

VIVA!

VINEYARD VALLEY NEWS

VOLUME 49

APRIL 2025

NUMBER 4



UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS

POOL OPENS, April 1

VVHA Board Meeting, April 16

BINGO, April 11

Chili Cook Off, April 17

Friday Night Social, April 25

FREE



Chili Cookoff

**Thursday
April 17th
5:30-pm**



Bring a crock or crockpot full of your favorite Chili to share and compete for bragging rights when you win the title of "Vineyard Valley's 2025 Best Chili"

Bowls and utensils will be provided but you are always welcome to bring your own.

Bring your own liquid refreshment.

Please sign up on the list outside the mail room if you plan join us and taste some good chili.





APRIL

Mon, Wed | Exercise with Stacy | 10-11AM | Exercise Room
Sundays | Tai Chi with Mark Siobal | 4PM | Exercise Room

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

		1 April Fools' Pool Opens	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Good Friday BINGO Passover	12
13 Easter Sunday	14	15	16 VVHA Board Meeting	17 Chili Cook Off	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Friday Night Social	26
27	28	29	30			
<div> Red-VVHA Community Black-Public Observance Green-Local Event Violet-VVHA Event </div>						

2025-2026 VVHA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President, Janet Schmidt
Vice President, Rick Wood
Secretary, Inger Laidley
Treasurer, Henk Brok
Directors:
Eve Breckenridge
Chris Killion
Steve Kinney
Mae VanNett



Committee/Activity Chairs

VVHA Clubhouse Coordinator:

Mae VanNett

Hospitality:

Robin McGuire, Mae VanNett

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.

April Birthdays

- 2 Mariam Hansen
- 3 Ben DiMaio
- 4 Natalie DMAio
- 6 Carla Holm
- 8 Noreen Allredge
- 10 Bruce Marks
- 12 Patti Rollins
- 14 Linda Messenger
- 16 Nancy Toney
- 21 Don Pestana
- 22 Judi Lenchner
- 24 Bette Antor
- 25 Gunter Pirchner
- 27 Judy Greene, Lydia Plotkin
- 28 Lupe Bengal, Judy Pohlers
- 30 Colleen Gillaspay

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

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Henk Brok

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The Prez Sez . . . by Janet Schmidt

Swapping chairs from vice president to president is a small physical move, but stepping into the president position is mentally huge. Hopefully I've learned over the years, being a past board member, because I'll be following in the footsteps of some of the best who have not only made our park fun with our social events but have worked with management to make needed updates and improvements. With the support of our present board and the encouragement I'm hearing from our Vineyard Valley neighbors, we're all going to have a great year.

Chairman Steve Kinney and his group of volunteers served 82 delicious St Patrick's Day dinners. I was very happy to see how many people volunteered to help make it a big success.

Our April bingo, under our new chairperson Mae VanNett, is adding a new twist suggested by our caller, Ed Smith. You'll have to come and play to see what's new.

Our April event will be a chili cookoff. After a vote at the board meeting in March, the attendees overwhelmingly voted for a chili cookoff over soup or pasta. So, on April 17th we're hoping for another big turnout to vote for "Vineyard Valley's 2025 Best Chili". Sign up and bring a crock or crockpot full of your favorite chili. You may be a blue-ribbon winner and have a year of bragging rights.

Spring is in the air and its time to gather with old friends, meet new friends, use the bocce courts, swimming pool and attend the events. See you around the park.

VINEYARD VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING WEDNESDAY MARCH 19, 2025 MINUTES

The meeting was called to Order by President Rick Wood at 3PM.

Confirmation of Quorum – 69 proxies and in-person votes.

Minutes of September 2024 General meeting were approved

Treasurer's report by Secretary Mae VanNett - As of February 28, 2025: Checking \$7,057.44; Savings \$9,013.28; VIVA \$3,088.87; Bocce \$4,013.32; Total \$23,172.91

March Bingo Report – 47 people showed up for games and hamburgers. A new monthly door prize will begin in April where some lucky person will get a crisp \$20 bill!

St. Patrick's night Dinner was enjoyed by 82 guests. Thanks for all the hard work from Steve Kinney/Chairperson, Michael Merriman and Ines Chiarello/Chefs, and to all those who volunteered.

The ByLaw update to have the Treasurer position subject to a review every 5 years passed (64 yes / 5 no) and the Nominating Committee's slate for our new Officers and Directors was approved. Please welcome Pres: Janet Schmidt; VP: Rick Wood; Sec: Inger Laidley; Treas: Henk Brok; Directors: Mae VanNett, Eve Breckenridge, Chris Killion, Steve Kinney.

Art rails have been hung in the lanai. If you'd like to share your art, please send us pictures (with sizes) and we'll work with Management to get some color on the walls!

A warning about a mountain lion sighting in Meily Park was shared – keep your pet close.

Our new President Janet Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm

PARK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

March 2025

The Vineyard Valley pool opens April 1st! The trial of early morning swims and an adjusted maintenance calendar will remain in force for another pilot year. The pool opening hours will be as follows: **Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday the pool will open at 8:00 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday the pool will open at 10:00 a.m. The therapy pool will open at 10:00 a.m. every day.** The pool will continue to close at 10:00 p.m. Below are pool rules reminders. Please contact the office if you need your pool code. If you have a requirement for more than the rules permitting two guests maximum, please put your request in writing and provide it to the office to document and manage. The fire code has a maximum pool deck number. All other pool rules (designated swim times) remain in force. Please call or email with any questions. Thank you.

Rule Reminders for Safe and Enjoyable Fun in the Vineyard Valley Pool

- 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.
- Swimsuits only, no cut-offs.
- **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 p.m.
- 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.

BASE RENT AND WATER/WASTEWATER INCREASES

This a reminder that the base rent increases will begin July 1st, a letter notifying residents of the increases will be sent prior to the end of March. The City of St. Helena water and wastewater rates will increase on July 1st as well and will be included in the rental increase letter mailed out prior to the end of March. Information on the water and wastewater rates may be found on the City of St. Helena website Utility Services Division.

SPRING REMINDERS

Happy Spring! Now that the days are warmer and a bit sunny it is a good time to take care of maintenance tasks and harden your home's defensible space. Defensible space is the area around your home that should be kept clear of plant debris and any potentially flammable materials.

- Patios and carports should be clear of any storage items, debris, or potentially flammable items. Carports and patios are not storage areas. Patio furniture and barbecue equipment only are allowed on patios. Carports are not intended for storage and must be always kept clean.
- Remove leaves and other debris from your yard.

- Check your home for any needed painting or repair. Paint colors must be submitted in advance for approval by management.
- Clean gutters and awnings if necessary.
- Weed flower beds and take care of landscaping that may need replacing. Changes to landscaping and fencing must be submitted in advance for approval by management
- Repair or paint fencing that may need it.
- Properly store fuels used for generators and barbecues.

RULES REMINDER

Pet Rules - Any pet, when not inside your home or contained within a fenced yard, must be kept on a short leash. Check with the Park Manager regarding fences or enclosures outside the home for the purpose of confining a pet. It is your responsibility always to “clean-up” while walking your pet. No pet may invade the privacy of anyone’s homesite, garden, flower beds, shrubs, yard, etc. The California Health and Safety Code 18603: 1608 states: Dogs, cats and other animals are not permitted to run at large in a Mobile Home Park. Pet litter must be removed daily from your premises. Pet owners are responsible for removing pet’s litter when walking pets.



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April BINGO



Friday, April 11th

Doors open at 6:00pm

Games start at 6:30pm

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



**Extra game packs
for a better
chance to win are
only \$10.00.**

**Dinner
Hot Dogs, Chips
and Coleslaw**



RIANDA HOUSE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

Line Dancing with Becky Jo Peterson

Mondays, 11:30-12:30, American Legion Hall, 1291 Madrona

A great low-impact way to keep fit and socialize. Kick up your heels to lively music and learn five new dances each session. Step-by-step videos help you keep up with the class. Beginners welcome.

Dance Classes: Cha-Cha and Waltz, Rianda House Fireplace room, Fridays in April, 3-4:50pm, each class is 50 minutes with a 10 minute break between. Come learn these dances with a true dance professional, Susan Gai. Cha-Cha, the Latin dance known for its playful fun and Waltz, with elegant gliding movements offer variety and fun on Friday nights. Make it a date! Website: riandahouse.org Phone: 707-965-8883 x101 Cost: Free

Ladies & A Cuppa Tea | Ellen Cotton

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30, Rianda House Join us for friendship and a cup of tea. A warm, inviting atmosphere encourages fun and engaging discussions.

Men's Fitness | Evan Massaro

Tuesdays, 8:00-9:00, American Legion Hall, 1291 Madrona Improve balance, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness with a splash of dad jokes! All levels are welcome. Please bring a mat.

Music with Ric | Ric Morgan

Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00, Rianda House

This sing along program will rekindle nostalgia of songs from the 1930's to the 1960's, allowing participants to rediscover and enjoy the music of their youth.

Canasta | Lucy Thater

Fridays, 1:00-4:00, 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 will teach you!

Zumba Gold | Becky Jo Peterson

Mondays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:30, American Legion Hall, 1291 Madrona

Move to music and have fun! Get your heart pumping while you improve balance, stamina and tone important muscles. Bring a water bottle.

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Sept. 29-Oct 5, 2025 | Charleston, Savannah & Jekyll Island More info: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1321139> or (800) 581-8942 refer to booking #1315547

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Thank you for your support.

High Above the Valley: The McCormick Ranch

By Gaye LeBaron for Press Democrat December 3, 1995
Edited and reported by Mariam Hansen

The McCormick Ranch, land that rises to peaks 2,300 feet above the valley, is where Santa Rosa Creek begins. Three families, the McCormicks, the Hudsons and the Learneds who have kept this land intact, preserved it from the perils of civilization, for five generations. They were involved in the Bear Flag Republic 160 years ago next year and their women rummaged to find some fabric to make the flag. It's about Molly Hudson McCormick, known as the "Bear Flag baby" because she was born in an adobe in the pueblo of Sonoma two days before the revolt, and her love of the land.

Let's start at the beginning, which is 1844, when William J. McCormick, born in Kentucky in 1815, first appears in the area. He settled on the southeastern slope of Spring Mountain and claimed land along the ridge toward the pueblo of Sonoma. The following year, 1845, William Hudson and his brother, David, brought their families to California and settled near Hood Mountain in what was called the "Guiluco Valley."

This was an uneasy time for Americans in California, not only because of the daunting mountains that separated them from their country, but because their presence made the Mexican governor of California extremely nervous. California was up for grabs. Mexico's hold was tenuous at best and Britain and France, as well as the United States, had "secret agents" in place in the important towns, such as Monterey, Santa Barbara and San Diego.

The Mexican government responded with periodic attempts to rid California of all foreigners. It was one of these edicts, in 1846, that resulted in the Bear Flag Revolt. Others such as William and David Hudson, stayed to fight. Encouraged by the presence of Capt. John C. Fremont and his quasi-military band of soldier-explorers, Napa, Marin, and Sacramento Valley settlers formed a rag-tag army called "Los Osos," The Bears.

It was less than a month when the Bear Flags were hauled down in favor of Old Glory and California became part of the spoils of the Mexican War. TWO YEARS later, with the war over and California safely in U.S. hands, the McCormick family came back to

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Spring Mountain. They may have returned in a wagon train which also included Martin Hudson, brother of William and David, who settled on the 2,500 acres his brothers had purchased from William Hood, owner of the Los Guilucos land grant. The two families were joined when William Hood's daughter, the "Bear Flag baby," Mary (Molly) Hudson, married Henry Mixer McCormick and went to live on his ranch.

In 1878, Henry, at age 40, was killed in a hunting accident. Molly was left with five children. It was hard going for a woman alone, but Molly was determined. She hauled supplies up the canyons with two poles and a canvas tied to her horse. The land became the focus of her life. There were mortgages and some sales. But Molly and the kids tended the livestock, counted the receipts and, eventually, got all the land back.

John McCormick was Molly's youngest son. His intention was to become a veterinarian. But someone had to stay and help Molly run the ranch. So John stayed until he died in 1963, in his 92nd year. He married a San Francisco woman, Ethel Roseberry, and this is where Babe (christened Edna May) comes in.

Babe and her older sister Ina grew up on the ranch. Ina married William H. Hart and went to live on Spring Mountain at his family's home, Chateau Chevalier, then known as Harthaven. Babe attended UC Berkeley and was working in San Francisco when she met Ed Learned. Ed was a banker, working for the Federal Reserve. Babe and Ed married in 1943 and, after the war they moved to the ranch.

Ed Learned became a sheep and cattle rancher. "He was good at everything he did," says his daughter Sandra. "And my dad loved the ranch. He loved that way of life." Ed died in 1975. Six months later their son Gary was killed in a ranch accident. Babe sold the ranch house, where she grew up and raised her children, along with several parcels of the Napa County portion of the ranch.

The McCormick descendants sold the remainder of the ranch to the Sonoma Land Trust, preserving the landscape forever.





THE TASTING ROOM

by Steve Kinney



Oregon, On the Road

I was up in Oregon visiting my son, who lives in the Eugene area. I took the opportunity to visit a couple places near McMinnville (about an hour and half north of Eugene) in the heart of Willamette Valley. This is Pinot Country! Wineries specialize in Pinot Noir, but also focus on Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Grigio. This is a cooler climate than the Napa Valley. This time of year, it stays in the 40's many days, and they get substantially more rain.

One of my favorite visits was to Soter Winery. Tony Soter produced wine here in the Napa Valley at his Etude Winery. He eventually sold the winery and moved up to Oregon and founded his Soter, Mineral Spring Ranch winery in 2006. Located on a hilltop with vineyards sloping away. Tastings start at \$40 for 5 wines – these are delicious wines and excellent Pinots.

Ken Wright Winery is located in the town of Carlton in a refurbished train depot, about 5 miles from McMinnville. The winery itself is just around the corner from the tasting room. They produce mostly single vineyard wines, a specialty of Ken. Elegant and focused on “terroir”, a collection of great wines. \$35 tasting fee for 5 wines.

Domain Drouhin Oregon is another favorite. Their slogan, French Soul – Oregon Soil reflects their heritage as one of Burgundy France's premiere producers. The family established their Oregon outpost 30 years ago. They farm from two distinct vineyards, Enola-Amity Hills and Dundee where the winery is located. A beautiful setting amongst the trees and the \$40 tasting showcases their wines and new sparkling. They also offer a \$50 Pinot Noir tasting that I would recommend.

Within a half hour of the Eugene area are numerous wineries to the West in the hills surrounding. This is still technically part of Willamette Valley. These wineries all have Pinot and Chard but also grow a wider variety of grapes. Riesling and Chenin Blanc also are prominent as well as Syrah.



Soter Winery



THE TASTING ROOM

by Steve Kinney



Benton Lane is the exception as it focuses on Pinot Noir and Chardonnay exclusively. Planted to 141 acres of vine, only 10 are Chardonnay. It was purchased by the Huneus Family in 2018 from Steven Girard, another Napa alumnus. The sampling for \$20 included four wines, three of which were Pinot Noir. All show the richness of oak ageing and classic flavors.

Next on this journey was Sarver. This is a very casual winery, focused more on entertaining. A large lawn and patio surrounds the tasting room and overlooks a stunning view of the Eugene Valley. Here you can purchase a glass or a bottle of wine as well as different cheese and charcuterie. They will let you sample before you purchase. At times, they have a pizza truck as well. The wines are respectable, and the overall experience is refreshing and fun, with everyone sharing their conviviality. This spot is very dog friendly.

If you ever find yourself in this area of Oregon, do yourself a favor and indulge in the wine country. The wines are world class and situated in gorgeous scenery.



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Breaking Bread Together

by Susan Arthur, NC

Certified Therapeutic Nutrition Consultant & Wellness Coach

"A meal shared with loved ones is happiness on a plate."

From the beginning of human's time on the planet we have "broken bread" together. Sharing our hearth and our table with family, friends and community, taking in earth's bounty while, at the same time, taking in the comradery of our fellows.

What would a holiday, celebration or fellowship gathering be without food and drink?

In fact, studies show that sharing meals together builds trust and cooperation, enhances communication and understanding, creates shared memories and improves one's mental health.

Additionally, the energy and love put into preparing the food and the spirit of giving that is served along with the meal truly changes the energetic properties of whatever is shared. In many cultures, prayers, chanting or singing are a natural part of the cooking process. Studies Published by the National Library of Medicine, Science Direct, PubMed, and others, show that these practices put the cook in a peaceful, focused, and energized frame of mind and that calm and positive energy is transmitted into the food.

The opposite is also true. Watching disturbing programs, listening to harsh music, arguments at the dinner table and the residue of daily stress can all interfere with the digestive process and the absorption of nutrients.

Physiologically, the body needs to be in a relaxed state for the digestive system to function properly. This is called the "parasympathetic" nervous system. Proper messages are better sent to trigger the digestive function and the digestive juices needed to breakdown and absorb our food.

Here are some ways to put your body into a relaxed mode:

- Before preparing or eating food, take five or ten minutes to relax by sitting comfortably and paying attention to your breathing, or take a stroll outside, or



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cuddle your pet. (Did you know that just 5 minutes of petting your dog or cat, significantly lowers your blood pressure?)

- Listen to uplifting music and sing along.
- Before taking your first bite, take a grateful moment. Focus on the color texture and aroma of the meal.
- Light a candle, say a prayer or reflect on or share a happy moment from the day.
- Make your first bite, your best bite. Savor that first bite, chew – chew – chew!
- When dining with others, remember what your mother told you: “Don’t talk with your mouth full”.
- Relax, put your fork down between bites, eat slowly and truly enjoy the food and your companions.
- Stick to benign and happy topics of conversation during meals. This can be a tough one these days, so making an agreement in advance with the group might be a good idea.

These are just a few suggestions. Some I bet you already do, and maybe didn’t realize the benefits. The trick is getting into the habit of doing them. How we eat and who we eat with is as important to the nourishment of our bodies, minds and spirits as what we eat. As we pay more attention to our eating habits, we will naturally pay more attention to the foods we are selecting and how they may or may not be supporting our health.

Many of us do live alone and most of our meals are solitary. Even if you eat alone, your frame of mind and the level of attention to your meal will make a difference.

For us loners, think of ways you can occasionally share a meal with someone.

- Find a friend or two to share one meal a week or a month with.
- If you know a neighbor who is alone or a shut-in, perhaps have a set day that you bring lunch and share it with them.
- Find organizations to join that share food and fellowship.
- Attend VV park events!

It is hard sometimes to step out of our comfort zones to do these things, it’s true. Once attempted, however, the rewards are significant—physically, psychologically and socially.

Feel free to reach out to me with questions.

susan.arthurnc@gmail.com

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Know Thy Neighbor

by Suzanne James

We welcome a new neighbor this month who has an interesting history that I think you will find compelling as much as I did in her interview! She was born in post-war Germany in Cochem, a small town along the Mosel River that was founded in the 9th century by the Romans, who discovered the land was good for wine growing. A large castle was built in that area around 1000 CE along with many more castles along the river.

Our neighbor was the second born of her parents' five children. She also has two older half-sisters from previous parental marriages. Growing up after the war she felt the heaviness, depression, and trauma everyone in her country had suffered from the suppressive and violent Nazi regime and WWII as a result. "It was a difficult time. My father suffered from (what we now call) PTSD from the hell he went through as a doctor on the Russian front. My mother's brother was killed in Russia at age twenty two."

They were in pure survival mode and still in shock from the War and the betrayal from their government that had promised them a good new life and making Germany great again.

The country was recovering from WWII during her childhood. "People had to rebuild the whole country—the infrastructure, their houses. They were in pure survival mode and still in shock from the War and the betrayal from their government that had promised them a good new life and making Germany great again. Instead, it led them to another devastating war which caused the death of millions of lives all over Europe. I believe the horror and trauma of the War was passed on through the DNA our generation inherited, and it is up to us to process and heal all the emotional damage caused by the War."

Her elementary school teacher, "a punitive and angry monster, beat the little children, causing more harm." However, a kind teacher in the second grade taught her to knit, a skill she continues today. When the family moved to their own home in the hills above the river, our neighbor loved running around the meadows, hills, and forest with her siblings, surrounded by nature.



"Providing local knowledge and exceptional service to assist you in achieving your real estate goals. Chris shows up and does the hard work, continually taking advantage of contract training so that he can provide information to help his clients make informed decisions and protect their best interests.

As a lifelong Napa Valley Native, he can provide insights into neighborhoods and helpful resources to ensure that the process of buying or selling a home is a smooth one. If you have any questions or would like a complimentary evaluation of your home, give Chris a call!"

Chris Colzani

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Know Thy Neighbor



by Suzanne James

She entered University in Freiburg in the Black Forest and befriended many music students. “I was inspired to practice my violin, though I did not have the confidence to apply at the music academy. My friends and I went to a lot of concerts during that time—it was wonderful!” She completed her Masters in Educational Philosophy and kept playing music. Years later she taught her daughters the violin, and attended a music camp in Mendocino woods annually after moving to the US—“it was the highlight of my year!”

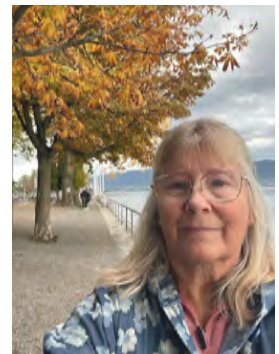
She met her future husband while doing a work study program for school. He was from Napa, studying German. After the project ended he continued his travels and eventually went home. “I stayed in Germany for another year and a half to finish my education.”

Once she received her degree she travelled to California to be with him while he finished his University degree at Stanford. Then the couple took a road trip travelling throughout California for a couple of weeks. They married in 1978 in his parents’ back yard, attended by her mother and second husband. “My father had passed away years before at age 66. The war had taken its toll on him emotionally, mentally, and physically. Strokes and heart attacks mowed him down.”

The newly married couple moved back to Germany as our neighbor was very homesick. Their first daughter was born in Germany. When her husband was unable to find a good job, they returned to Napa. They found a house in the vineyards, surrounded by nature, “our own little paradise. They had more children and with each birth she put down more roots. She home-schooled her children for several years using the Waldorf educational philosophy. When her children went on to private school she entered Napa Valley College to study her passion, photography, finishing with a fine arts degree.

When her marriage ended after 24 years our neighbor delved into the inner work of healing and spiritual growth which has always been very important to her. She travels to Germany every year to see her huge family—her siblings, twelve nieces and nephews, and fourteen grandnieces and nephews. “It only takes half of us to get together and we are 50 people! I love seeing them all.”

“Leaving Germany, my family, friends, and culture, was a huge sacrifice for me. To establish a life here in a culture that I did not grow up in is a huge accomplishment that only those who are not born here can truly understand.”



Our neighbor loves to write and to be out in nature as well as the beautiful garden she created in Napa over the years. She likes to walk, bike, bake, and participate in healing circles to bring healing to the earth and humanity. She is a nature photography artist and also expresses her creative talents in knitting, crocheting, sewing, and music. These activities “give me peace and calm to deal with the stresses and fears in the world today.”

You can welcome Friederike Heidger to our community at her home at 42 Laguna Seca.

Volunteers and referrals for this column are encouraged and welcome!



Idle Musings of an Idle Old Person

by Joyce Armington

Gotta Have Guts

During a recent bout of indigestion, I started musing about guts, trying to distract myself from the upheaval in my own. The Old know guts are something heroes have in abundance. And inspired thoughts or actions are often attributed to gut instincts. When you know something beyond a doubt, does your brain get the credit? Nope. You know it in - where else - your gut. But like so many things in the reality of the Old, metaphorical guts need to step back and start ruminating on retirement.

Remember all those lazy days when you met up with friends, grabbed a bottle or two of wine, and lounged around arguing about things like "Who was the first supermodel?" or "What's the most challenging ski run in California?" Conjectures and herbal smoke would fill the air, and the disorderly discussion would last as long as the wine held out or at least two people were still lucid. In a similar discussion today, some killjoy always whips out a phone and Googles the contested topic. This is enough to shut everybody up. In the 2000s, Google decides on the actual truth of facts your gut had always told you were rock solid.

Nowadays, the Old must recognize that guts need to retire from the info business. Data, and its mouthpiece, Google, have conquered the field of the factual. You can't win by shouting your point louder than anybody else, and you run a high risk of being mocked and silenced if you try to argue against e-truth. Our gut feelings are being shamed out of existence by search engines and AI.

Guts pose problems at many levels for the Old, not the least of which is the medical. Most Olds remember the day when the stomach portion of their gut decided to work painlessly only if fed a steady supply of chalky pink tablets. And further down the G.I. tract, in recesses only specially equipped doctors can explore, your Old gut starts to show worrisome signs in areas you have never heard of and don't want to know about. ("Gramps, is your jejunum still acting up?") For some poor souls, the saga of the Old gut is a story of gasses to gasses, diapers to even bigger diapers. Many Old will get it if I allude to problems of the nether gut involving consistency and frequency. These issues are always worse in Olds who ignore the expert data and take health advice from the very same guts that torture them.

Guts can be of great value to the Old. You've gotta have guts to face common Old experiences like colonoscopy prep or living on a fixed income. Olds who rebrand their gut instincts as "experience" can still market their abilities and offset the fixed income problem. Sadly, too often, gut instincts lead codgers to make losing bets in a data driven world. Now, I'd like to conclude by contradicting everything I just said and make a gift to my readers. My gut's telling me if you invest everything in a company that makes chalky pink tablets, you'll snag a bloody fortune. You're welcome for the tip.

Friday Night Social

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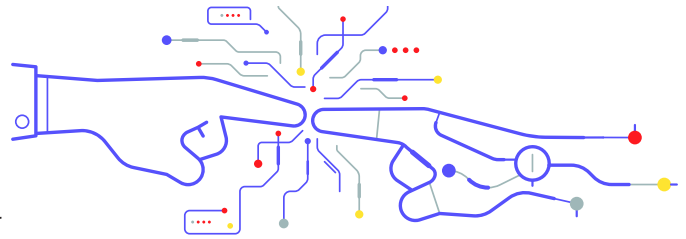
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This is Ferenc . . .

The Way I See It

by Ferenc Brunner



Greetings, residents of Vineyard Valley.

What is it that we all possess, individually and collectively?

A Brain — Freedom — Time. 300 People, a Brain Trust. An interesting combination to create a whole. Consequently: it is reasonable to assume that we possess a Colorful Landscape from which to harvest. What say YOU?

Posting these comments to my good buddy AI [Alfie] for a reflection on the way it sees it, this is what I got:

AI [Alfie]

What a profound reflection! The triad of Brain, Freedom, and Time forms a fascinating foundation for the synergy of a collective like your 300-person Brain Trust. Individually, we bring unique perspectives, talents, and the creative power of our minds. Collectively, we magnify these qualities, forging something greater: a dynamic, interconnected ecosystem of ideas, experiences, and innovation.

The "Colorful Landscape" you envision is a poetic metaphor for the diversity and richness within such a group. Like a vibrant mosaic, it's the interplay of contrasting colors—different voices, disciplines, and imaginations—that allow the whole to shine. The potential for discovery, collaboration, and growth is boundless.

I'd say you're on to something remarkable. How do you imagine this landscape being cultivated and explored? Where do you think such a collective could lead?

Can you provide examples of collective intelligence in action? What factors contribute to a productive creative environment? How can we effectively harness this collective intelligence?

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I'm Old Fashioned New CD release from Gale Terminello

Gale Terminello was born and raised in San Francisco and as a child was always singing. In her late teens she became a professional vocalist appearing as Gale Fletcher, and worked in many famous San Francisco nightclubs, from The Hungry "I" to Charlie's Penthouse. She appeared regularly on Don Sherwood's TV show and she was asked to join George Shearing at the Embers in NY but, admirably, decided to raise her son instead. Fast forward many, many years and she decided she needed to sing again. Enter myself, Mike Greensill, a veteran accompanist known for my partnership with my late wife Wesla Whitfield. I happened to live a few doors away from Gale and a partnership, both musical and romantic, was formed.



After doing some concerts in Napa Valley, where both of us live, we decided to record Gale for posterity. A collection of the best of the American Songbook, that is, the melding of great melody, harmony, and literate lyrics that both of us adore. The CD title is "I'm Old Fashioned", containing songs that may seem old-fashioned to some, but to us are wonderful art, and never to be forgotten.

The amazing part of this story is Gale's age. She is 87 years young. I wonder if anyone else has made a recording debut at such a mature juncture in her life. So watch out Marilyn Maye . . . Gale's on her way.

CD Release Show with the Mike Greensill Trio | Wednesday May 7th at the Blue Note in Napa.

Tickets - <https://www.bluenotejazz.com/napa/>

Contact Mike Greensill, mike@mikegreensill.com (707) 235-5107