

Living Longer & Loving It

Moraga Movers to the Rescue

By Sophie Braccini



Sylvia Tobias (left) and Kelly Clancy hard at work in the Town office

Sylvia Tobias always wanted to give back to the town where she's lived since the 70's, so when Kelly Clancy, from the Moraga Planning Department, asked her if she could help with clerical work she immediately accepted. Tobias' volunteer experience was the first time that the Moraga Movers' database, which lists each member's skills, was put to the test. George Fisher, President of the Movers,

believes that the skills base of the group's members is an under-utilized resource in the town.

The 377 members of the Moraga Movers are listed in a file maintained by Fisher. On a suggestion by Darlene Haffner, he added a category listing professional qualifications. "Most of our members are retired," says Fisher, "but their professional experience is very diverse and they love to help." Among the quali-

fications listed are accounting, computers, crafts, clerical, musician, gardening, legal, medical, sales and marketing, web master, woodwork and others.

Tobias, who volunteered to help the Town, had a job there in the past. "I used to write the minutes as a contractor for most of the commissions and Council meetings," she explains. "Staff used to give me a tape and I typed the minutes from there." Tobias remembers the office she worked in at 329 Rheem. She continues to feel close to the town and enjoyed coming back to lend a hand. "Everyone was so easy to work with and friendly," said Tobias, "I will go back whenever they need me."

By the same token, Clancy was very pleased with the help. "Sylvia Tobias came in last Friday and was here from 10 am until about 4 pm," she said, she was a trooper! We had a mailing that needed to be folded and sealed and stamped for postage for 1559 addresses. I could not have done it without her." Clancy adds that as staff move to the Hacienda while the building at 329 Rheem undergoes construction work, she will most probably need help with a myriad of tasks. Planning Director Lori Salamack agrees, "Yes, we

will use the Moraga Movers again when we have an appropriate project."

Recently Verna Osborne took the minutes at the Moraga Liaison meeting, replacing Susan Sperry who's been the notes-master for years. "I had to follow up to check names and background information," said Osborne, all the people I phoned and emailed were very gracious and helpful." Before retirement, this 17 year Moraga resident used to take notes at legislative hearings in Sacramento, so the fast flow of information was not a problem for her. She reported enjoying discovering this monthly meeting and getting to know all the town's officials.

George Fisher hopes to promote the Movers' skills with other departments and organizations. "Jay Ingram, the Parks and Rec Director, works closely with us and knows what we are doing," said Fisher. "He told Kelly about us. With our very wide range of skills we can help ourselves first; of course, town departments and other community groups can always contact us and have a discussion." The best way to reach the Movers is to call 376-6622.



Did you meet us at the Faire? That is, the Moraga Community Faire, where our Townspeople crowded the Rheem Shopping Center to sample some of the exciting wares Moraga has to offer! If you missed us last time, look for us at the Moraga Commons on the 4th of July! We're better than ever! Pictured: George Fisher (top row, right) President of Moraga Movers, his wife, Julie (bottom row, left), Membership Chair—plus Angie Sakalay, Bianca Streiffer, and Lee Barker (other happy participants in moving Moraga to cheers). Submitted by Lee Barker

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Not to be missed

The Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group will meet on Friday, June 26, from 10:00 am to 11:30 AM in the Las Trampas Room of the Hillside Clubhouse in Rossmoor. Suzette Lake, Bowenwork Therapist, will be a guest speaker and will give a presentation on Bowenwork Therapy and how this work has helped people suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy. For more information call Carolyn Cash 925-254-8195.

Surviving Change You Didn't Ask For, Monday 6/29, 10:30-Noon. In today's tough times, we may be forced to reinvent our career or downsize our lives; at any point in life, we may lose love, health or some dream. Join bestselling author and executive coach M.J. Ryan for a session on how not to merely survive but thrive in change. Lafayette Senior Services, 500 Saint Mary's Rd, Lafayette, \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members, RSVP 925-284-5050.

Silver Voices Presents an Interactive Poetry Reading Event that will include poems by famous poets and lesser-known poets and the event will involve the audience in fun and interesting ways. Enjoy light refreshments provided by The Chateaus of Pleasant Hill. Friday, July 10, 1:30 - 3:00 PM. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. Call

(925)284-5050 to reserve a spot

Concert, Friday July 24, 1:30 - 2:30 PM. Join us again for a special Friday afternoon concert featuring accomplished musicians, baritone Bob Steiner and pianist Martha Wasley. The music will feature not only the song compositions of 19th century Austrian composer Franz Schubert but extend through the romantic Broadway '40's song standards of Jerome Kern (Ol' Man River, All the Things You Are.) Light refreshments are offered. We are grateful to the folks at Byron Park Retirement Community for their support. To sign up, call Lafayette Senior Services at 284-5050. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Rd, Lafayette. \$3 Members/\$5 Non-Members.

Compassionate Care and Placement of Loved Ones with Linda Wurth, Professional Eldercare Consultant. Balancing safety concerns with independent living is a challenge. Complex issues and changing circumstances can be overwhelming. Understand the range of in-home care services and housing options available to frail adults and the costs involved with such choices. Monday, July 16, 11-noon. \$1 Members/\$3 Non-Members. Call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot.

Senior Services events:

Lafayette Senior Services has just instituted a membership and event fee schedule so that our city can continue to provide you with the quality programs that you have become used to. Annual Membership fee: \$10 per person. General Event fee: Members \$1; Non-Member \$3; Special Concerts fee: Members \$3; Non-Members \$5; Ongoing Care-giver Support Group: Members: no charge; Non-members \$3. For info call (925)284-5050

On-going Programs: Embracing Aging with Story and Movement: Every other Thursday, 1:00 -2:30 PM, 7/2, 7/16, 7/30

Positive Living Forum: On the second Thursday of each month, 10:30 - noon, 7/9, 8/13, 9/10

Bi-Monthly Caregiver Support Group: Mondays, 7/13, 7/27, 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Tea Dancing with Karen and Michael: every Wednesday, 12:30 - 3:00 PM, No Tea Dance 6/24 and 7/29

Anne Randolph Workshops: Art of Balance, Learn exercises to improve your balance Fri: 6/26, 11:30AM - 12:30 PM, Preventing Falls, Fri: 7/24, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM, Sequoia Room

Free Blood Pressure Screening: John Muir Senior Services, Fri 6/26, 7/24 at 12:30 PM, no appointment required.

Free Memory Screening (by appointment) by Caring Solutions: Fri 6/26, 7/24. Call 284-5050 for an appointment. Appointments at 12:30, 12:50, and 1:10 PM.

The Parental Shift: ... continued from page 1

When parents can no longer live independently



Jim Burris, 89, plays harmonica solo at Aegis of Moraga chorus practice

Photo Jennifer Wake

"Bills that go unpaid, throwing out important mail while keeping things like sweepstakes letters, personal hygiene changes (men getting unshaven and women forgetting hair appointments), forgetting things like doctor's appointments or mixing up dosages of medication are the most common red flags," says Rosenthal.

Changes in mobility or a sudden illness are another catalyst.

Jim Burris, 89, had lived in Lafayette with his wife, Lois, for 56 years. An avid cyclist who even cycled 80 miles when he was 80 years old, Burris took a fall from his bike and could no longer keep his balance. With his wife ill, his children approached the couple about assisted living.

"Our kids gave us a good outline of the way things were going," Burris says. "The kids knew about assisted living programs and we'd go to different facilities and have lunch."

Burris and his wife moved to Aegis of Moraga two years ago, and although his wife has since passed away, Burris now spends a

lot of time gardening, singing in the chorus, and trekking in his scooter (which he traded for his bicycle after he could no longer ride).

"I like the trails close by. I go all over the countryside in that scooter," he says. "It has an electric motor and two gel batteries. I go to Chamber and Town Council meetings, and have even been up on Mulholland Hill - you can see all the countryside up there." Burris even drove his scooter to Lafayette to visit a friend who lives by Stanley School. "I like to keep busy," he says.

Moraga resident Wendy Scheck's parents, Jack and Joan Wuerth, were not as enthusiastic about the prospect of assisted living. "They wanted to be independent; no old people's homes and neighborhoods," Scheck says.

Rosenthal says people often have unrealistic expectations about what it's like to move from home. "They think assisted living will be very restrictive, with an older person stuck in a cookie-cutter setting, or that if they let caregivers into their home, they'll take over," she says. "Actually, there are personal rights and resident bills of rights mandating privacy, access to a telephone, and dietary preferences, among other things (which can be found on the Internet). No one is required to participate in anything they don't want to."

Agencies like Eldercare Services are very careful about who they hire for in-home care, Rosenthal adds. "People are not only experienced, reliable and honest, but they treat their clients with honor and respect."

After three years of dealing with various health problems on their own (and Joan acting as caregiver for Jack) in a small town on the east coast, the Wuerths agreed to have a chef come into their home once a day, but refused any other help. But when Joan broke her pelvis, that type of help was no longer enough.

While most people opt to stay at home as long as possible, Rosenthal says in-home care is a good option if you need it fewer than 8 hours a day. "If people use over 8 hours a day for care, it might be more cost effective to look at shift or live-in rates, which may be a better value."

"It cost \$500 a day for 24-hour care (one person at night; two during the day)," Scheck says. "It happened really quickly; then all of a sudden we were dealing with their finances. My mom was messing up her medication; the caregivers were even messing it up. We basically needed a manager to manage the caregivers. My siblings and I didn't want to move them to an assisted living facility, but the situation became unmanageable."

Since Scheck was told the most important thing when selecting a facility is that at least one family member lives close by, she decided to move them to California and signed them up for a trial run at Aegis of Moraga. "We kept their house, and I told them if they didn't like it, they could leave," Scheck says. "We paid the association fee, but if you leave before 90 days, you get some of that back. Once they were there, their health stabilized."

The Wuerths now sit at a table for meals with Burris and several others. "They really enjoy the interaction with the people," Scheck says.

Burris enjoys the company as well. "Jack and another fellow we just lost both went to Princeton and another went to Harvard," says Burris, who attended UC Berkeley. "We're not a bunch of dummies," he added with a chuckle.

What's next for Burris? "I want to learn to play the ukulele." (For more information about how to talk to parents, visit the AARP Web site at: www.aarp.org.)

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