

VIVA!

VINEYARD VALLEY NEWS

VOLUME 49

SEPTEMBER 2025

NUMBER 9



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Labor Day Breakfast, September 1

BINGO, September 12

**VVHA Semi-Annual Membership Meeting
September 17**

Friday Night Social, September 26

Newcomers Social



not pictured: Marc and Nancy Kustman



Luke Montgomery and Jennifer Phelps-Montgomery



Linda Morin and John Pitts

*Welcome to
Vineyard Valley!*

WE ARE SO GLAD TO MEET YOU



Elizabeth Carlson



Patricia Laguna



Andria Scarabelli and Andy Oglesby



Ed Smith

SEPTEMBER

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

	1 Labor Day Breakfast 9AM	2	3	4	5	6
	Labor Day	Tu, Thurs Aqua Exercise with Stacy 10-11:00 AM Community Pool				
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					BINGO 6PM	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			VVHA semi-annual membership meeting 3PM			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
					Friday Night Social 5:30PM	
28	29	30				

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

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:
Rick Wood

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 diRienzo 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.

September Birthdays

1	Susan Ernst, Fred Knifer
2	Henk Brok
5	Mike Greensill, Patrick Mumm
9	Lauretta Cecchino
13	Bob Walkup
14	Chris Killion
16	Michael Beglin, Thomas Walsh
19	K T Waxman
21	Dottie Gingerelli
23	Bob Toney
29	Miguel Segura

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.

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Business Manager
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Henk Brok

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St. Helena, CA 94574
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The Prez Sez . . . by Janet Schmidt

Hi Friends,

We are so fortunate to live in a community with neighbors who care enough to check on each other's well-being, to help by giving rides when needed, to support a friend in need, and to encourage their neighbors to join in and enjoy the retired life.

Life is good in Vineyard Valley.

What a great crowd we had at the Newcomer's Potluck. Hospitality co-chair Robin McGuire worked hard not only tracking down our new residents to invite all of them, but she and her volunteers did an amazing job planning and decorating. We have a great group of newbies who will, I hope, sign up with our Vineyard Valley Homeowners Association website to be informed of future activities and participate in many of our events.

Speaking of events, we're looking for a great turnout at our traditional Labor Day "*Men in the Kitchen*" breakfast on Monday, September 1st. Also in September we look forward to playing Bingo on Friday, September 12th, and to our Semi-Annual Membership meeting on Wednesday, September 17th. And, don't miss the Friday Night Social on Friday, September 26th.

Mark your calendars!

Janet

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VINEYARD VALLEY HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20, 2025 MINUTES

The meeting was called to Order by President Janet Schmidt at 3:05pm.

Minutes of July 2025 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's report by Henk Brok – As of July 31, 2025: Checking \$11,593.64; Savings \$9,013.72; VIVA \$3,075.22; Bocce \$1,734.30; Total \$25,416.88

September brings us our General Meeting – there are no business transactions scheduled so we will not be distributing proxies

August Bingo Report – 49 people showed up and enjoyed good friends, food and prizes

Robin McGuire/Hospitality Chairperson is working hard on putting together the annual Newcomer's Potluck on Saturday August 23rd – I hope you all will join us. Robin suggested moving the Newcomer's party to late fall or early spring, when most people are not so busy moving in.

Men in the Kitchen returns Monday Sept 1st: eggs, cooked to order, and all the fixin's – look on the board outside the mailroom for signups.

VVHA directory – please update any contact information on the sheets outside the mailroom to be corrected in the upcoming directory

The board has approved two additional color pages in the VIVA when there are pictures of events to showcase. Please remember that the online version is in full color.

The board approved purchase of a miter saw and flags; however, both were vetoed by Park Management.

Residents mentioned broken sprinklers, sprinkler markers, and overgrown blackberry bushes. Please continue to email Park Management (vineyardvalleymhp@gmail.com) when you see safety and/or maintenance issues you'd like to see them address.

President Janet Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 3:50pm.

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August Bingo Winners: Chris Killion, Rick Wood, Lupe Bengel, Noreen Alldrige, Doug Schmidt



Congressman Mike Thompson Visit

Our congressman, Mike Thompson, visited Vineyard Valley on Friday evening, August 1. This was the first time he's visited in a couple of years. Many thanks to Pat Dell and Grace Kistner for reaching out to Mike and planning his visit!

Mr. Thompson started with a short speech outlining some of the issues facing congress and the struggles in working with this administration. He struck an optimistic stance while relating his personal goals and successes. He quickly opened up the Town Hall to questions from the audience.

Concern was voiced by several about the consequences of the new package, which Mr. Thompson referred to as the "Big Ugly Bill". Medicare vs. Medicaid was discussed as well as Social Security. He tried to calm fears and differentiated Medicare and SS as entitlements, whereas Medicaid isn't. (FYI, if you're over 65 you're on Medicare). Yet he also stressed that the changes taking place will have some negative impact.

He spent the better part of an hour and a half speaking to the questions and issues. He even invited Mayor Dohring up to discuss the problem with water supply. While not downplaying the problems we are facing, he tried to stay upbeat and show his progress and accomplishments.



PARK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

September 2025

VINEYARD VALLEY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS!

We celebrate our journey.

We are grateful for all our residents (past and present).

We thank our employee team and partners for their dedication and a half century of resilience.

Thank You for being a part of our story!

WATER CONSERVATION

The City of St. Helena water rates are based on a usage tier system, the cost of water increases exponentially as usage increases. Residents are encouraged to save water, please contact the office if you would like help setting your irrigation controller. Here are some tips to help conserve our valuable water resources and keep water bills manageable:

Around the House:

- Use a low flow shower head
- Repair leaks
- 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 plants
- Use drought-resistant trees and plants
- Adjust sprinkler heads and fix leaks
- Install drip irrigation and add a smart controller
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean outdoor areas
- Use mulch

ACCESSIBLE DOOR INSTALLATION

The lanai door from Redondo has been replaced with an automatic accessible door. Please use the push buttons located on the outside and inside of the door to enter and exit.

SEPTEMBER RULES REMINDER

SWIMMING POOL RULES REMINDERS

Happy Labor Day! For the safety and enjoyment of all those who use the pool please note the following Pool Rules reminders. Thank you. 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. Adults only after 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.



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Alzheimer's Walk | Sat, September 6, 9:30-11:00 | Yountville Park, 2900 Lincoln Avenue

Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's® is the world's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's care, support and research. This inspiring event calls on participants of all ages and abilities to join the fight against the disease. Join us for a 1 mile or 3 mile walk on Saturday, September 6. Become a member of our team at alz.org/napavalleywalk Search "Rianda House" **RSVP**

Being Mortal: Discussing What's Important | Frank Mueller | Tues, Sept 9-30, 3:00-4:30 | Rianda House

Join Frank Mueller, MD, retired Serious Illness and Supportive (Palliative) Care Specialist in a series of discussions about how to manage declining health as we age. Topics include how to discuss making our wishes for our final days known, what to expect from medical care, how to talk to your doctor and how to make choices now for the care you want to receive in the future. Exercises include how to complete an Advance Healthcare Directive, learn about POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment), write your own obituary, role play exercises that simulate individual treatment decisions and family discussions, decisions about continuing care. Brief discussion of the use of hallucinogens at end of life. **RSVP**

Meadow Loop Walk | John Duncan | Fri, Sept 12, 9:00-10:00 | Pacific Union College Trail Foresthead

Join us for this beautiful walk through meadows and shady forests. See interesting rock formations and Douglas Fir trees. This walk is approximately 2 miles, and will take one hour. **RSVP**

Three Stages of Dementia | Melissa Gerard | Fri, September 12, 19 & 26, 1:00-2:30 | Rianda House

This three-part seminar explores three main stages of dementia; what to expect; how to respond; and how to communicate and care for the person effectively. Designed for community caregivers, friends and family members of those suffering from dementia. **RSVP**

Affordable Workhouse | Michael Caldarola, Our Town St. Helena | Sept 22, 1-2PM | American Legion

Come learn how Our Town St. Helena is addressing the need for more affordable workforce housing. Get answers to important questions. What does affordable housing mean and how is it determined? What is the state of affordable housing in Napa Valley in general and St. Helena in particular? What specifically has OTSH done, what is OTSH currently doing, and what does OTSH plan to do in the future to increase affordable workforce housing?

Gong Nidra Meditation | Patrici Flores | Saturday, September 20, 9:15-10:15pm | Rianda House

Gong Nidra is a unique meditation experience that combines the calming practice of Yoga Nidra — often called "yogic sleep" — with the deep and powerful healing tones of the symphonic gong. This class lets you lie back, breathe, and allow the sound to carry you. Build a pathway to rest, restoration, and inner stillness. Bring a mat, pillows and blankets. **RSVP**

Demo Angelina Tomato Sauce Chef Mariano Orlando | Sat, Sept 20, 1:00-3:30pm | Rianda House

Observe Chef Mariano Orlando as he prepares Angelina Tomato Sauce. Mariano will explain how to make tomato paste, tomato water and tomato jam at home. Recipes, spaghetti and sauce tasting included. Bon Appetito! **RSVP - Maximum 10**

Estate & End of Life Planning | Victoria Lancaster | Wed, September 22, 2:00-3:30 | Rianda House

Estate Planning and Probate Attorney Victoria Lancaster presents a seminar designed to educate individuals interested in building an estate plan. Learn about the latest tax laws, probate procedures and adjusting plans to comply with current regulations.



We decided to stay in St. Helena and visited Lang & Reed in a lovely Victorian House on Spring Street, across the street from the Goose & Gander restaurant. The idea behind this winery started in 1993 with a love of Cabernet Franc by John Skupny and his wife Tracey. The winery is named after their two sons, Jerzy Lang and J Reed. John wanted to focus on Cabernet Franc, having always appreciated the great wines of Loire and Right Bank Bordeaux. John has been producing a Cab Franc with a California appellation since then and very small lots of vineyard designated as well. In 2009, Reed and wife Megan traveled to Loire, where Reed worked a year in Chinon making Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc. When they returned, they were able to find vineyards with Chenin Blanc and added the varietal to their line-up. Reed and John make the wines and work with their vineyard partners to achieve their goals.

The tasting room opened in March of 2020 and promptly closed due to Covid. They were able to re-open in February of 2021. Reed's wife Megan has taken over marketing and was our host in the tasting. Reed and Megan have also introduced some new brands to the lineup, Such as Hawkbox and Rockhound, that feature Pinot Noir from Santa Rita Hills.



We started with a 2022 Library Vintage Chenin Blanc from Mendocino. Fairly dry and citrus-y fruit with crisp acidity. This wine is built for ageing, having spent 9 months in both neutral oak and stainless steel. Next was a 2024 Rosé of Cabernet Franc. After quite a few years, they have brought back rosé, with only about 50 cases of production. Dry with violet and subdued fruit notes. The 2024 Hawkbox Rosé of Pinot Noir only comes in a Magnum and only 24 six-packs were produced. A lively mouth feel with good acidity and fruit notes.

Reds started with the new Rockhound Production of Pinor Noir, from Radian Vineyard. 10 months in Oak produce a beautiful rich Pinot, with bright raspberry fruit and mild tannins. The 2022 North Coast Cabernet Franc was aged 17 months in older oak barrels. Very approachable with supple tannins and juicy berry fruit and notes of violets. The 2019 Napa Valley Two-Fourteen Cab Franc from Sugar Loaf Mountain Vineyard followed. Two-Fourteen refers to the Loire Clone of grape used. The colder growing conditions produce a bigger style, with forward cherry, raspberry fruit and notes of licorice and earth. 16 months of oak in about 10% new barrels. Only about 200 cases were produced. As a treat, we were given a taste of the 2013 T-Bar-T Alexander Valley Cab Franc. This shows the capability of aging great Cabernet Franc. Bold, rich with spicy licorice notes, this is a big wine with many years left.

Our tasting was \$75 per for the wines listed. While not cheap, it is very competitive with today's prices. They offer two additional tastings. Monograph is a tasting of their older wines with a little food, and for \$175 they offer a Caviar and Wines Tasting featuring .5 ounces of Tsar Nicoli Caviar. Lang & Reed is a nice change of pace, offering Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc primarily. There is a nice mix of wines to taste, and the best part is that it's right here in town!



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St. Helena in the Next War

by Mariam Hansen, St. Helena Historical Society

“As China increasingly threatens Taiwan....western intelligence officials see a target of being ready to invade by 2027.” *Source: The Wall Street Journal*

What if the United States went to war with China? How would that affect St. Helena? To answer this query, we need look only at what happened here after December 7, 1941. On that day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor Naval Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. The next day President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. Suddenly the west coast of America became the front line in the event of another attack by Japan. Residents had felt safe from the war in Europe far away across the continent and cross the Atlantic—no more! Life changed in an instant. Suddenly Mare Island Naval Shipyard and Hamilton Air Force Base in Novato were targets.

According to the Wright Museum of World War 2, on the West Coast, the threat of Japanese air raids loomed large. Following the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the fear of further Japanese incursions intensified. Cities along the



Pacific coastline found themselves under the cloak of darkness as blackouts were rigorously enforced. The clear goal was to minimize the visibility of urban centers and vital infrastructure, making them less susceptible to aerial bombardment.

Sheriff Jack Steckter was appointed civil defense coordinator for the county. At a meeting on Dec 9 defense committees were formed in Napa, St. Helena and Calistoga. Police Chief C.C. Johnson and assistant fire chief Joe Cheli went to a meeting in San Francisco with civil defense authorities. National Defense Chief was Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.

The first defense measure was blackout of all lighting at the sound of a two-minute rising and falling blast of the fire siren. If anyone in the region spotted planes or heard them, the siren sounded. One blast would be the all-clear signal. A fifty-mile radius from San Francisco was affected. Residents were told to stay in their homes or go to the nearest shelter. All lights had to be turned off immediately. Businesses had to turn off all light when they closed for the day. Drivers had to pull off the road at night and turn off their headlights.

During blackouts the public was asked not make phone calls. In those days of smaller circuits and party lines, this enabled emergency fire and police calls to through quickly.

At the command of the Army, St. Helena's first blackout took place on December 12, 1941—five days after Pearl Harbor was attacked. The siren was heard by nearly everyone and within twenty minutes 100% of the town was dark. Police guarded the entrances to town, stopping drivers until the all clear blast. However, it took too long—the order was for the town to be dark within one minute! Violators of the blackout law faced a \$300 fine or three months in jail. Monitors volunteers were charged with making sure their neighborhood went dark. By February 1942 the town immediately went dark when the siren blew.

Former Marine officer Col Jay Salladay was named head of the St. Helena Relief Committee. At a meeting he explained to civil defense volunteers what work lay ahead.

Committees were formed for Medical (Dr. George Wood), Rescue (C.A. Burkett), Shelter (Arnold Metzner), Evacuation (John Mitchell), and Necessities of Life (Red Cross Chair Amy Stern). Dr Wood asked around for beds and fast set-up of medical care. He also wanted to start a blood bank.

Citizens adapted. Some residents converted rooms into blackout rooms by covering windows and doorways, going about their usual evening routine. Goodman's Department Store advertised blackout window shades and black oil cloth. PG&E had regular columns in the *Star* about war themes, such as "Blackout-see it through with a cheerful light", along with ads for war bonds (theme of an upcoming article in this series.)

Augustino Arbaco was an Italian immigrant who lived at the corner of Railroad and Fulton Streets. He was not fluent in English and did not read the newspaper. He was "an alien of enemy nationality" wrote the *Star*. Air warden Arnold Metzner told Arbaco to blackout his home when the siren sounded, he complied. He was warned by three other neighbors too. Later he turned the lights back on and was arrested by police Chief Johnson. Judge Vasconi fined him \$25, but suspended the fine if he complied with the law. It was the first case in Napa County. To add to Arbaco's troubles his radio was confiscated because of its shortwave equipment and that he was an enemy alien.

Friday, January 2, 1942 ST. HE

THEY'RE HERE!
BLACKOUT
WINDOW
SHADES
 COMPLETE WITH ALL HOLDERS AND BRACKETS
 READY TO INSTALL
2 Sizes
 36 inch by 7 feet each 50c
 48 inch by 8 feet each \$1.00

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 46 INCHES WIDE - yard 35c
 Black Sateen
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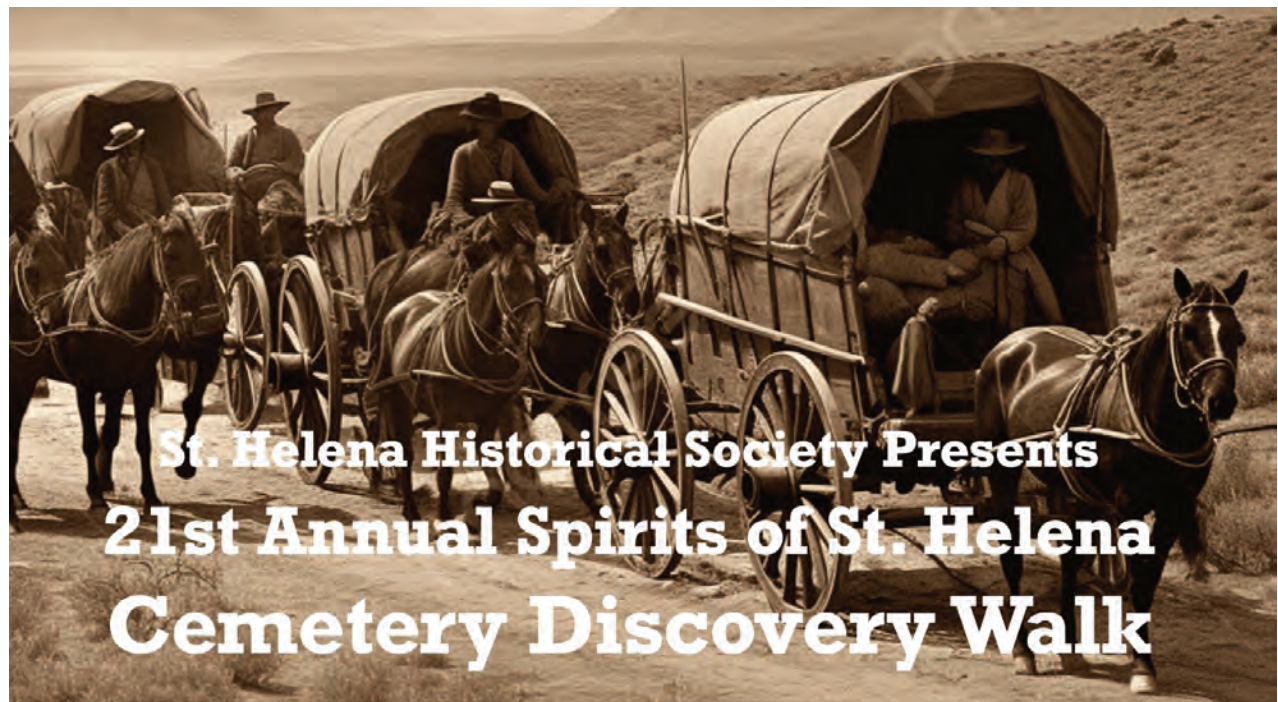
In early 1942 the Chamber of Commerce canceled the Vintage Festival due to the threat of blackouts. St. Helena schools issued new rules if blackouts occurred during night basketball games. If the blackout lasted 30 minutes the game in progress would end. Everyone had to stay put where they were. All attendees were urged to walk to the game. No cars could leave.

Star Baldwin editorialized Feb 20, 1942 "With the fall of Singapore, Allied power has been thrust back to the Hawaiian Islands on the East. Some attempt, demonstration or outright attack on our shores is reasonable to expect...at any time these days or nights bombs might be falling on our town...Some of these days we are probably going to have the real thing in these parts."

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Know Thy Neighbor



by Suzanne James

Imagine filling your house with so much of your artwork over the years that you run out of wall space for any additions! That is the “dilemma” faced by our neighbor in the spotlight this month.

The middle of three daughters, she was born and initially raised in Visalia, in the San Joaquin Valley, on forty acres that her father farmed while working for a sheet metal company. He grew alfalfa and cotton until the walnut trees matured. “I have so many wonderful memories from the ranch, like when the cotton was picked and the cotton bales were loaded into trailers, my sister and I would dig tunnels in the cotton and make rooms to sit in. Then Daddy would let us ride in the trailer taken to the cotton gin to be processed.

“There was a creek bordering two sides of the property; it would somewhat dry out, leaving little pools with fish and tadpoles. We would catch the tadpoles in a jar and watch them develop their legs. My older sister and I would come home from school and reset the irrigation pipes from the small ditch to water the rows of cotton. From the house we had an open sky looking to the Sierra Mountain Range. On clear nights we could see the stars and on stormy nights, we would watch the lightning strikes for hours.”

*“On clear nights
we could see the
stars and on stormy
nights, we would
watch the lightning
strikes for hours.”*

The family sold the ranch when she was fourteen and moved to Carmel where she attended Carmel High School for two years. After school every day she went to the library to study and then to Carmel Theater where she sold tickets, ushered and during intermission helped with the snack bar. Then walked home in the dark. “There weren’t any street lights beyond Ocean Avenue.”

The family moved to Cambria where she completed high school. She did waitressing after school, sang in the church choir, and was Senior Prom Queen for her class of sixty students. She was awarded a scholarship to the School of Cosmetology in Hollywood. She succeeded in having the scholarship transferred to the Cosmetology School in Visalia where she worked and achieved her license.

License in hand, she moved to Monterey and worked there for a year before relocating to Fayetteville, North Carolina, with her new husband, Paul Gyurancsik, a Hungarian refugee who was in the army. She worked there as a stylist after passing her Board exams.

After a year she moved back to California and lived in Walnut Creek where she had her daughter, Andrea. She then moved to Orinda with her daughter, living and working in Orinda in the shopping area near the Orinda Theater. This was followed by a move to Oakland where she moved with her current partner into a 4-unit, 3-story building he had built near Laney College.

A friend from New York came to visit and was looking to relocate in California. The couple took her around to various retirement communities and Vineyard Valley was on

the list. The friend decided to return to New York. The following week, our neighbor and her partner returned to Vineyard Valley and promptly bought a house. That was twenty-five years ago. "We have never regretted our decision to live here!"

After moving to Vineyard Valley our neighbor assumed she would work in St. Helena, but at that time, "there wasn't a chair to work behind!" She commuted back and forth to Orinda for eighteen months until Romeo Style opened in St. Helena with a chair she could rent. After a year or so, the salon became the Michele Scott Salon where she continues to work full-time styling hair.

As mentioned above, our neighbor in her free time loves to make visual art, collages using found objects such as metal wire, tree bark, leather, dried plant material, fabric, etc. "In Oakland there was a metal recycling place where I collected many of the pieces used in my artwork. My mother made collages for many years and I learned from her."



Our neighbor this month is Cheryl Olson who lives with her partner, Ferenc Brunner, at 19 Laguna Seca Court.

Referrals and suggestions for this column are welcomed and encouraged!



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