

# VIVA!

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## VINEYARD VALLEY NEWS

VOLUME 49

MARCH 2025

NUMBER 3



### UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

BINGO March 14

St. Patrick's Day Dinner  
Monday, March 17

Friday Night Social  
March 28

VVHA Semi-Annual Membership Meeting/Elections  
March 19

# SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

## DINNER

**\$25.00**

**MONDAY,  
MARCH 17TH  
5:30 PM – DRINKS  
6:15 DINNER**



Please sign your name(s) on the signup sheet and use the envelopes provided below to pay for your dinner(s). Deposit the envelopes in the VVHA box in the middle of the cubbies in the mailroom.

# MARCH

S M T W TH F S

Mon, Wed   Exercise with Stacy   10-11AM   Exercise Room						1
Sundays   Tai Chi with Mark Siobal   4PM   Exercise Room						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Mardi Gras Shrove Tuesday		Ash Wednesday			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Daylight Savings begins				Purim@sunset	BINGO	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	St. Patrick's Day St. Patrick's Day Dinner		VVHA Meeting/ Elections	Vernal Equinox Spring begins		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
					Friday Night Social	
30	31					

Red-VVHA Community   Black-Public Observance   Green-Local Event   Violet-VVHA Event

## 2023-2024 VVHA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President, Rick Wood

Vice President, Janet Schmidt

Secretary, Mae Van Nett

Treasurer, Henk Brok

Directors:

Eve Breckenridge

Joyce Cahill

Ines Chiarello

Janice Dugan

Inger Laidley



### Committee/Activity Chairs

*VVHA Clubhouse Coordinator:*

Mae Van Nett

*Hospitality:*

Robin McGuire, Mae Van Nett

*Memorials and VV Clubhouse Coordinator:*

Janeen di Rienzo

*Directory:*

Michael Merriman

*Library:*

Joyce Cahill, Rick Wood

*Bocce Committee Chair:*

Bob Distad

*VVHA Website:*

Michael Merriman



### Non-Social Resident-formed Groups

*Community Education:*

Grace Kistner

*Neighbor Helping Neighbor:*

Carroll Cotten

*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.*

## March Birthdays

- 1 Mae Van Nett
- 2 Debbie Austin, Bill Thompson
- 4 Linda Bertoli
- 5 Eleanor Crebs
- 8 Shanon Kuleto, James Venechanos
- 9 Chantel Leruitte
- 12 Connie Sagadin, Bernie Casey
- 13 Mary Ann Maurer
- 14 Ginger Kelly
- 17 Claude Leruitte
- 18 Joan Buckholz, Inger Laidley
- 22 Russ Barker
- 23 Cameron Fraser
- 27 Will Conum

### In Memorium

Donna McNab 4 Del Rio Court

## VIVA!

**VIVA Mission Statement:** To provide a periodic newsletter concerning current & 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

Carroll Cotten

#### Advertising

Henk Brok

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# The Prez Sez . . . by Rick Wood

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This is it!! It's been two years and time to turn over a new leaf. I'm very proud of what has been achieved, and it can only have been done a very strong and enthusiastic board behind me. I know not all of this community agrees, but the larger majority does and for that I say thank you for your support and kind words. You will be in good hands going forward.

March bingo is Friday the 14<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up early as it makes it easier to plan food that needs to be purchased. Where else can you have dinner for \$15 and win some money?

Saint Patrick's Day dinner is Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>, with all the Irish flair. On the menu is corned beef and cabbage, potatoes, carrots, and soda bread--all for \$25. Put on something green and join the fun! Sign-up sheets at the Mail room.

The March 19 board meeting will be my last meeting as your president. Please join in and meet your new board. Proxies will be in your cubby if you cannot be present. I am hoping that if you have not yet been involved, you have a chance to enjoy the activities this year.

March 28th is our Friday night social at 5:30. Bring something to share, and as always BYOB. We've planned is a story telling social, so if you would like to share a short five minute story please sign up with Michael Merriman.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your president. Remember, get up, get out, and be healthy.



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# VINEYARD VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING

## WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2025 MINUTES

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The meeting was called to order by President Rick Wood at 3:03pm.

Minutes of January 2025 meeting were approved.

VV Park Manager report – Park Mgmt. will be emailing monthly updates to all residents in lieu of attending VVHA Board Meetings.

Treasurer's report by Henk Brok - As of January 31, 2025: Checking \$7,485.52; Savings \$9,013.28; VIVA \$3,088.69; Bocce \$4,013.32; Total \$23,600.81

Nominating Committee presented Nominees for upcoming elections: Pres: Janet Schmidt; VP: Rick Wood; Sec: Inger Laidley; Treas: Henk Brok; Directors: Mae VanNett, Joyce Cahill, Eve Breckenridge, Ines Chiarello, Steve Kinney. Look for ballots in your cubby at the beginning of March.

February Bingo Report – 43 lucky people showed up for Valentine's Day Bingo where Chicken Tacos were on the menu. Please sign up early so the cooks can make enough food!

The new sound system has been received and recently used at February Bingo!

St Patrick's night Dinner sign up sheets will be posted soon – Steve Kinney is Chairperson with Michael Merriman and Ines Chiarello chef-ing!

Fond farewell and thanks to Janeen DiRienzo and Gigi Batchelor for their years of putting out the VIVA. Hello to Francine Freeman ([viva.vineyardvalley@gmail.com](mailto:viva.vineyardvalley@gmail.com)) as our new editor. Francine lives at 25 Redondo.

President Rick Wood adjourned the meeting at 3:20pm.



*Valentine's Day Bingo winners*

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# PARK MANAGEMENT UPDATES

## February 2025

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### **PARK PROJECTS**

The landscapers have been cleaning up between and during the February rain storms. Work continues on tree maintenance and limbing up. The corporation yard clean up and reorganization is ongoing. Due to predicted warm weather, the turf may be cut next week, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Management is waiting for a scope of work and estimate for the lanai door to Redondo to be converted to an accessible door.

This is a reminder that a TV has been added to the gym for resident use with the capability to cast or mirror their personal workouts from their phone to the TV. The instructions to connect to the tv and the wifi login information are posted in the gym. If you have any issues connecting to the tv from your phone, please call the office during office hours for assistance.

### **FIRE SEASON PREPAREDNESS**

At the end of January, Assistant Fire Chief Alec Vidler met with Frank, our Operations Manager, to walk through the common areas - Clubhouse, Landscaper's Workshop, Workshop Yard, Woodshop, Gym, and Corp Yard. Alec reported that all areas were clean, safe, with good signage and equipped with multiple Fire Extinguishers. All park vehicles are also equipped with Fire Extinguishers. Vineyard Valley has multiple water reserves on property in the pool and lagoon that could be utilized by the Fire Department. All the common buildings are equipped with roof sprinklers during fire season.

Review of the Park trees – staff has limbed up a great number of trees and should continue this practice of limbing up trees. To slow the progression of embers, residents are requested to keep bushes and hedges trimmed well below the bottom limbs of trees.

The few remaining Juniper Bushes will be removed from the park as they are highly flammable. All Hollywood Juniper trees in Vineyard Valley will be removed before fire season. These trees are classified as highly combustible because they contain volatile oils.

The Homes in Vineyard Valley - are for the most part clean and free of debris. However some carports are being used as a storage area for cardboard boxes, which creates a fire hazard, especially in high winds with embers. Each home has a garden, bushes should be kept below roof height and the ground clear of weeds.

Roofs and gutters should be regularly cleaned to keep dry debris off the home.

Management appreciates Assistant Fire Chief Alec Vidler taking time to visit the Park and make recommendations.

Residents are encouraged to reach out to management at [vineyardvalleymhp@gmail.com](mailto:vineyardvalleymhp@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns.



# Flyboys: Octogenarians Fly from Napa to South America

By Mariam Hansen

In a great feat of adventure, 81 year old Dean Stahr and 79 year old Bill Savidge flew to the tip of South America in a small Cessna Skylane two seat airplane in 2007. Sounds risky? But these two aviation fanatics planned every hour of their adventure and had an experienced ground crew to monitor their every move.

This was not a one-off event. Dean Stahr flew to Scotland alone in 1999. In 2004 he flew to Hawaii, but the biggest trip of all was in 2005 when Dean flew around the world in the same Cessna Skylane. He was gone 51 days and flew 188 hours, using the same ground crew. This time he invited Bill to join him.

The 26 year old plane was modified by removing the rear seats for extra fuel tanks, doubling the time between refueling. This made the plane overweight, requiring approval from FAA. Dwight Small, a retired pilot, would monitor the weather for them. With modern GPS technology the aircraft autopilot did much of the flying for them.

Dean and Bill departed on Jan 29, 2007 from Napa Airport for Tucson, AZ to meet with Dwight Small.

During a eight-week flying adventure the pair made a total of 19 stops as flew down one coast of South America and back up the other side. They stopped in Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Santiago and Puerto Montt, Chile, Rio Gallegos and Viedma, Argentina, Salvador, Recife and Belem, Brazil, Trinidad, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Albuquerque and Nut Tree Airport in Vacaville.

On the last Sunday in March, 2007 Bill and Dean landed at Napa Airport. There to meet them were 60 of their closest friends, a three-piece band and the Mayor of St. Helena Del Britton.

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How did they do it? Their ground crew virtual co-pilot Dwight Small sent out frequent emails keep their supporters updated. The pair carried a satellite phone to maintain contact with Small in Arizona. They had to report their location every hour, or a search party would look for them. They flew during the day and landed each night for eight weeks in a different location. Both men were experienced pilots. Dean (who owned the plane) did the takeoffs and landings, while Bill did the flying. To stave off cabin fever, each had their own hotel room. Neither of them spoke Spanish, but they encountered English speakers at every control tower, except in Viedma, Argentina. They used flash cards with common phrases to communicate with airport crews.

Bill was robbed on the beach in Salvador, Brazil. He was walking alone on a deserted beach. Two young men approached carrying a large rock. Without speaking the men searched Bill's pockets. They took his watch, hotel key, about five dollars in local currency, a safe deposit key and a photocopy of his passport. As they left they handed back the safe deposit key. Stunned and not able to speak Portuguese, Bill said "gracias". Otherwise they had a great time!

Bill joined Army Air Corps determined to become a pilot, but was told he was too young and needed 2 years of college. They sent him to Stanford University. Just after he flew solo for the first time, the US dropped the atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945 and the war in the Pacific was over. Later Bill joined the Air Force around the time of the Korean War. After 24 years in the Air Force, Bill retired in 1972 as full colonel and moved to St. Helena with his wife and daughter. He served on city council, boards and committees, Kiwanis Club, Rianda House Board and the food pantry.

Until recently he lived at 7 San Lucas Court.







## Failla Winery

This month, we decided to visit a winery that features my favorite grape variety, Pinot Noir. Failla Winery is located North of St Helena, off the Silverado Trail. Their mailbox marks the driveway that is located across the street from Rombauer Winery. Failla is an unusual winery for the Napa Valley, in that it produces cool climate wines, specializing in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. As a cool-climate producer, their vineyards are all located near the coast, with their Estate Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast appellation. Ehren Jordan is the owner/winemaker and has made wine for Turley and Neyers. An interesting twist is that neither of those wines can be considered "cool climate". Wines are sourced from some of the best Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyards, such as Hudson, Peay and Hirsch. There is also a winery in Oregon in the Willamette Valley, sourcing grapes from vineyards in that area. Ehren is a big fan of Cement Egg Fermenters, with most wines having at least partial cement fermentation. This technique helps develop a lush, refined style.

Our tasting started with a sparkling wine, a 2016 Brut "2G", which is new to their production. The "2G" refers to the 2 grams of sugar added to the dosage. Delicious and balanced with a smooth mouth feel. Two whites followed, a Chenin Blanc and a Chardonnay. The Chenin was from Santa Ynez in Santa Barbara County. Rich and bright fruit with a touch of minerality. Reuling Vineyard Chardonnay, from the Sonoma Coast, is rich with delicious bright fruit. The subtle complexity of the wine makes an appealing quaff. They offered a Rosé from their Oregon winery as an extra treat to the tasting. Dry, with restrained fruit flavors, not overly fruity as many Pinot Rosé's are.







# THE TASTING ROOM

by Steve Kinney

Next up were three Pinot Noirs, all from Sonoma Coast Appellation. Stella is a blend of four vineyards. A step up from their 'Sonoma Coast' bottling, this is very accessible with great fruit forward notes and balance. Peay Vineyards is always a notable wine in my book. Complex and full of cherry and red berry flavors, this can be a mouthful. The 2022 vintage is showing more subtle tannins and is very approachable now. Last was a Platt Vineyard Pinot. This had a fair amount of tannin to go with the lush fruit flavors. Probably a year away from being ideal, it is still a beautiful wine to drink. As a special treat, they



brought out a 2020 Savoy Vineyard from Anderson Vally. The extra years of aging have let this develop into a beautiful wine with some tannin that is offset with rich tart fruit.

The tasting room is in an older house with lots of wood-paneled walls in a slightly funky style. On warm days (which we did not have) they offer seating outside on the patio. The cost for the basic tasting is \$65 per person. They have a cellar experience as well, which showcases their hillside cave at \$90. I highly recommend this winery when you want to try some lighter-styled wines (Pinot & Chardonnay) and stay close to home.



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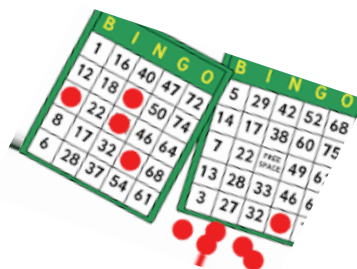
# BINGO

**Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Doors open at 6:00pm**

**Games start at 6:30pm**

Entry Pack - \$15.00  
includes 3 x 6 game packs,  
dauber and dinner.



Hamburgers and  
potato salad are  
on the menu.



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# FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIAL

*Friday March 28th  
5:30pm in the Lanai*

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# Know Thy Neighbor



by Suzanne James

We have an energetic, well-known neighbor in the spotlight this month who has been a resident of Vineyard Valley for nineteen years! She was born in Seattle shortly after her mother was evacuated from a military base at Dutch Harbor where her father was stationed. He served in both World Wars, first as a foot soldier, next war as a dentist. Her mother was a part time realtor and pharmacist, likely the first female pharmacist in CA.

When our neighbor was two, the family moved to Carmel to a home that her mother had built before she was married. They stayed there for four years during which time her younger sister was born. It was also a time of meeting what would turn out to be a lifelong friend. "We became best buddies!" Diane Barr.

The family moved again when our neighbor was six to Fairbanks, Alaska "by ship, car, and airplane" to join her father, who was working there as a dentist. He died unexpectedly when our neighbor was thirteen.

The family then returned to the house in Carmel where she attended high school "I tried out for several sports but never made a team except for bowling!" After completing high school, she attended a community college in Monterey followed by attending San Francisco State College, "where I graduated with an MRS degree," i.e., marrying before completing college. After twenty years, the couple were divorced. She had two daughters who were still living at home at the time of the divorce.

She then applied to Fresno State College where she completed her BA in English, attending night classes as she was working full time as a legal secretary, plus raising their two daughters. Despite her already busy schedule she found time for several volunteer activities – Girl Scouts, Room Mother at her daughter's school, Rainbow Girl's leader, etc.

She was introduced by a neighbor to her current husband, and discovered he worked in Admissions at Fresno State and had two children at home. Also, that he was a Minister prior to taking the job at the College. They dated for quite a while, six years, "because we didn't want to do 'The Brady Bunch'" i.e., blending the two families while the children were still young. Eventually they eloped, taking the children with them! They have now been married for 37 years.

After they married her husband decided he wanted to return to the ministry after years working in Admissions. "I had some great times following him around to different churches during those years of his ministry! I retired first, then he retired and in February 2006 we moved to Vineyard Valley. I found my childhood 'best buddy' there. We again lived on the same street and were close before she died a few years ago."

One of her daughters "lives five minutes away "in the Meadowood area with her husband (Anne Gridley's son) and travels extensively visiting wineries as the US rep for Riedel Crystal. Her second daughter lives with her family in Washington state, a consultant in the health care arena. Our neighbor and her husband have six grandchildren between them,

# Know Thy Neighbor



by Suzanne James

two in Washington State and four in Florida. They occasionally have family gatherings "and everyone gets along just fine," she says with some pride in her voice.

Asked what she enjoys doing now, it seems that volunteer activities are at the top of the list! She is the facilitator of the weekly Ladies Tea at Rianda House and is also part of an early morning exercise group there. In addition, she is active in the Congregational Care Committee at the local Presbyterian Church. In the past she was very active in multiple committees and the Board here in Vineyard Valley.

Do you recognize her? She is Ellen Cotten who lives with her husband, Carroll, at 1 Del Rio.



**Volunteers and referrals for this column are encouraged and welcome, a great way to become acquainted with your neighbors.**

**Call Suzanne James at (763) 234-6643**



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## Idle Musings of an Idle Old Person

by Joyce Armington

### You Should Live So Long

Despite occasional boredom, pain or angst, most of us hope for a long life. And this is true even knowing that a long life inevitably entails years and years of being an old person. Might as well buckle up.

There's a Yiddish saying, "You should live so long!" And though it sounds affirming, it actually expresses skepticism. It means don't hold your breath waiting for your big dreams to materialize. Breath-holding is a terrible strain on aged lungs, and the odds of seeing your dream come true aren't that great whether you inhale or not. Yiddish wisdom tells me that I might as well relax for my remaining time on earth and tell my dreams to settle down and go play mahjong or bocce.

Literally, how long is a long life? If you look where I looked on the internet, you'll read that the average American lives to be 77.5. (Hmmmm...I'm 77.3 so if this article ends mid-sentence, you'll understand why...)

In the previous century, my dreams of the future were planted by Walt Disney and low budget science fiction films. Eureka! Clothes that didn't need to be ironed. Zowie! Wrist phones with screens so you could drool over how cute your boyfriend is while you talk to him.

But there were people who had far grander visions for the future than I. Visionaries brought us antibiotics, cloning, moon landings, television, computers, cures for cancers, the internet and on and on. These amazing things have already happened in my lifetime. There's just one technology breakthrough that I feel I should live even longer to enjoy.

It's called teleportation. This marvel works by reducing you to kazillion molecules and then streaming them to your chosen destination where you are reassembled. It doesn't even mess up your hair. In the movies, it worked like this: A gorgeous test subject, clad in a sexy stretch suit, steps into a transparent booth. In the adjacent lab, a goateed scientist pushes buttons and twirls knobs until smoke starts to rise from the control console. In no time at all, the gorgeous test subject dissolves into a cloud of sparkles. Tense moments pass. In an empty booth at a far away location, sparkles start to glimmer and then condense into the gorgeous test subject from the first booth. Voila, teleportation works! Except for one time, when the transported sparkles of an actor named Jeff condensed into a housefly.

This single movie catastrophe should not be enough to pull the plug on something as wondrous as teleportation. But we're now in the 21st century, and it's still not here. I've read it's waiting on further advances in quantum physics. Costco has even reserved shelf space for the kit. In the meantime, we linger on in an age of pollution-spewing gridlock and airplanes that can't keep their wings on.

This is especially tragic for the Old because there could not be a more elder-friendly form of transportation. It's the gentlest way to get around, albeit posing a niggling risk of a passenger turning into a fly. Because I'm the kind of optimist who knows teleporting will transform our world and who also believes that peace is on its way back to earth, I think it's well worth the effort to live as long as possible just to see how well things turn out.



# RIANDA HOUSE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

## **Southern Charm Travel Presentation with Jay Fehan & Robin McGuire**

**Tuesday, March 4, 11-12:00, Rianda House**

Rianda House Tripsters are heading south! Discover the charm of America's southeast as you stroll cobblestone streets, tour historic homes, and enjoy unspoiled coastlines. Stay two nights each in **Charleston and Savannah**, exploring Charleston's historic City Market and Savannah's sprawling Historic District by trolley or on foot. Relax with two nights at the exclusive Jekyll Island Club and visit the Georgia Sea Turtle Center to see sea turtle rehabilitation in action. Experience the unique beauty and warm hospitality of South Carolina and Georgia's "Low Country."

Trip dates: Sept. 29-Oct 5, 2025

## **Canasta with Lucy Thater**

**Fridays, 1:00-4:00PM, Rianda House**

Typically played with four people, canasta is great for both mind and spirit. The game takes 2-4 hours, and multiple rounds. If you don't know how to play, Lucy is happy to teach you! Friday afternoon fun and games!

## **Ladies & A Cuppa Tea with Ellen Cotten**

**Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30AM, Rianda House**

Ladies, please join our own Vineyard Valley gem, Ellen Cotton, for friendship and a cup of tea. A warm and inviting atmosphere will encourage fun and engaging discussions.

## **Men's Fitness with Evan Massaro**

**Tuesdays, 8:00-9:00AM, American Legion Hall, 1291 Madrona**

Improve balance, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness with a splash of dad jokes! "Stay within your safety zone but push your comfort zone!" All levels are welcome. Please bring a mat.

## **DANCE CLASSES ARE BACK AT RIANDA HOUSE**

### **Swing Dancing, taught by Susan Gai**


**Fridays, 3:00-3:50PM, Rianda House**

Learn the All-American Swing dance that was created in New York in the 1920's. Originally danced to the Big Band sounds of the '40's, the Swing is again widely popular with contemporary swing bands as well. It's a versatile dance that's easy to learn. RSVP.

### **Rumba Dance, taught by Susan Gai**

**Fridays, 4:00-4:50PM, Rianda House**

A slow, romantic dance that originated in Cuba. Known as "the dance of love", the Rumba characterized by "Cuban Motion", a rolling action of the hips and legs, that gives it its sensual look. The Rumba's distinguishing features are a romantic feel with a slow languorous beat.



# **Susan Arthur, NC**

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### **Nutrition Club**

Once a week through March, a group of health-minded Vineyard Valley residents will be meeting to discuss the benefits of diet, lifestyle and supporting the body.

I will give a short class on a different topic each week. We will then discuss strategies and ideas for making positive changes. There will be time for general questions as well.

Some of the topics I will be proposing to the group include:

**Health Hazards and Health Heroes**

**Mindful and Intentional Eating**

**Tips to Improving Digestion**

**Heart Health**

**Balancing Blood Sugar and Increasing Energy**

**Choosing Quality Supplements**

**Mind Body Connections and the Microbiomes**

**This is a free activity and you can attend any one or all of the meetings. The first meeting was 2/24, the next meetings will be Mondays March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>. The meetings will be held at 2:00 – 3:30pm in the card room at the clubhouse.**

Joining together to share thoughts and suggestions can be a fun and enlightening experience. Tea and a healthy snack will be provided.

I hope to see you there!

(831) 239-4555

[susan.arthurnc@gmail.com](mailto:susan.arthurnc@gmail.com)

Feel free to reach out to me with questions



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