



January-February 2021

# ACACIA CREEK JOURNAL

WRITTEN BY RESIDENTS, FOR RESIDENTS

[www.acaciacreek.org](http://www.acaciacreek.org)

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## *Keeping Residents Entertained in the Pandemic*

And suddenly the pandemic struck in March 2020. The “virus” came quickly, and overnight, life as we knew it stopped. Here at Acacia Creek, closures of the dining room, the gym, day trips, classes, shopping—**gone!** For the LifeStyles team, this meant everything was up for reprogramming and replanning. At this point in time, in-house TV Channel 61 was used only to rebroadcast “Meet with Martin”, and the 2nd in-house Channel 1-62 was gathering dust. So, team members Carolee Rodrigo, Nancy Nguyen, Penny Vittoria, and Monica Pelcastre started their collaboration to revive the in-house tv stations, develop program ideas, test, edit, and begin broadcasting.

Nancy and Carolee dealt with programming, Monica did editing and Penny started the zoom classes. They were also open to ideas from other team members and residents. Yanasa Williams was brought in for consultation so she could be part of the solution. Soon, her exercise classes moved online and kept everyone moving! Nancy contacted IT, and they were able to get her the needed new equipment, and fit it into a cabinet that she found in storage. From there, existing channel 1-61 was opened up for resident presentations from the Resident Council and various committee meetings along with the weekly “Chat with Chuck” that kept us informed about the state of the world outside. The operation of Channel 1-61 was made more user-friendly so residents could actually run it.

The wide variety of programming we now have on both in-house channels—world, science, musicals, Broadway, Disney+, nature, exercise are due to this team stepping up and taking on all these challenges they had never done before. It’s hard to believe that this all happened in less than a year. Our programming team is open to new ideas and suggestions - just let them know.

The television set in the lobby features “Captures Around the Creek” shows compiled by Monica. It has been a popular gathering spot for

many months now. It all began when the team members were looking for ways to keep us all connected without placing us in harm’s way. Many residents asked about seeing pictures of participants in the spring Pandemic “Walk for Wellness” program, which provided the theme for the first slide show. This was followed by Penny’s walkers collecting flora and fauna to make their creative mandalas. Not only were the actual mandala designs displayed, but they were also captured visually surviving long after their demise.

Residents began sending photos including many nature shots from all around the campus. Regular contributors are Betty Chiang, Karen and Keith Moody, Betty Shumway and Penny Vittoria. One of the first events to be showcased was the Grab & Go which led to many more fun and creative ways to safely connect fellow residents.

Monica has now assembled 20 different shows which are shown in the lobby on a continuous loop.

Family videos were another popular feature this Christmas. Family members of residents were invited to submit short videos (1-2 minutes) with holiday greetings. These were collected and shown in the lobby on Christmas day for all residents to enjoy.

Be sure to share your photos and videos with Monica. “Captures Around the Creek” shows are now available for viewing on your own computer, tablet or smart phone. Check with Monica for more information on how to get access. And so, we can all look forward to what programming might come next.



By Martha Crowe

## *A Good Pandemic Happening at DMV!*

You might have been studying hard to pass the dreaded DMV written exam as your California Driver License expired on your birthday this year. California law states that persons over 70 years old must go to a DMV office to renew. Since appointments could not be made during the pandemic, a one-year extension letter was mailed to you.

Now, even if your renewal notice says that an office visit is required, you may renew online or by mail! A temporary waiver allows those over 70 and older to **renew** non-commercial Driver's Licenses, Real IDs or ID cards without going to the DMV. There is no written exam!

Go to [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) and click on "Driver's License or ID Card" and follow the instructions. Pay by credit or debit or eCheck, then kick back and enjoy your loss of DMV exam anxiety and a future DMV office trip! Your 5-year renewal will be in the mail in about 2 weeks.

By Clarice Hill

## *Remembering Covid*

*Twas the day before Covid, not a care to our name,*

*until we were told that Covid 19 came.*

*People were scrambling on what now to do –  
so we all were quarantined and face masks  
ensued.*

*Some folks thought it stupid and ridiculous  
besides,*

*but most heeded the warnings and kept  
themselves inside.*

*Dinners delivered, nose swabs eventually came  
and life at Acacia Creek was not quite the  
same.*

*Management reported in weekly reviews  
and we all were kept abreast of the latest  
news.*

*Now we can see a light at the end.*

*Covid vaccines have come as a friend.  
We all look forward in anticipation to reunite  
with family, friends and have parties too,  
but I hope I can remember who is who.*

By Karon McAninch



Dear Residents,

I hope you have enjoyed the very restricted Holiday Season and limited celebrations that were allowed due to Covid-19. The 2020 holiday season will not be forgotten for a long time... All of us are hoping for a much better year in 2021 with some normalcy and life going back to as we knew it and liked it.

I am so proud and thankful that the vaccination turnout was very high. Residents and team members who visited the first clinic thought the process was fast and not as bad as they had feared. As predicted by the CDC and different health organizations no one displayed severe symptoms after the first vaccination dose. This might help convince a few more folks to get vaccinated on February 23, 2021 when we receive our 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

I also want to thank all residents and family members again for the patience and cooperation that you showed this past year. Let's carry forward the warmth, joy and kindness throughout the New Year. With so many resolutions made on the stroke of midnight for the New Year, let's consider keeping brotherly love, friendship and hope in the forefront of our minds and hearts.

Cheers!

Martin Herter



Vaccine—January 20, 2021

## Coyotes Chorus; Turkeys Gobbling

Two of the most moving experiences for me in the Covid-19 year came from the wild side. I have seen individual coyotes on the campus ever since I moved here 8 years ago, and I have been prepared for more. Keith Moody reported

considerable coyote activity in Dry Creek Park just over the hills to the East of us. The first inkling that things have changed occurred in the middle of May when a single coyote gave us



a song on the Northside in the full sunshine. Around 10 at night a few days later I heard a commotion outside my apartment. Stepping onto my porch I could hear coyotes yipping and yapping from the lobby crossover down to the eastern end of the building—maybe 3 dozen dogs in all. In subsequent weeks they moved to the Southside to serenade. Jim and Bev Schwartz heard such levity when they lived in the forested suburbs of Palo Alto. Shirley Warren and Marcie Radius both grew up on ranches. During the hot summer months they slept on a screened-in front porch. They heard coyotes passing by at night and chorusing following a successful pupping season.

Long ago and far away it was the Egyptian God Set who stormed out of the desiccating Sahara savannah accompanied by plagues of locusts along with Anubis, the chorusing African dog. Those who study dogs believe they chorus to define who they are, to make other packs aware of their presence and, therefore, less likely to wander into their territory. The migratory cattle herders on the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates Rivers stayed in place building civilizations as places of sanctuary and to protect the water for themselves.

As 2020 approached its end we did our own version of raising the spirits of the earth in celebration of Santa Claus coming down from the North on his sleigh with eight tiny reindeer. This

year we trooped around Acacia Creek in a Light Parade. We were led by Sugar Plum Fairies doing



their lifestyle dance to he who reads tea leaves to see who has been naughty or nice. As the parade rounded the corner on the East end of the building

the Turkeys in their nighttime roost joined with the

yelling and cackling. The only other time I have heard roosting turkeys send up a gobble has been on the Fourth of July and the New Year. At those times their feelings



have been a combination of fear and irritation in a minor key. My second-floor apartment on the far right up the road is identified by an illuminated



antique fiber-optic Christmas Tree in the front window. Stepping out onto my porch I was flashed by Thys Marcelis's green-light Christmas projection on the retaining wall and hillside across the road. Looking down the road I

could hear the conjugaré of Turkeys and Sugar Plum Fairies. I could hear the Turkeys tuning in to our positive note such that it was hard to tell the difference. It was a nice bit of cooperation from animals who don't usually see eye to eye.

By CJ Becker

# Christmas Train Layout

One of the annual Christmas features of the Acacia Creek lobby is the wonderful model train layout which is very popular with residents and families (when they are allowed to visit). Tau Alpha brought his garden layout to Acacia Creek in 2013 when he and his wife moved in. Previously, it had run on 130 feet of track in his backyard for 33 years. This year, the 2020 layout had 2 trains running with a total running stock of 50 cars and 6 locomotives donated by residents. If you have ever looked at model train layouts you've probably noticed that Tau's train is in G scale (1:24) which is larger than the scale used for



Lionel trains which were popular in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century America. It is considerably larger than the popular HO scale favored by model train enthusiasts today.

Tau admits that what he really likes these days is creating the buildings and displays around the layout. Recently, Tau built a model of a wine cellar complete with wine barrels; you can peek in and count barrels. New this year, is the Santa's Workshop model which has working tools powered by the springs from an old phonograph. He decided that the water tower model donated by Sandy Adams needed some additional activity, so he developed a homeless shelter encampment beneath it. Sandy also contributed some model train cars that had belonged to her husband

George Adams who also owned a full size steam locomotive that he donated to the Niles Canyon Railway, (part of the Pacific Locomotive Association).

This year the train layout also featured wooden models of trucks and airplanes originally intended as giveaways to our younger visitors who were unable to visit due to the Pandemic; the wood models were given away to the children of Acacia Creek staff. The toy models are a product of the AC Model Shop with lots construction and rework by Gene Gire and



Steve Potter, Marty Crowingshield, Larry Leong and others. Lady residents also got involved in setting up and maintaining the layout, keeping an eye on the daily running of the track. The female helpers this year included Judy Cain, Bea Corley, Carol Hough, Bev Schwartz, and Kathy Troll.

For the last six years, the annual model train layout has been a great example of resident volunteerism. Tau admits that it is a lot of work, but as long as there is interest and support for it by residents and staff, he hopes to see the layout continue every year.

By Sophie Hudnut

## Feeding the Hungry Masses



**Dennis Purch**

**Team Member of Quarter**

Dennis Purch is going on 11 months now and has worked hard to get to this point. He came in with little experience and under the circumstances especially this year he has shown improvement and perseverance. Dennis is always conscious of what is asked from him and has displayed this in many ways:

- Great attitude every day: his daily enthusiasm smiling and greeting everyone & professional in the aspect of keeping to himself and staying focused
- Great team player: consistently helps when he's not busy, He does this often by asking his Sous Chef for tasks. He also helps coverage when we're shorthanded.
- Willing to learn new things: just recently asked how to do the marinade for the Cornish hen. He does this often with various questions on procedures and cooking methods
- Making sure every order is plated to specification (e.g. bread on the side, no onions, rare burger or a soft omelet).
- Rotates inventory accordingly.
- He manages dating and labeling of his product.
- His work area is very clean and organized

Overall, his best quality is his personality; he's such a hard worker but an even better person. He is a great example of what we look for in a model employee.

By Fernando Gaeta

Napoleon Bonaparte once said "an army marches on its stomach". Well, Acacia Creek residents don't qualify as an army, but during the Pandemic of 2020-2021, we rely on the good food cooked and served daily by our kitchen under the direction of Chef Fernando Gaeta. With help from the cooks and dining room staff, almost 200 residents receive 1-3 meals daily delivered to their apartments. While it is not as pleasurable as eating a hot meal in the dining room, knowing that food will be delivered solves a basic human need on a daily basis.

If you chat with Chef Fernando, you'll discover that the Pandemic has made his job more difficult. Just as we all noticed in March 2020 when toilet paper and sanitizers disappeared from the local grocery store shelves, his suppliers can't always provide the desired food and drink items that he orders. On the other hand, his menus continue to include a variety of daily choices, with 2-3 items each week marked new.

To broaden the daily salad selection, the dinner menu now includes some old favorites such as coleslaw, potato and tuna salads. One of my favorite items on the menu are the daily soups, made from scratch each day – much better than any canned soups.

Keep in mind that you can always call or email Chef Fernando with your concerns about a particular dish. Because we are not getting together in the Dining Room, he is not getting as many comments as in the past. Let him know what you like, what works and what needs improving. He likes to share your comments with his team.

By Sophie Hudnut



## *Abraham Lincoln and the Chinese Builders*

This year's Chinese New Year falls on Abraham Lincoln's birthday. And this coincidence got me thinking: What domestic connections were there between Abraham Lincoln and the Chinese in the U.S.? Well, here's one that came to mind. On July 1, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act to provide federal "aid in the construction of a railroad... from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean" -- the Pacific Railroad. But who will build it?

The answer to this question was anticipated more than seven years prior by Rev. William Speer, a pioneer Presbyterian pastor ministering to the Chinese in San Francisco Chinatown. He was fluent in Cantonese and founded the Chinese-English newspaper, *The Oriental*. In its inaugural issue on January 4, 1855, he penned an editorial entitled **Laborers for the Pacific Railroad** and confidently predicted: *"the boundless plateau of the Western half of this continent... will be scattered by busy lines of Chinese builders of iron roads, that shall link the two oceans, and add to the wealth and comforts of the dwellers upon either shores."*

Interestingly, at the time of the Speer 1855 forecast of Chinese iron road builders, Lincoln was also working as a railroad lawyer (1853-1860, Illinois Central Railroad), and it was his legal reputation that gave rise to the nickname "Honest Abe". The Chinese started building iron roads in 1858 with the California Central Railroad in Marysville, when they were hired to replace white workers who had left for the silver mines. Chinese builders also worked in 1861-1863 on the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad, which opened in January 1864.

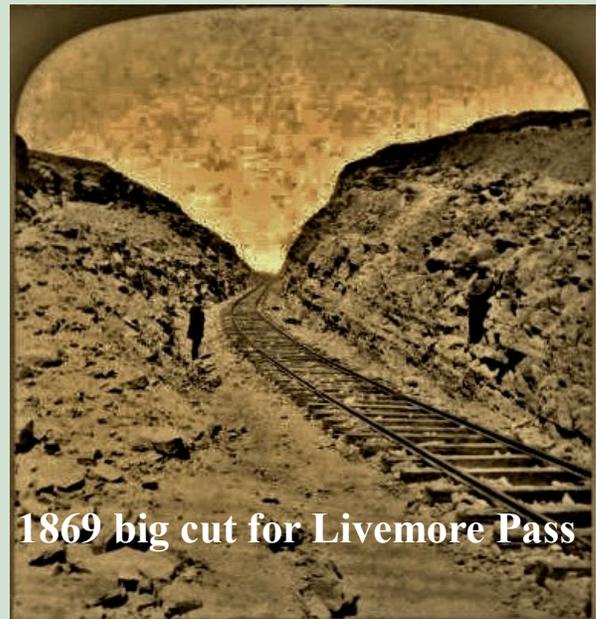
In 1865, Chinese builders started on the Pacific Railroad: in January 1865, on the Central Pacific working east from Sacramento; and in February 1865, on the Western Pacific working north from San Jose. Chinese builders from the Pearl River Delta in the province of Guangdong (Canton) in southern China constituted the vast majority of the Pacific Railroad workforce on the western front, about 80 to 90%.

On March 3, 1865 President Lincoln officially added Western Pacific to Central Pacific and Union Pacific as the charter companies to receive federal aid to construct the Pacific Railroad. The next day, President Lincoln gave his second inaugural address, imploring all to help heal the wounds of a deeply divided country: *"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."*

Two scores and one day later, President Lincoln was killed by an assassin. More than four years later on September 6, 1869, Chinese builders finished the iron road to the Pacific ocean, fulfilling President Lincoln's 1862 dream of a railroad from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean. With this iron road greenlighted by President Lincoln came the ascendancy of agriculture and California as well as, in time, the healing of these United States.

You can hear the seldom-told story of how three different gangs of Chinese builders helped complete the first iron road from Sacramento to San Francisco Bay, including the stretch right in front of Acacia Creek at 11am, February 12, 2021, on channel 1-61 and zoom.

By Victor Wong



1869 big cut for Livemore Pass



I just **love** the Harlem Globe Trotters! Oooh, boy do I **love** the Super Bowl! How I **love** my little toy poodle. I **love** my husband. I hear love, love, love all over the place, but what is it really? How many ways can you use the word love?

Merriam-Webster says that Love is:

- A strong affection,
- A warm attachment,
- Unselfish loyal benevolent concern for others,
- Attraction based on sexual desire,
- A score in tennis.
- To hold dear

The word love, in my opinion is so over-used that it almost becomes boring. We have a wonderful dictionary of about 100,000 words to choose from so I am quite sure we all could find some more descriptive words to use instead of love.

For example, I adore the Harlem Globe Trotters, they are so skilled in handling the basketball! I hold dear my little poodle. I just relish potato salad and a hot dog. I savor a good game of golf or bridge. And, of course, I do love

my late husband. The word love has such a strong, deep meaning of affection that it really does belong in reference to a husband or wife. Let's look for other words; English is such a colorful language: cherish, take pleasure, passionate, hold dear, affect, affinity for. Well, you get the idea.

I believe the word LOVE should be preserved for Valentine's day, the day.



More now than ever, in today's world, we must spread a blanket of love over our communities. In Roman times, the middle of February was the time for celebration called Lupercalia, the beginning of spring, romance, and happiness. However, Claudius II believed that unmarried men made the best soldiers, therefore he declared that no man may marry. Father Valentine, a Catholic Priest believed in love and marriage and would marry the couples in secret. The Valentine cards began in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,. At first they were handmade, the 1<sup>st</sup> card (1797) is in the British Museum. Commercial cards began to show up in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the advent of the printing press.

My Quote: *"When your heart is open to love, your mind is also open."*

By Carole Silva



New Year New Action Grab n'Go—January 29, 2021



# Living It

