



December 2020

## President's Message

By Susan Neuhaus

The days are getting shorter and outside it finally is starting to feel like winter. It is hard to believe that the last month of 2020 is here. I for one will be glad to see it go and hope for happier and healthier days in 2021.

Now that you have received your Emergency To-Go bags you will want to follow up on your preparedness by watching "Be Red Cross Ready", a Zoom presentation by our volunteer extraordinaire, Diane Delaney, who also works with the Red Cross on Thursday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.



I think many of us will struggle, some knowing that this holiday, usually a time of large gatherings of family and friends, might look very different. It is hard to give up our traditions, but this has been a year of letting go and finding new ways. We all hoped to be in a better situation by this time, even though in the back of our heads we knew it could probably be the opposite. And so, it is, new restrictions, new limitations, and a reality that we are just not seeing the end of COVID, at least not yet.

It is a reminder that life is fragile and what we hold dear could disappear overnight, but as we make the journey that is our life, we should never forget to look for the gifts and the beauty all around us.

The generous donations from our community of members and volunteers to our Adopt-a-Family fund drive will bring some real holiday joy to our adopted families. Our member services committee were able to buy everything on the gift lists for our Benicia and Vallejo families. We had enough to also include gift cards for gas, groceries as well as a special restaurant meal.

Here at Carquinez Village we are gearing up for the holidays. Seems we can all use some cheer. At our November Speaker Series, we were lucky to have the Master Gardeners join us again, this time for holiday wreath making. Benicia's parks department donated the greenery, Janice Magner made the bows and with much laughter, beautiful wreaths were created.



*President's message continued...*

On Wednesday, 12/9 our own Carlo Carlucci will be demonstrating how to make some of his amazing cookies from his annual Italian Holiday Party. I wish we had smellovision!

That same week on Friday, 12/11, Suzanne Awalt will be teaching us how to make a hanging holiday garden bouquet.

Since we can't go out and carol this year, we hope you will join us on Wednesday 12/23 on Zoom for Cocktails, Cocoa and Caroling.

I am sad that we will not be able to get together at our annual holiday party, but I am very grateful to be part of this village. This year expect a call from us to coordinate the delivery of a small holiday gift.

Be safe, be well and know we are only a call away!

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## Round Hole

By Molly Barr

(This is the fifth and last episode)

"I saw the house go by too," said Grandma. "Course I didn't know it was the ranch house, but it was shelter. I braced my feet and hauled back. The horses had the bit in their teeth and didn't even slow down."

"They probably smelled water," Grandad commented.

"Maybe. I didn't see the pond. I don't think the horses did either. The first I knew, was the two lead horses were going down, and the ones following were fightin' the harness."

"The wagon tipped forward and I could hear the horses scream," Grandad said. "The poor beasts didn't have a chance. Down they went, a ton of freight pushin' from behind."

Grandma stared at the ink-black surface of the pond, lost in the memory.

"I thought it was over for me too; I could barely move with my banged-up leg. Then Meg came crawlin', aft over the top of the freight and snagged me by the scruff of the neck as she went by."

The roar of the storm and the screams of the horses faded. The sun slipped silently below the horizon, and Round Hole squatted smug and placid in the gloaming. The utter silence of a hot summer evening in the Nevada Desert settled in my ears like cotton.

"That was quite a day," Grandma said.

Grandad slowly lifted the glass of alkali lemonade to his lips. "Yep," he said.

THE END

# Join Us! Support the Village!

By Judie Donaldson

The Carquinez Village Outreach Team--Lois Requist, Judie Donaldson, and Linda Chandler--is expanding its membership. We're in search of Village supporters who would like to work with us on an interesting and varied mandate. We want to strengthen the Village's visibility and connection with a variety of populations--members, donors, partners, other organizations, the community at large, and even our own members!

More specifically, the purpose of the team is to: 1) enhance the Village's visibility in the community through publicity and other approaches, 2) reach and serve individuals who are potential donors, 3) locate organizations that are potential partners, 4) strengthen internal member communications, and 5) connect with individuals in the community who are potential members, and 6) develop strategies to be an advocate for older adults. Individuals who join the team can choose to focus on one or more of these areas.

What would this look like? What kinds of things would a team member do? Here are some examples.

1. List all organizations in Benicia and Vallejo that we want to know about us. Make contact. Explore whether we could send a speaker to talk about the Village and its mission.
2. Help to design and implement strategies to connect with older adults who may be potential members.
3. Collaborate with team members to design and implement a community visibility strategy.
4. Seek opportunities to partner with other organizations in ways that benefit Village members.
5. Find outlets to be an advocate for older adults!
6. Play a role in a Senior Roundtable that we hope to form.
7. Be a speaker! Be a writer!

To be clear and to the point:

There are a variety of ways that individuals can choose to participate. Overall, the Village's team approach is one that works well for individuals to be a part of a group effort as well as work on individual projects if they wish. Would you like to learn more? Contact Judie Donaldson at 707-771-1217 or [judiedonaldson1@gmail.com](mailto:judiedonaldson1@gmail.com).



# To Help Your Zoom Experience

by Greg Plant

There is a power cord to connect the speakers to an outlet. The sound is stereo and there is a knob to turn on the speakers and increase the volume. Sound goes to each speaker equally for better listening quality.

Greg says: "These have made my Zooming experience much better—I am a more enthusiastic participant because I can hear the discussions. These speakers are also good to use with CD players, even portable ones."

Hope this is useful for our community!

External speakers are a great solution for those who have trouble hearing on Zoom calls.



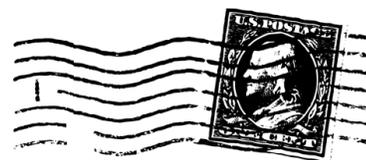
## Postcards

By Joe Athey

There is something magical about having some personal time with grandkids. During the pandemic that just hasn't been possible for me. I can Zoom or Facetime with them but in my family that means a group meeting and not one-to-one time, so I've been looking for ways to communicate with each of them more personally.

I've found postcards to be ideal for that purpose. I ordered fun fact postcards online and started mailing them out to the ten-year old twin granddaughters weekly. After I learned that they love getting personalized mail, I decided to order similar sets of postcards for them to send to me. I added some blank postcards, as well, so they could draw on them when they write.

To make it easier for them I had USPS deliver postcard stamps to their house. It has encouraged them to write, read and draw. And it keeps us all in each other's hearts. Just a thought for those of you who want to encourage reading, writing and artwork in your grandkids. A memorable way to "know" your grandkids better. *Happy Holidays!*





## The Damn Basket

By Marty Stockard

Dear John,

Your father and I had a special relationship. The Damn Basket is tangible proof of that. You might recognize it, as it traveled from California to Minnesota in your suitcase many years ago. This is the sort-of-full story of TDB.

Many years ago, when your father was ten, he found a Mexican basket in his bedroom. Not wanting it, he put it in my room. I too didn't want it, so I put it back in his room. This went on for several years, each time it changed rooms it became more hidden—sometimes under the bed, or buried in a clothes closet, or stuffed between books on a shelf. The more hidden, the longer it stayed. (During these years, our mother revealed that the basket was, indeed, her “lovely Mexican basket”, but was happy we were “enjoying” it.)

I went to college. In those days, there were no laundromats. All students had two metal boxes. One went home with a week's dirty clothes while the other box arrived from home with clean clothes from the week before. Often in the clean clothes box were “gifts” from home. In early 1954, TDB hidden under the freshly ironed clothes. That started a flurry of exchanges. During this period, TDB#1 was flattened, fell apart, and discarded.

Years later, after I was divorced, your dad and I resumed the tradition of TDB with this basket. My memory of the origin of this second basket is fuzzy, but I believe it was our mother who provided us with another “lovely Mexican basket” so our tradition could continue. A new rule evolved: it had to be exchanged “in person”. I remember taping it to the underside of a toilet seat in St. Paul and leaving it hidden in your dad's filing cabinet only to find it in my suitcase when I got home. Your dad hid it in my linen closet after a visit.

You were about 12 the year you took it back to St. Paul. I had to collude with friends who were loading your family's suitcases into the car. Your dad, mom and sister's suitcases were all locked...yours was the only one into which we could sneak TDB.

Somehow, I ended up with TDB when your dad died. I know he looked down after death with a grin on his face at finally having the last word. I have cherished TDB ever since, giving it a place of honor on my bedroom wall. I have requested that it be sent to you upon my death. Know that I will be looking down with a grin on my face knowing that TDB has finally been returned to the progeny of the original finder-instigator.

With lots of love,  
Aunt Marty

## Notes from the Editor

By Lois Requist

During a holiday season most tenuous, I'm glad to see the holiday events Carquinez Village has planned and to note the continued pragmatism and optimism of village members. Marty Stockard's contribution is especially pertinent to this season. Thanks again to Greg Plant, Joe Athey and Molly Barr for their words. Also, to Susan Neuhaus, our outstanding president, and Judie Donaldson, both of whom make a monthly contribution.

Rachel Ann Latosa Brown maintains our Facebook page and posts the newsletter there. Barbara Fredericks takes our words and images and makes them into a newsletter that can be read across various platforms—something that we didn't have to think about in the past. Thank you, Barbara!

Speaking of the past, we all have one. If you would like to share a memory in this newsletter, I'd like to see it. Keep it to 200-300 words. You can send it any time to [Loquuu@gmail.com](mailto:Loquuu@gmail.com). In the subject line, say "memory for the newsletter."

May we all be healthy and happy during this holiday season!

*Happy  
Holidays*