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Local bands entertain to combat cancer at Roundup



The Ripplers at last year's event.

Lamo archive

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette's iconic Roundup Saloon will once again be holding a fundraiser on the night after Thanksgiving featuring The Ripplers and many other bands, this time to benefit the American Cancer Society. The music is set to start at 8 p.m. on Nov. 29. This fun musical evening for a great cause could be the perfect answer for turkey coma.

Encouraged by the huge success of last year's fundraiser that raised over \$7,000 for families affected in the Paradise fire, The Ripplers' front man Tom Duffy and Roundup owner Karen Johnson decided that this year's traditional night-after Thanksgiving concert would once again be a benefit.

Duffy explains that a recent brush with cancer prompted him to suggest the ACS to Johnson. "When I suggested the possibility to Karen, she let me know that she was a breast cancer survivor, and that she thought the benefit was a great idea," says Duffy.

Together Johnson and Duffy recognized that many people's lives are touched by cancer, either directly or in their families and friends. "Every person I know has

been affected by this disease," says Duffy.

Duffy says that he's lucky. "On Sept. 11 of this year, at my wife's urging, I went in for a colonoscopy. The doctor spotted a tumor, which turned out to be cancerous."

Within 27 days Duffy had met with his surgeon, Dr. Salvador Guevara, and with the oncologist, had a CT scan and then had surgery to remove the tumor and an eight-inch section of his colon. "They found it, got it out, ran all the pathology, and I am stage one. No chemo or radiation. Dodged a bullet!" he says.

Johnson agrees that by sharing their stories, they help build awareness, which in turn could save lives. Her cancer was diagnosed five years ago. After discovering that she was BRCA-positive, she had four aggressive surgeries and six rounds of chemo in 14 months.

Johnson says that the support of her family, especially her husband, was very important. She says all the staff at the Roundup, who she describes as "family," stepped up to help. "My husband was a rock," she says.

A native Lafayette girl, Johnson has owned the Roundup with her husband for 15 years and worked there

for 10 years before that. "And I was a customer before that," she says. Johnson says both the night before and the one after Thanksgiving are huge nights for the bar, describing it as a Lafayette tradition.

The Roundup has had other fundraisers throughout the year, such as ones for suicide prevention, and for Notes 4 Hope, which raises funds and provides education for breast cancer prevention.

"It is human kindness, gathering together for a cause," says Johnson. "Good people doing good things."

Duffy says his idea snowballed. "I started thinking about how grateful I am to be friends with so many cool musicians in this area, and how I would love to gather as many of them as possible to take part in this event," he says, adding "They keep saying yes!"

The musical lineup appearing with The Ripplers include The Fog 5, Carly Thomas, Roxy Lady, The Dill Farmers, NoFlow, SKOOL!, and John Todd and Erik.

Duffy says he was amazed to learn firsthand how many skillful, compassionate, intelligent people are focusing their energy and efforts to fight cancer. "If we can use the power of music to help fund the fight ... let's do it!" he says.

It will be a fun evening with music and dancing, with raffle prizes and plenty of opportunity to donate to ACS.

"I am so grateful and lucky to be alive, on the mend, and making music with and for friends and family in this area," says Duffy.

Johnson and Duffy encourage people to stop by from 8 p.m. onward on Nov. 29, to enjoy the bands and to come together as a community to fight this disease.

Seventh annual 'It's a Wonderful Life' kicks off the holiday season



Santa visit at last year's event

Photo Gint Federas

By Pippa Fisher

It's one of the official signs that the holiday season is here; the annual "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce will be taking place from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Dec. 6. The free, fun, family-friendly celebration includes the tree lighting, live music, community sing-a-longs and, of course, Santa himself.

It's a sure sign that things are getting jolly in the 94549 area when you see the big man arrive at the Lafayette Plaza. This year, Santa is arriving by train at 4:30 p.m.

Children will also be able ride the rails on the Lafayette Express too, along Golden Gate Way, once they have visited with Santa, who will be taking note of all requests and posing for photo ops. Lafayette's historic fire truck,

Old Betsy, will still be part of the parade and will be available for photos too.

In addition to the complimentary hot chocolate and treats, there will be activities for the kids and live entertainment, including local student musicians, singers, and dancers from Stanley Middle School Chorus, Lafayette Kids' Cottage, Performing Academy, Lafayette Nursery School, The Sizzling Latin Dance Studio, the MCVT Glee Club and Town Hall Theatre Kids.

The official lighting of the Lafayette holiday tree is planned for 5:30 p.m., immediately followed by a community sing-a-long lead by Rena Wilson of Performing Academy. The Master of Ceremonies this year is artistic director and founder of the Gold Coast Chamber Players Pam Freund-Striplen.

This year the Lamorinda

Sunrise Rotary Club is raffling their latest project – a completely renovated 1963 Glasspar Seafair boat. Previous projects from this club (known as the "We Build Stuff" club) have included a canoe, a kayak and a teardrop trailer. The sedan model seats four or five and is suited for fishing, water skiing or pleasure cruising. The V-shaped berth sleeps two and has an integrated toilet. It is estimated to be worth \$25,000. All proceeds will go toward a variety of community projects.

The event is presented by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by local Lafayette Realtor Dana Green and Branagh Development, who together are also hosting the environmentally-friendly downtown Lafayette twinkle lights for the 2019 holiday season.

Further details are available at <https://lafayettechamber.org/holiday/>



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