



# San Rafael Village

## Quarterly Newsletter

### Spring 2020

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## Coronavirus Upends our World

The Coronavirus and Covid-19 have turned our lives upside down. We're inundated with a constant stream of very unsettling news. As a village of mostly seniors, we fall into the especially vulnerable category of older Americans. That's why we are so very grateful to have the Villages to support and guide us through this unprecedented and difficult time.

Our own SRV has leaped into action with myriad ways to help our members and volunteers get through the pandemic in relative comfort – safe, healthy, informed and also...busy! We're calling all our members to check in, to make sure they have friends or family to help if needed, to supply information, and to add a reassuring human voice and personal touch from a community of villagers who care. The Villages administrative staff, working from home, has continued to coordinate our activities, even integrating new members and volunteers during this trying time.

The Village is helping us learn to use Zoom, the online audio and video app that allows us to see and talk to each other in "real time" throughout this crisis. Many activities are now being conducted virtually, from book groups to committee meetings, all done via Zoom. Regular Villages emails are keeping us up to date on what's new and what's available online. As we get more familiar with Zoom,

we're finding that it is not only effective – it is fun! Not quite the same as meeting in person – but a close second.

We sincerely thank the Marin Villages staff for their ongoing information and support. Their dedicated work is helping all SR Villagers to stay safe, healthy, engaged and busy! SRV wants you to know: You are not alone!

## Welcome New Members & Volunteers!

Despite what's going on around us – or maybe because of it – SRV has continued to gain members and volunteers. We welcome your participation during this tough time and look forward to getting to know you much better in the future once we are free to meet in person after the threat of the virus is over.

### **New Members:**

Patricia Krantzler  
Giancarla Tacchi  
Gene Karas  
Joan Peterson

Lou Harding  
Annette Rose and Chris Hardman  
Ami Diallo

### **New Volunteers:**

Betty Jennings  
Kirsten Meadows  
Lauren Musso

Diana Tran  
Marcia Jaffe  
Carolyn Lenert

## Happy Hour at McInnis

On February 20 – before we knew what was happening with the Coronavirus – the San Rafael Village hosted their first Happy Hour of 2020. We met in a private room at the McInnis Golf Club Restaurant to share conversation and friendship, food and drink. What better combination is there? Large round tables were perfect for gathering, circulating and chatting with one another. A fabulous array of hors d'oeuvres kept us all repeatedly visiting the buffet table while the nearby bar provided wine and drinks at very reasonable prices.

While we munched on bruschettas, fried calamari, sausages, little pizzas, spicy meatballs and a variety of cheeses and crackers, Sparkie Spaeth, Chair of SRV, and BJ Slater, Marin Villages Office Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator, welcomed us with information about events in the new year. Our Happy Hours have become signature events for the SRV – always well attended – convivial, informative, a way to meet old friends and new, and just plain have fun!



Sparkie welcomes SR Villagers



Carole & Lorraine check out the food!

## Tea, Talk and Tour at Villa Marin

On January 8th, about 30 SR Villagers gathered for a tea hosted by Villa Marin, the large, beautiful retirement complex perched high on a hill above Northgate Shopping Center, overlooking Terra Linda valley. While listening to Sparkie Spaeth, Chair of San Rafael Villages, enthusiastically describe the SRV and its many benefits and activities, the group happily sipped teas and coffee and feasted on a fabulous array of cream puffs, eclairs, shortbread and almond cookies.

With a lovely background of piano music provided by Dick Atwood, Kat Braemen, a former SRV member, and Liv Asbo, a current member, now both residents of Villa Marin, told the group about their enjoyable experiences living here at Villa Marin.



Welcoming SRV to Villa Marin



Donnalee Wells & Val Stilson

A lively exchange of comments and questions was followed by a tour of the Villa Marin Health Center which 15 SR Villagers attended. Kat explained that the Health Center is now open to the community, to both the public and Kaiser patients, in addition to Villa Marin residents who need its services. This outstanding facility provides both skilled nursing and recuperative and rehab post-surgery care, with professional staff and appropriate therapies as well as many amenities including menu choices, a beauty salon, library books, TV and movies. Kat welcomes San Rafael Villagers to visit and take a tour at any time.

We all thank Villa Marin for a lovely afternoon. They sure know how to treat their guests!

## Reading Out Loud

"Reading Out Loud" is a new group that formed about six months ago and is already going strong. Meeting at various members homes on the third Wednesday afternoon of every month, the group reads and discusses pieces that someone has come across and finds interesting – and it is always a surprise! The only limit is that the piece can't be too long since there must be ample time for back and forth sharing of reactions and opinions. The pieces read out loud range from something found in old files, dresser drawers, scrap books, newspapers and novels to the backs of cereal boxes and even the interior of egg cartons! Who knew there was something interesting to read there?

One recent gathering included a wildly varying mélange of pieces, starting with a very funny recitation of jokes that "spoke" to everyone. Then one person read a

piece about Diane Fosse and her study of the mountain gorilla in the jungles of Africa. Leaving Africa, the discussion jumped to learning a little of the life of the first woman to receive a medical degree in the U.S. Her medical school faculty admitted her as a lark and was astonished when she showed up on campus! Discussion quickly flowed to a "Letter to The Editor" written by one of our members when Roe vs. Wade was first being debated by the Supreme Court, complete with her hilarious and unprintable suggestion to the men of the Supreme Court as they pursued their debate.

The session ended with the reading of a treasured family letter, leaving the group with warmth in their hearts and an appreciation for all those who have loved us. Conversation flows easily as the group reminisces, opines, discusses and respectfully avoids arguing about our different beliefs, ideas and interpretations. All present end up laughing a lot and connecting over many shared experiences. What a wonderful new benefit this group is to our San Rafael Village! Members and volunteers welcome!

## **Lunch Out – When it Was Still Possible!**

One of the pleasures that we are temporarily having to forego is going out to a restaurant to enjoy lunch with friends. Shortly before we were aware of the Coronavirus, a group of SR Villagers gathered to enjoy lunch together at the State Room Brewery in downtown San Rafael – a delightful restaurant, not just a place to have a beer!





The group enjoyed excellent food, conversation and each other. While several selected healthy Chinese chicken salads, one person indulged in sticky ribs and Donnalee Wells treated herself to mussels in what she described as a “wonderful curry sauce with shallots and Indian naan bread” for dipping into the delicious sauce. We all look forward to the time when we can resume these terrific outings – for the social interaction as well as scrumptious food. This is something that Zoom, no matter how good it is, simply does not capture!

## Dealing with Loss – Open to Villagers

The SRV group called “Dealing with Loss” has existed for a few years, typically with 6-month sessions that meet monthly, although the current group started about 8 months ago and is still ongoing. The 2-hour sessions are organized, led and facilitated by Jackie Hewitt, a professional with a long career in grief support. Under Jackie’s guidance, participants address the myriad issues, major and minor, that we all face as we age.

As Jackie points out, loss and its implicit death knell are natural side effects of life’s passage. To continue living a fruitful and happy life, we need to learn how to not only survive but thrive. This interactive support group has helped many participants to address losses ranging from the death of loved ones to a variety of encroaching physical limitations and hardships. For some, that entails the threat of losing their identity and image of themselves. Some losses disrupt entire lifestyles and living situations, while others force us to come to terms with new ways of doing things we’ve always done but can no longer manage. “Dealing with Loss” offers strategies and perspectives and an intimate, supportive group to help deal with the many losses and sense of isolation that challenge us as we age.

Now, Jackie says, “Shelter at Home” restrictions impose increased isolation and lack of contact with the world, making life more stressful and depressing for many villagers, especially those who live alone. Jackie invites anyone who is interested to join the current group – which now has only 4 members. She is arranging Zoom meetings for the foreseeable future, the first one of which will be Friday, April 10. Newcomers are welcome! Please contact Jackie via email at [jackiejoyous@gmail.com](mailto:jackiejoyous@gmail.com) or by telephone at 707-849-9786. Jackie adds, if ever there was a time when this kind of support is needed – it is now!