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George Jedenoff reigns supreme as king at 3/4-century event

By Sora O'Doherty



George Jedenoff Photo Sora O'Doherty

Perhaps they need a new event for George Jedenoff, one that celebrates folks active into their second century. At 104, Jedenoff is again king of the three-quarter-century event, held this year via Zoom on Sept. 29. Jedenoff, queen Bobbie Dodson, 93, and longest married couple Don and Nancy Hall who have been married for 64 years, were honored at the event and presented with gift certificates for local restaurants.

Jedenoff, who went skiing twice last winter at Sugar Bowl at Lake Tahoe proclaimed that he is "Just lucky to still be alive and to live in this wonderful place of Orinda." While grateful for the gift certificate, he begged for no more crowns.

Queen Dodson has lived in the same home in Orinda Woods since 1955. Very active in the community, Dodson currently writes for the Orinda News and the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church. The Halls are originally from Rhode Island, but moved to the Bay Area to raise their family. Nancy Hall was involved in the schools for many years.

Host John Fazel also introduced his wife Mary Lou; the couple celebrated their 58th anniversary the same day as the event. Bea Heggie, Orinda's first 1st Lady joined the event again this year and is possibly the only guest who has attended all 21 of the Three-Quarter Century Club events. The event was not held last year owing to

the COVID-19 pandemic.

In presenting the 21st Annual Three-Quarter Century Club Shindig on Zoom this year, the club was able to open it to broader participation. Guests came from as far away as Iowa (the home of the original three-quarter century club) and New Hampshire.

Guest speaker George Hardeen, great grandnephew of Harry Houdini, gave a PowerPoint presentation about his famous great granduncle. Hardeen's grandfather, Theodore Hardeen, was also a magician, and carried on performing Houdini's famous milk can escape into the 1940s, following Houdini's death on Oct. 31, 1926 at age 52.

Hardeen was the principal investigator for a 2018 five-part series on Houdini on the Science Channel called "Houdini's Last Secrets." Hardeen lives in Page, Ariz., on the border of Utah. A writer, actor, Colorado river guide, cowboy, reporter and editor, Hardeen is fascinated with his famous great granduncle and seeks to share his knowledge of him with the public now. This Halloween would have been Houdini's 95th birthday. His presentation was full of facts and many photographs of Houdini and the family.

Fazel thanked the event's many sponsors, including local Rotary clubs, Lamorinda Senior Village, the Lafayette Community Foundation, the Lafayette Chamber, and the Orinda Association, which, according to Fazel, started in 1946 and was a quasi city council before Orinda incorporated in 1985.

Jamie Textor, president of Sunrise Rotary, spoke about the Rotary sponsors, including Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, Moraga, Lafayette and Rossmoor Rotary clubs.

The Orinda club focuses on education and community support, tutoring and reading in Oakland and Richmond, and supports a library in Zambia. The Lafayette group supports youth performing arts at Stanley Middle School, (three concerts a year) homeless in Oakland and Concord, international programs to abate sex trafficking and contributes to school libraries in Afghanistan. Moraga's club provided full funding for the all-access playground at Moraga Commons Park, scholarships for Campolindo High School and Saint Mary's College, medical kits and security cameras for all schools in their area and the Rossmoor Rotary supports Meals on Wheels.

Lamorinda Sunrise, with 65 members, provides the Home Team to help seniors in the community every other month, and the Family Harvest Farm, which mentors and trains youth aging out of foster care system.

All the Rotary clubs also support international projects. Another sponsor of the event was the Lamorinda Arts Council, which hosts the very popular Lamorinda Idol singing contest.

To view the 3/4 Century Club event on Zoom, visit www.lamorindasunrise.org

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