

VIVA!

VINEYARD VALLEY NEWS

VOLUME 50

JULY 2026

NUMBER 6



JULY EVENTS

VVHA Sponsored

Independence Day Celebration, July 4

BINGO, July 10

VVHA Board Meeting, July 15

Friday Night Social, July 24

Community Sponsored

St. Helena's 3rd of July Celebration



EVENTS SCHEDULE

July 4th

**9:00
AM**

Flag Raising
Meet at flagpole by the Clubhouse
Serving Donuts, Coffee, and Mimosas

**9:15
AM**

Pet Parade
Starts at the Guard Shack

**10:00
AM**

Bocce Tournament
sign up NOW - spots limited
Cold drinks at the Bocce Court

**2:00
PM**

BINGO in the Clubhouse
4 games - \$10

**5:00
PM**

DINNER - \$10
Cheeseburgers, Hot Dogs, Coleslaw
Corn on the Cob, and Dessert





July 2026



SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

			1	2	3 St. Helena 3rd of July Celebration 5:30-8:30PM	4 Independence Day 4th of July Activities 9AM-5PM
5	6	7	8	9	10 BINGO 6:00PM	11
12	13	14	15 VVHA Board Meeting 3PM	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Friday Night Social 5:30PM	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Tu, Thurs Water Aerobics w/Stacey 10-11:00AM Community Pool</p> </div>						
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Red-VVHA Community Black-Public Observance Green-Local Event Violet-VVHA</p> </div>						



2026-2027 VVHA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President, Janet Schmidt
Vice President, Rick Wood
Secretary, Mae Van Nett
Treasurer, Henk Brok

Directors:
Chris Killion
Steve Kinney
Inger Laidley
Vivian Pichner
Audrey Ward



Committee/Activity Chairs

VVHA Clubhouse Coordinator:
Mae VanNett

Hospitality:
Co-chairs: Chris Killion and Bernie Casey

Memorials and VV Clubhouse Coordinator:
Janeen di Rienzo

Directory:
Chris Killion

Library:
Joyce Cahill, Rick Wood

Bocce Committee Chair:
Rick Wood

VVHA Website:
Michael Merriman



Non-Social Resident-formed Groups

Community Education: Grace Kistner

If there is a death, call Janeen di Rienzo at 707-294-8307 so she can post it on the bulletin board and arrange for the \$50 donation to the organization you designate. She will explain how to schedule the clubhouse for a memorial.

July Birthdays

- 2 Tish Hively, Anne Offord, Anne Marie Storeide
- 5 Robyn Orsini
- 7 Ron Naines, Rita Cervone
- 8 Adrienne Asher
- 14 Carlos Ibarra
- 18 Steve Kinney
- 19 Steve Waxman
- 22 Myrna Caratti, John Traecy, Lisa Martel
- 25 Sherie Downie
- 26 Joy Peters
- 27 Vera Pestana
- 28 Marina Lavagnino, Linda Snowden
- 29 Steve McNabb
- 30 Gale Terminello, James Wayson
- 31 Audrey Ward

VIVA!

VIVA! Mission Statement: To provide a periodic newsletter concerning current and upcoming events, VVHA news, activities, neighborly news, and other non-political and local items of interest to all Vineyard Valley residents.

Editor

Francine Freeman

Business Manager

Henk Brok

Advertising

Henk Brok

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Mae VanNett, Janet Schmidt

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Hans Mauli, Staff

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Janeen di Rienzo

VIVA

21 Del Rio Court
St. Helena, CA 94574

email: viva.vineyardvalley@gmail.com
content deadline: 22nd of each month

The Prez Sez . . . by Janet Schmidt

Hellooo my friends,

After the Tea & Fashion Show, Eve Breckenridge and I were exhausted but happy that it was such a huge success. Next year we're going to try getting a committee together instead of a Chair and Co-chair. I hope that all of you who thanked us and told us how much fun you had will step up to be a member of that committee to help ensure the Tea & Fashion show will always be a fun summer event.

At our last board meeting, several participating residents suggested that we have more events. We, on the board, are all for more events but we need to know, first, what events; and second, who will be willing to chair those events. VVHA will furnish party supplies and anything you might need in the kitchen, and any board member(s) would be willing to help if they're not already involved with their own event. Call or text me at (707) 339-1814 if you have a good idea and I will share it with the rest of the board to see if it can be added to the calendar.

If you haven't already signed up for the 4th of July bocce tournament, bingo, and the dinner you'll find all the information you need on the VVHA bulletin board at the mailroom.

Hope to see you at one, two, or all of our upcoming events!

Janet

VINEYARD VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 17, 2026

Meeting was called to order by Janet Schmidt at 3:05 p.m. Minutes of May 2026 meeting were approved and seconded.

May Treasurer's report: Checking \$11,303.65; Savings \$9,014.40; VIVA \$3,898.72; Bocce \$1,175.03; Total \$25,391.80.

Purchases: Table Cloths and Coffee Pot have been purchased. The Board approved purchase of a flat-top grill to be used for outdoor events (cost approx. \$500). Travel expenses are reimbursed at the IRS rate of \$0.14 per mile for non-profit volunteers and charities. If you have ideas for items that VVHA could purchase to make your Vineyard Valley experience more enjoyable please reach out to a Board member with your suggestions.

June Bingo: 55 people for games, Chinese Chicken Salad, and fun with a net profit of \$300.

Tea & Fashion Show with raffle hosted 77 guests with a net profit of \$1,796. Eve confirmed she will not Chair the event next year so Janet will be reaching out to form a committee.

Open Discussion:

- Elizabeth Green notified us of an upcoming Fire Drill later this summer. Please participate.
- Any interest in joining a poker club? A sign up sheet is posted in the mailroom.

Responses to questions submitted via our website:

- Residents can send letters regarding concerns about the rent increase to Vineyard Valley Management, Attn: Greg Reynolds, 290 Pope Street, St. Helena CA, 94574
- Pickleball Court: The Corporation Yard belongs to VV Park Management and VVHA has no input regarding a court next to the bocce court.

President Janet Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

PARK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

July 2026

Fire Season has begun with small fires occurring during June in Napa and Lake Counties. Thank you to the first responders who were able to control and contain them quickly. Fire mitigation efforts continue in the Park, as landscapers have been trimming and limbing up trees and shrubs along the perimeter, as well as clearing brush from common areas, in the corporation yard, and along the Sulphur Creek banks and pathways. The St. Helena Fire Department was in the Park assessing common areas and lots for potential fire hazards. The perimeter of the Park was sprayed with fire retardant in June.

Emergency information packets were placed in resident cubbies containing important information and resources during fire season; also included in the packet is your Evacuated Tag. Reminder to have your go bag and your pet's go bag and a pet carrier, if needed, ready during fire season.

WATER CONSERVATION

Water usage in Vineyard Valley continues to increase. Here are some tips to help conserve our valuable water resources and keep water bills manageable:

Around the House

- Fill the bathtub halfway or less
- Recycle indoor water and irrigate your garden
- Turn off water when brushing teeth and shaving
- Fix leaks
- Install high-efficiency toilets
- Take 5-minute (or less) showers
- Wash full loads of clothes and dishes

Around the Yard

- Use water-wise and drought-resistant plants
- Adjust sprinkler heads and report broken sprinklers to the office
- Install drip irrigation and add a smart controller

POOL REMINDERS

Summer is here, and residents have family and friends visiting, for the safety and enjoyment of all those who use the pool, please note the following Pool Rules reminders. Please bring any pool exception requests to the office. Enjoy!

The pool is for the exclusive use of residents and their guests.

Guests must be accompanied to the pool by their host resident.

The guest limit is *two persons per household*.

All persons must shower before using the pool.

Glass containers are not allowed in the pool area.

Pool toys are not permitted. Pool flotation devices for therapeutic use are allowed.

Appropriate swimwear must be always worn in the swimming pool.

Diving and jumping into the pool are not allowed.

Animals are not allowed in the pool area.

Swim times for children ages 3-5 years are 10 am to 1 pm; 6-16 years are 10 am to 3 pm.

Children under three years are not allowed in the pool area.

No one under age 18 is allowed in the therapy pool or sauna.

Please contact the office if you have misplaced your pool code.

JULY RULES REMINDER

Lot and Homesite Maintenance: The exterior of the mobilehome must be well maintained, clean and neat in appearance. All electrical, water, sewer and gas connections must be kept in a good and leak-proof condition at all times, and in compliance with all state and municipal laws or regulations. Residents shall maintain their homesites in a clean, well-kept and attractive fashion, including the front, sides, and back. Any additions to the home and location of the home (porches, screen rooms, cabanas, air conditioners, water softeners) or yard (fences, screens, storage locker, etc., must be approved by Management in writing, then submitted to the proper regulatory agency for the necessary permit.

All trash, debris, boxes, barrels, brooms, ladders, etc., must be kept out of sight. Carports must be kept clean at all times.

We would like to extend our thanks to our residents. Your continued efforts to maintain your homesites and conserve water help keep utility costs under control while ensuring our community remains attractive, welcoming, and well cared for. We truly appreciate your cooperation and commitment to making the Vineyard Valley community a great place to live.



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References from park residents available

jmpetty1@att.net

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THE SECRET GARDEN

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The Annual Vineyard Valley Tea and Fashion Show was held on Saturday, June 6. It took place in their Secret Garden in the clubhouse, beautifully transformed. Palms lining the Lanai and the stage added to the lush theme.



Everyone was decked out in a fabulous assortment of hats, gowns, and flora of some sort. Each table rallied to the garden motif with their best china and themed props on display.

(cont'd next page)





Noreen Fetzer from Daisy's Boutique hosted the fashion show. She has taken the time to outfit our models for the last several years. All the outfits were casually elegant as befits a summer garden party. She offers a 10% discount to all who come in the store and mention the event. Many thanks to Eve Breckenridge and Janet Schmidt for hosting this year's event, as well as the table hosts, models, and all the volunteers for their hard work in making it such success!



2026 Summer Concerts in the Park

St. Helena 2026 Summer Concert Series

Wednesdays, July 8 to August 12

The 2026 St. Helena Summer Concert Series returns to Lyman Park on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Listed below is the lineup beginning July 8 running through August 12. The free, family-friendly events feature live music, local food vendors, and community activities.

Wednesday Evening Concert Lineup at Lyman Park

July 8: Batacha Latin Band (Latin Salsa)

July 15: Petty Rocks (Tom Petty Cover Band)

July 22: Dustin Saylor (Country)

July 29: *To Be Announced*

August 5: Sounds of Selena (English/Spanish Cover Band)

August 12: Cassie B (San Diego's Premier Cover Band)

Note: There will be no regular Wednesday evening concert on July 1; instead, you can catch the Saint Helena Community Band performing at Lyman Park on July 4 at 5:30 p.m.

*Lyman Park is located at
1498 Main Street, St. Helena*

Calistoga 2026 Concerts in the Park

Thursdays, July 2 to August 20 | 6:30 - 8:30

Thursday Evening Concert Lineup at Pioneer Park

July 2: Traveling Willburys Revue (Classic Rock)

July 9: Boys of Summer (Eagles Tribute Band)

July 16: Kid Galaga (Dance music from the 60's, 70's, 80's)

July 23: Second Hand Funk (Funk and Soul)

July 30: The Humdinger Band (Rock and Soul)

August 6: Jane Blonde and the Goldfingers (British Rock, Soul and Pop)

August 13: Miko Marks (Country Americana and Roots Music)

August 20: Maya (Latin Tribute Band)

*Pioneer Park is located at
1308 Cedar Street, Calistoga*

BINGO

Night

IN THE
CLUBHOUSE

JULY
10

DOORS OPEN
6PM

- \$15.00 Entry Pack includes 3 x 6 games, dauber, and dinner
- Those with specific food requirements or allergies are invited to bring their own
- BYO beverage
- Extra Game Packs \$10.00

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The Declaration of Independence as written by Thomas Jefferson

contributed by Mariam Hansen, St. Helena Historical Society

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.



Portrait of Thomas Jefferson
by James Turnbull

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which

they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the

Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation;

For Quarters large bodies of armed troops among us: For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed

to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Congress, JOHN HANCOCK, President.

Attested, CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.



John Hancock's Defiance: July 4th 1776
lithograph by Currier & Ives

Signers of the Declaration of Independence (by Colony)

Pennsylvania:	Massachusetts:	Delaware:	Maryland:
George Clymer	John Adams	George Read	Charles Carroll
Benjamin Franklin	Samuel Adams	Caesar Rodney	Samuel Chase
Robert Morris	John Hancock	Thomas McKean	Thomas Stone
John Morton	Robert Treat Paine		
Benjamin Rush	Elbridge Gerry	New York:	Georgia:
George Ross	New Hampshire:	Lewis Morris	Button Gwinnett
James Smith	Josiah Bartlett	Philip Livingston	Lyman Hall
James Wilson	William Whipple	Francis Lewis	George Walton
George Taylor	Matthew Thornton	William Floyd	

list of signers continued on p.16

continued from p.15

Signers of the Declaration of Independence (by Colony)

Virginia:	North Carolina:	New Jersey:	Connecticut:
Richard Henry Lee	William Hooper	Abraham Clark	Samuel Huntington
Francis Lightfoot Lee	John Penn	John Hart	Roger Sherman
Carter Braxton	Joseph Hewes	Francis Hopkinson	William Williams
Benjamin Harrison	South Carolina:	Richard Stockton	Oliver Wolcott
Thomas Jefferson	Edward Rutledge	John Witherspoon	
George Wythe	Arthur Middleton	Rhode Island:	
Thomas Nelson Jr.	Thomas Heyward Jr.	Stephen Hopkins	
	Thomas Lynch Jr.	William Ellery	

St. Helena's Third of July Celebration

event sponsored by St. Helena Chamber of Commerce



Date & Time

July 3, 2026
5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Location

Crane Park
360 South Crane Avenue in St. Helena

Event Details

Join the City of St. Helena for a special Third of July Celebration!

This year marks two historic milestones; the Sesquicentennial (150th Anniversary) Celebration of the City of St. Helena and the Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) Celebration of the United States of America.

To honor these momentous occasions, the City is switching things up for 2026!

With the Fourth of July falling on a long holiday weekend, St. Helena will kick off Napa Valley's line-up of festivities with an unforgettable evening of hometown pride, entertainment, and community spirit.

Please note that, after deliberation and discussion, the City of St. Helena will not have a Pyrotechnic display.

RIANDA HOUSE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

Building Healthy Habits for Self Care | Anne Bernardin **Tuesday, July 7- August 11, 3:00-4:30, Rianda House**

This 6-session wellness series is designed for those who want to maintain their strength, energy, independence, and overall well-being as they age, especially while caring for another individual, and balancing everyday responsibilities. Beginning with an overview of what self-care entails, each additional session offers simple, practical strategies for improving sleep, managing stress, making nourishing food choices, staying gently active, and building healthy daily routines. **RSVP**

Music & Wellness Summit Festival Napa Valley **Friday, July 10, 9:00-3:00, CIA Copia, 500 1st St, Napa**

The FNV 2026 *Music & Wellness Summit* is a one-day gathering focused on arts and wellness, bringing together leading neuroscientists, psychologists, entrepreneurs, and musicians. Explore music's role in brain health, community health, senior wellness, and youth mental health. The event highlights scientifically documented curative medical practices that harness the power of music. Join us for an information-rich day led by noted researchers, clinicians, and artists exploring the latest scientific discoveries and clinical innovations in music-based therapies.

Wellness Day at Bothe State Park **Saturday, July 11, 9:00-1:00, Bothe State Park, Calistoga**

Join Napa Valley State Parks Association for a morning dedicated to movement, mindfulness and fresh air at Bothe State Park. From energizing fitness classes and peaceful yoga sessions to guided nature hikes and family-friendly activities, there is something for every age and pace.

Bone Health Workshop | Susan Arthur **Saturday, July 11, 11:00-1:00, Rianda House**

Explore the fascinating world of bone health. Whether you are looking to maintain an active lifestyle or slow bone loss and prevent fractures, this class will provide you with vital and practical nutrition and lifestyle habits to protect your precious bones. **RSVP**

Italian Language & Culture | Carlo Di Fede **Thursdays, July 16 - September 3, 6:00-7:30, Rianda House**

This eight-week introductory course is designed for learners seeking to acquire basic Italian language skills and a rich cultural immersion of Italy. We'll blend interactive lessons with cultural exploration. Develop conversational abilities and grammatical understanding, building confident communication. **RSVP**

Reiki Caregiver Workshop | Darleen Gardner **Saturday July 18 & Sunday July 19, 1:00-4:00, Rianda House**

Reiki is a gentle, holistic method that can help reduce stress, promote relaxation, and increase well-being. Learn techniques to practice Reiki on yourself or your loved ones. Practicing self-reiki is a wonderful form to help caregivers cope with the chronic stress and fatigue associated with caregiving. **RSVP**

Why Spirituality Matters in Healthcare | Therese Fischer **Monday, July 27, 1:00-2:00, Rianda House**

Therese Fischer is the Chaplain for Providence PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, <https://communityhealthnapavalley.org/pace/>), and the author of *Walking Through the Valley of Dementia: A Self-Paced Spiritual Retreat for Care Partners*. She will join us to talk about what spirituality is, how PACE approaches spiritual care, and, in the context of medical science, why spirituality is an important part of any healthcare conversation. Q & A at the end of the presentation. **RSVP**

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Know Thy Neighbor



by Suzanne James

Our neighbor in the spotlight this month is known for her baking skills and sweet dogs, her friendliness and boundless energy! She is a delightful addition to our community; one you will enjoy getting to know through this column and out and about in the Park.

She was born and raised on the Peninsula, primarily in Mountain View. She is the third of three sisters, one deceased and the other living in Redding. “We are close now and then,” she says in describing their relationship. Her father was an engineer working at Lockheed Martin. During the mid-80’s she was also employed at the engineering firm “which helped pay for my college!” At one point, both of her parents worked there too, but in different locations. Her parents divorced when she was six and she saw little of her father after that. It is interesting to note that all her schooling took place in Seventh Day Adventist-run schools.

“I studied for two years in Spain with the Adventist Colleges Abroad program, which was my big adventure!”

After graduating from high school in Mountain View, she entered college at Pacific Union College (PUC) in Angwin, then finished at Loma Linda University with a degree in Spanish. “I studied for two years in Spain with the Adventist Colleges Abroad program, which was my big adventure!”

She married a Spaniard she met during her time in Sagunto, Spain, who came to the States to complete a Doctorate in Biology at Loma Lina University. The couple had two children, Carmen, now 35, who has a Master’s in Public Health and works at Loma Linda University, and Adam, 31, who lives in Newport Beach working in Tech sales.

The couple divorced after ten years of marriage and our neighbor returned to the Bay Area with her two children. For the next twenty-five years she taught high school and community college courses in Spanish, English, and Advanced Placement among others.

In 2001 she completed a Master’s from UC Santa Barbara in Spanish Language and Culture. In 2014, after being inspired by the “pastelarios” in Spain, she decided to get training in Classic Pastry Arts and took a ten month intensive course at International Culinary Center at night after teaching all day. This led to making bridal cakes and cupcakes as a side job, something she very much enjoyed doing!

“When I retired from teaching in San Jose, I decided to move to St. Helena and Vineyard Valley. I knew the town from my years at PUC and they had great bakeries!” She bought a home at 14 Del Campo in 2019 but then sold it and left for a year in 2022 to be closer to her children “where I wanted to be.” But she returned the summer of 2023 and bought her current home which had been extensively remodeled. She did some updates to bring in more light and added a gas fireplace. Her mother came to live with her in 2019 and lived with her off and on until her death in September 2024.

Our neighbor enjoys spending time with her friends and doing home improvement projects such as adding a fireplace and putting shades on the large living room windows. She just joined the Napa Valley Health Club “to get in better shape,” and has started doing watercolor paintings. Her mantra for this stage of her life is “I choose peace!”

Please join me in a major welcome to our neighbor this month, Rebecca (Becky) Soret, who lives at 4 Del Campo with her two charming little dogs, a Maltipoo named Latte and a poodle mix named Noodles.



Volunteers and Referrals to this column are encouraged and welcomed!

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