

Lamorinda Village honors its volunteer members



Photo provided

Lafayette mayor Mike Anderson presents proclamation to Helen Gough with Don Jenkins.
By Jennifer Wake

More than 50 Lamorinda Village members, volunteers and donors gathered Dec. 13 to recognize the dedication of a few of its tireless volunteers who help facilitate services to members with the desire to age in place.

Founded five years ago by Ruth McCahan, Lamorinda Village now has 50 active volunteers serving 120 members, offering support in myriad ways: driving members to appointments, preparing meals, helping with computers or office tasks, making household repairs, or simply calling or visiting a member. Drivers are trained through Mobility Matters, ensuring the safe transport of members.

Lamorinda Village president Larry Toy said he and his wife joined the Village five years ago. "We were in our 60s at the time, and we thought it was a good idea to stay in the home [as we age] and support the effort not to go somewhere else." Toy began attending the monthly men's coffee

meetings, and then became involved with the board.

The "Afternoon of Gratitude" event, held in the fellowship hall at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, underscored the sense of community. The church provides a small office and its fellowship hall for Lamorinda Village to use free of charge, but the organization has no religious affiliation. "I'm very proud of the turnout today of the members, the volunteers and the donors," McCahan said. "It works; it just takes time."

Toy explained that the most important aspect of Lamorinda Village is to alleviate social isolation, since members may have friends who are gone, or they may have worked and, once retired, need to reconnect to their community. "Holding events like this can break this social isolation," he said.

Students led by Acalanes High School Choral Music Director Bruce Langacher performed several holiday songs at the event, and Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson presented a proclamation to Lafayette resident



Photo J. Wake

Acalanes High School carolers entertain Lamorinda Village members and volunteers at Dec. 13 event.

Helen Gough, the recipient of the Ed Stokes/Lamorinda Village Community Service Award, stating, "Today is Helen Gough Day in the city of Lafayette."

The Community Service Award is in honor of the late Ed Stokes, who was well known in the Lamorinda community for his philanthropy, and was an inspiration to founding member Don Jenkins, who presented the award. "Volunteers are the heart of this organization. Helen Gough has been with Lamorinda Village since day one and does everything in the office," Jenkins said. "She has done the job of two to three volunteers and she's the first voice you hear when you call to ask for services."

Ed Stokes' daughter, Connie, spoke about her dad and how much he loved the Lamorinda area. "Dad embraced the community over 50 years ago and has given a lot and was a part of everything," she said. "Ed never said no - he was always willing to help any organization. We're very honored that Lamorinda Village is keeping his legacy alive."

The Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary

also presented Gough with the Paul Harris Recognition Award, which is the highest honor Rotary can give. The Rotary club is also a Lamorinda Village donor and helps those who cannot afford to be members. Ed Stokes was also a Rotarian.

Other volunteers were recognized for their contributions, including Orinda resident Rick Shriner, who created the software package to run the Village and match volunteers, Treasurer Jack Sweitzer, Secretary Joyce Hawkins, Andy Amstutz, who was the membership chair from the beginning, and other founding member Skip Bradish. Jane Tiemann was also recognized for serving three years as president of Lamorinda Village.

"We have such an independent society," said Mike Kern, a retired family physician specializing in geriatric care whose sons live out of state. "People are disconnected and need more support. We have an opportunity in our community to do something about it."

For information about Lamorinda Village, visit lamorindavillage.org.

Camino Pablo cleans up



Submitted by
Cathy Chang

Over 35 volunteers helped clean up Lafayette Reservoir recreation area last month and collected over 37 pounds of trash by boat and on the trails. Campolindo High School student, Justin Wang, a Camino Pablo Elementary School alum, volunteered to help lead the volunteering experience and modeled for the young children. Camino Pablo Elementary's staff, Judy Silva, and her children joined the cleanup project as well. The event was organized by Camino Pablo Elementary School's PTA Community Services Committee to create volunteer opportunities for young children and promote Moraga School District's Presidential Volunteer Service Award programs. (www.moraga.k12.ca.us/pvsa)

Photo provided

Campo friends Gruebele and Penny achieve Eagle Rank together



Photo James Brian Studios

From left: Finlay Penney and Mason Gruebele

Submitted by
Rhonda Hughes

Campolindo High School juniors Mason Gruebele and Finlay Penney earned their Eagle Scout badges. The Moraga Troop 234 Scouts will be recognized at an Eagle Court of Honor at St. Monica Catholic Church in January.

For his Eagle project, Gruebele led the building of two gardening beds for St. Mark's nursery school in Orinda. This project helped the preschoolers learn about the plant life cycle by planting their own flowers and vegetables. Penney's Eagle Project was to organize the rebuilding of Campolindo's

Cross-country and Track record board that was in deep disrepair. He oversaw all aspects of the project, from getting his coaches' approval, designing the new record board, sourcing the materials, and, finally, building and installing it.

During his time in scouting, Gruebele became an Order of the Arrow brother and earned the World Conservation award, Religious Knot, and Arrow of Light. Penney earned the Presidential Service Award (gold level). He served as Senior Patrol Leader for the troop and participated in Order of the Arrow, High Adventure Treks, Philmont, and Seabase.

In Memory

Christopher Peter Georgeovich

Jan. 16, 1940 - Nov. 6, 2019



Chris was born on Jan. 16, 1940 in Devonshire, England to parents Costa "Gus" Georgeovich and Petra Markovich. In 1949, the family immigrated from England to Canada aboard the Aquitania before making their homestead in Geneva, New York. Chris served in the U.S. Army from 1964-1969.

In 1970, the family moved to Pacheco, California. After the passing of his father, Costa, Christopher took on the responsibilities of the family home. This included caring for all the family members, which were his sisters, their children, and his mother. We all were greatly appreciative for all of his sacrifice, love and caring.

Over the past 50 years, Christopher was a hair stylist/salon owner in Contra Costa County at various locations in Orinda, Walnut Creek, and Lafayette. He loved his profession and many of his clients became lifelong friends.

Christopher lived life to the fullest and cherished every moment.

He adored the game of golf so much that he wrote and published several books about the game and how to live your life according to the game! He was an avid inventor, artist, musician, and a choir member.

Gretchen Peters, his wife and soulmate, preceded him in death. Over many years, Chris made many lifelong friends whom he shared his love of life! He discussed his many opinions regarding everything from political views, his inventions, the poems that he had written, the books he wrote, his artwork, and the computer generated pixel drawing he spent countless hours creating. Chris was an incredible person who will be remembered for his kindness, enthusiasm, caring and joyous presence!

Christopher passed away unexpectedly on Nov. 6, 2019 following complications from a stroke. Services were held on Dec. 16 at Christ the King Catholic Church located in Pleasant Hill, California.

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.