deteriorated and he passed away before I could start."

The proposed grandfather/grandson bonding time became instead a memorial.

In July Larsen, his "football buddy" Kyle Leutenaker (himself an Eagle Scout) and Scouts from Larsen's Troop 249 cleared out overgrown vegetation and replanted. Two weeks later they assembled the project centerpiece – a planter box on wheels.

The project was surprisingly time consuming, when design draft work, purchase of materials and final on-site construction were in-

cluded. Larsen estimates he and his fellow scouts committed over 50 hours to the project.

Larsen worked closely with owner Ana Blaj, whom he called "extremely supportive" and grateful. Blaj returned the compliment, insisting, "I only have nice things to say about him. He could have chosen something else to do," Blaj continued, adding, "not many high school kids are involved with their grandpa."

"I hope that my project will be able to make the home more appealing and help out the residents by adding some things for them to do," Larsen said.

The residents assembling at

the planter on the day photos were taken seemed delighted at the pansies peeking out from the soil. And Larsen's mother, Emily Larsen, is certain her son's project would

have meant a lot to Jones because he, like his grandson, was an Eagle Scout.

"He touched my heart," said Blaj.

Pet emergency preparedness

By Mona Miller, DVM

In the wake of the terrible California North Bay/Napa fires, and recent hurricanes, I was motivated to check my home emergency preparedness kit. I do this every couple years, replacing supplies that have an expiration date and adding additional items. In our beautiful Bay Area, it is not a question of whether a major earthquake will occur again, but when it will hit. In addition to stocking supplies and food for all human family members for a minimum of three days, here are some precautions you can take to help your pets survive.

First on my list of to-do's: microchip all your pets! It is a very safe procedure, inexpensive and can be done quickly without anesthesia by your veterinarian or the county. Without a collar or tag, this is a reliable way to connect pets with owners. Keep your microchip registration current with the company – make sure that your contact phone numbers and address are current.

Second is to have an individual carrier for each cat or other small pet (small dog, rabbit, guinea pig, etc.). In the event that you need to house your three indoor cats for a week or longer in a makeshift shelter, there is not enough room in a medium sized cat carrier for more than one animal. Make a small investment in a decently constructed medium-sized carrier for each pet,

and then store these in an area that is near your earthquake kit. In some cases, you might consider having a large dog carrier for your large dog – especially if your dog isn't friendly – in case you need to share space at an emergency shelter or with friends.

Consider adding some vacuum-packed dry kibble and several cans of pet food to your own food supply, along with a can opener (not one that relies on electricity). Include some lightweight food and water bowls. Canned food is the easiest method to make sure that your dog or cat gets water and stays hydrated.

Pets need to drink fresh, clean water daily, or consume a fair amount of water through canned food. The general rule of thumb is that a cat needs a half-liter per day, and a 20-pound dog needs one liter per day. Consider having a minimum of a three-day supply for each pet.

Does your pet take daily medication? Pack a week's supply for each pet in a waterproof baggy, clearly labeling the medication, dose and expiration date. Make sure to check this supply annually, along with your food supply, and replace any outdated medication.

For each pet, make an individual sheet of paper with name and photo, date of birth, microchip information, description and any

underlying health information. Include a current vaccine certificate. These papers can serve as a quick identifier to search and rescue responders. Some pet shelters may require proof of valid rabies vaccination in order to house your pet during an emergency.

Further information can be found on the following websites: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/pet-sanddisasters/index.html>, <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/disaster-preparedness>.



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

In Memory

George Anderson Talbot

Dec. 31, 1918 – Sept. 8, 2017



Former resident of Orinda and Moraga, born in Oakland, Calif., to William J. Talbot and Marie Andersen Talbot, brother of William J. Talbot, Jr., George Anderson Talbot passed away on Sept. 8. He is survived by three sons, Pete (Debbie), Rick (Carol Devincenzi) and Al (Lucy), eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild, nephew Jim Talbot, and niece Marcia Porter Ellis. He is predeceased by his parents, brother and wife of 62 years, Mary L. Talbot. A 1941 graduate of UC Berkeley and member of the 1938 Cal national champion freshman crew. Following college, George worked for Pan American World Airways and met Mary Louise Lyman (his first boss!) and they married in 1947. After

retiring from a career in marine and industrial sales management, he and Mary traveled the U.S., Europe, and the Pacific where they had both worked during and after World War II. His greatest adventure was a cruise up the Amazon on his own, at age 94. He and Mary had many great summer vacations at Lake Tahoe as well, with family and friends, where he was always happy to share his treasured Chris Craft with all. Family is eternally grateful to his many caregivers these past few years, as they surely extended and improved his life. A celebration of life was held at Metro, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette, on Oct. 15. Donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

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