

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

The Ted Gallagher 150: Walking for a Cause



Photo Diane Claytor

Lafayette's Ted Gallagher gets ready for his 150-mile walk to benefit the Navy.

By Diane Claytor

When Edwin Gallagher, Sr. passed away in early 2014 at the age of 93, his son, Ted Gallagher, Jr., wanted to do something to memorialize his father in a way that was both meaningful and truly fitting of the man his father had been. "My dad was a remarkable man," Gallagher remembers lovingly. "He was a hard worker, building a very successful business but always remaining true to his Oakland roots and always placing his family first. He gave generously of both himself and the many resources he had available, helping to improve the lives of those around him."

Gallagher, Sr. valiantly served for more than three years in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII, although he rarely talked about it. During his Celebration of Life, a Marine Honor Guard played "Taps" and presented the family with the American flag that had been draped over his

coffin. "That really got me," Lafayette's Gallagher says. It was then that Gallagher knew he wanted to celebrate his father and honor his military service.

Research led Gallagher to the Semper Fi Fund, a charitable organization dedicated to serving those who have preserved our freedoms. (Semper Fi is the shortened version of the Latin Semper fidelis, the U.S. Marine Corps motto meaning "always faithful" or "always loyal.") According to the Semper Fi Fund website, this nonprofit provides "immediate financial assistance and lifetime support ... to all members of all five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families," delivering resources needed during recovery and/or transition back to their communities, "working to ensure no one is left behind."

"It's a phenomenal organization," Gallagher states. Two years after his father's passing, Gallagher, an avid

walker, decided to plan a fundraising walk around the Lafayette Reservoir and host a barbecue at his beautiful Lafayette home in the hopes of raising \$5,000 for the Semper Fi Fund. He received so much interest and support that he expanded his goal — and his walk. The 3-mile Res walk quickly morphed into a 75-mile, eight-day hike around Lake Tahoe, raising \$157,000.

Soon after that successful fundraiser, and with his commitment to continue raising monies for veteran organizations, Gallagher learned about the Navy SEAL Foundation, which provides "immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and its families." According to its website, programs are designed to improve health and welfare, build resiliency and empower and educate families. Consequently, this year's walk will benefit this outstanding nonprofit.

The mileage and monetary goals continue to grow: the 2019 trek will be 20 days covering 150 miles, leaving Mailbu on Sept. 30 and ending in Coronado, "adjacent to where the SEALs train," on Oct. 19, Gallagher notes. The objective is to raise \$150,000 for the SEAL Foundation. (According to Gallagher, 94 cents of every dollar goes directly to the warriors and their families.) Colleagues, friends and family will be joining at different points in the walk, but it's Gallagher who will walk the entire 150 miles, hoping to average about 10 miles per day; plans include a day of rest every two or three days. "It's unbelievable what a day off can do to rejuvenate you," he admits.

Passionate about helping our vets, Gallagher and his wife, Courtney — his most ardent supporter — have set a personal goal of raising \$1 million for these brave and honorable men and women. And, between the two walks, he's almost a quarter of the way there.

"It just breaks my heart

that these men and women in all branches of our military come home after serving their country, fully committing themselves for many, many years, only to ask 'now what do I do?' It's great that there are

organizations like these that offer help, and for Courtney and I, this is our way of giving back and saying thank you," Gallagher says.

As of Aug. 14, \$86,000 had been raised for this year's walk. If you are interested in donating to this extremely worthy endeavor or to joining Gallagher for some (or all) of his walk, please go to www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/ted-gallagher-150.

Pacific Chamber Orchestra season opens Sept. 14 in Lafayette

Submitted by Lawrence Kohl

In celebration of 30 years of stellar performances, Pacific Chamber Orchestra Conductor Lawrence Kohl offers "a season of inspiring performances to travel the hero's road, soar to the heavens, revel in the tango, marvel at genius and party!" With Kohl's illuminating introductions to the music, every note, every moment is to be savored.

The season opens Sept. 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church in Lafayette and 3 p.m. Sept. 15 at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore with "The Monumental – Beethoven's Symphony #9." Beethoven's 9th Symphony defied categorization, leapfrogging to a new pinnacle of what the symphonic form can achieve. If you find yourself sitting up a little straighter, tilting your head to listen, forgetting where you are, you are traveling and experiencing with Beethoven the hero's inner journey from mysterious and humble beginnings to thundering triumph expressed in the enduring "Ode to Joy" featuring Soprano Rhoslyn Jones, Mezzo

Sylvie Jensen, Tenor Christopher Bengochea, Baritone Ben Brayd, and the combined Pacific Chamber Orchestra/Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church choirs, Brett Strader Chorus Master. The performances will be followed a special 30th PCO birthday bash.

Pacific Chamber Orchestra kicks off the holiday season Dec. 1 in Livermore with "The Glorious-Handel's Messiah." This is one of the best-loved musical experiences to be treasured. Kohl's effervescent interpretation offers great emotional impact underscoring the uplifting messages. Soloists Soprano Marnie Breckenridge, Mezzo Sylvie Jensen, Tenor Ricky Garcia, Baritone Ben Brady, and the Pacific Chamber Orchestra Chorus, Ofer dal Lal Chorus Master offers dazing virtuosity with an orchestra/chorus blend only possible in the intimate hall of the Bankhead Theater. At the end of the concert presentation the chorus joins the audience. Everyone in the midst of the harmonious voices joins together in a sing-a-long reprise of the famed Hallelujah chorus.

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