

Living It



Board of Directors @ Party



ACACIA CREEK JOURNAL

WRITTEN BY RESIDENTS, FOR RESIDENTS

www.acaciacreek.org

(510) 441-3700

ACACIA CREEK'S MODEL RAILROAD

Each year for the last 8 years, Tau Alpha has shared his model railroad with fellow residents at Acacia Creek. What started as a garden railway at Tau's home in Palo Alto became an annual Christmas favorite for residents when Tau and his wife Ann moved to Acacia Creek in 2013 and began sharing his model train layout. This year, Tau says will be the last. The reason is that like any volunteer effort, putting up, maintaining, and running the railroad is a big task that requires a lot of support from fellow residents and AC staff.

When Tau first built his garden railway in the backyard of his home almost 30 years ago, it had 130 feet of G scale track, the preferred model railroad track size used for garden railways. In the real world, "standard gauge" is four feet, eight and a half inches inside-to-inside between the rails. G scale model trains range in scale from 1:24 to 1:32 inches wide, scaled down from the real thing.

In order to display this wonderful model railroad layout each year in our lobby, requires the support of many volunteers. To start, the table platform is (approximately 10' x 12') and has to be assembled by maintenance staff. The next step is to place the mountain scenery on the table, lay out the track, and add the many buildings and scenes that provide the visual awe and additional entertainment. However, like most electrical displays, the model trains that run daily do require servicing and care. Tau and his fellow assistants have to tinker with the engines, cars and tracks. The tracks have to be cleaned daily, and Carol Hough does the rounds with her cleaning rag at 6am each morning. Tau's assistants

from the AC Model Shop include Marty Crowningshield, Steve Potter, Larry Leong, and Gene Gire. When they're not checking the equipment, they may be building new features for the layout or building toys to give away to child visitors. Among the popular features of the layout are the winery, the corral, water tower, mining



equipment, Masonic lodge building and the recently added party train cars.

We've been told that the layout and its accompanying equipment will probably be given away some time in 2022 to an interested party who will be willing to maintain it. The obvious reason is that Tau and his assistants are getting too old to continue maintaining this wonderful layout, and new/younger residents



have shown little interest in taking on this effort. **Going, going..., gone...?**

By Sophie Hudnut



Holiday Memories

Rodger Page remembers a Christmas in 1965 when he and Jorene went back to Binghamton, NY to visit family.

He took this picture of their son Joe (he was 4 at the time) with his grandpa, Jorene's dad. "Our job that day had been to go to Mr. Holmwood's wood lot with permission to get 5 Christmas Trees for family and friends.



Christmas was really a great time for our three families, but as it turned out, that was the last and only time that we would all be together. The highlight of that whole trip was the gathering of the Christmas trees, having a little lunch and then loading them all on the back of a jeep and heading home."

Wilma Vinson has a very special memory of December 7, 1941. "My Mom and Dad and I were sitting in our Dining Room eating and listening to President Roosevelt tell us about the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. We were looking out our window at 2 Japanese ships! My Father jumped up and left for his job as head of security at Benecia Arsenal.



Our land is next to the Arsenal and close to the powder house building. Boy, we would be a good target.

There were 3 Japanese ships and one was at Port Chicago just around the corner. They were collecting crude oil and scrap metal. My Mom and I watched as the Navy from Mare Island came and took the ship crews away."

Paul Crummey remembers a Christmas adventure from 1954. "My Father took a job in South Africa setting up fish canneries along the Atlantic coast between Cape Town and Walvis Bay in South West Africa. My mother joined him that summer, and in November arranged for me to join them. I flew from San Francisco to New York on Thanksgiving Day. I boarded a 12-passenger freighter, the African Star, on December 1st and sailed into Cape Town on Christmas morning (25 days later)."



Carole Silva remembers when the Masonic Home/Acacia Creek Handbell Choir was formed in 2016. "Christmas times that stand out in my memory are when I conducted the hand bell choir to light the large tree in front of the

Masonic Home. We had some 2000 visitors and when special person 'threw the switch' we could hear a breath-



taking OOOH! It was an awesome display of lights. After the first time, our hand bell choir was invited back

to repeat the tree-lighting concert."

Martha Crowe remembers Christmas 47 years ago like it was yesterday. "I had been on my own with three sons - ages 4 to 14, and our lives were finally getting smoother. I had met Bill at our son's soccer games and had been "seeing" him. I got a call from my mother that she and my father were coming for Xmas. All was going well but soon after they arrived, someone at my front door was telling me my minister had given her my name and



she and friends had gifts for my sons. I was so embarrassed and tried to tell her we were just fine, but my mother overheard this and quickly took me into the kitchen and told me I HAD to go back and take the gifts and thank her so I wouldn't ruin her joy of giving. So, I did as I was told and my sons were ecstatic with their

Xmas. Soon after, my mother had another chat with me and gave me even better advice, "If you miss this one (meaning Bill) you will regret it the rest of your life." So I soon took her advice. The best Christmas ever—we all got each other!

Sophie Hudnut remembers the Christmas of 2010. Getting and decorating the annual Christmas Tree had always been a very important part of her husband Vernon's life. So, even though he was quite ill, she



persuaded him to decorate the tree one last time. He hung 400+ ornaments on the tree and laid out the Christmas scene, Santa's village and the model train, some of which dated back to his early childhood. "I think it gave him great joy to have this final memory."

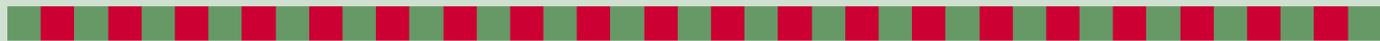
Exercise Your Pen

You do have a voice when it comes to the food and service in our dining room. On every table there are comment cards available to you. Even though pens and pencils are not provided for health concerns, it's a good idea to bring your own writing implement. If you have a complaint or praise, please exercise your opportunity to communicate. Every comment card is read by not only Chef Fernando and Madelane but also by the cooks as well. All comment cards are posted on a bulletin board in the kitchen. Madelane addresses server issues with



individual servers. You are asked to sign or at least put your name and phone number on the comment card. This way staff can contact you about a specific issue. We did have a problem when we first came out with the comment cards from some residents that just complained that the food tasted like garbage or similar. These types of comments are not useful. Any comment cards unsigned or not identified are destroyed and not acted on.

By Sally Ward
(Culinary Committee Chair)



Celebrating Hanukkah at AC

Celebrating Hanukkah has become an annual event at Acacia Creek thanks to the efforts of fellow residents Phyllis Glueck, David Goodman and Hilary Kaufman. This year's Hanukkah celebration on November 28th included a reading of the Hanukkah story, several songs by our Chorus, and a feast of potato latkes with sour cream and apple sauce accompanied by Kosher blackberry wine.

Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem during the 2nd century B.C.E., following the triumph of some Jewish rebels, known as the Maccabees, against their Greek oppressors, who had defiled the temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and tried to force the Jews to convert. In order to rededicate the temple, the Jews lit the menorah, but they only had



enough pure olive oil to last for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days. Jews reenact the miracle of the oil every year during Hanukkah by lighting candles in a Menorah for eight nights. At Acacia Creek, we rely on electric candles, but the principle is the same. The shammash, the helper candle in the middle, is lighted first and is then used to light the others, one per day until all eight candles have been lit.



The miracle of the oil lasting eight days is not only celebrated through the lighting of the menorah, but also in the traditional foods fried in oil that are eaten. Hanukkah is a favorite holiday for many people because it reminds them of the importance of freedom.

By Phyllis Glueck

ACACIA CREEK TRAVELERS

Sixteen hardy residents were treated to the 75th Anniversary of the Men and Boys Choir at Grace Cathedral. We drove to San Francisco's Nob Hill on Saturday December 18th. I say "hardy" as we encountered a lot of wind and rain. Our bus was approaching "boat" status, but Luis did his usual great job and got us to and from there safely.



The program was beautiful. The choir is comprised of 12 choirmen and 18 choristers. The choristers are students at Cathedral School for Boys. The sound was clear as were the words despite the fact everyone in the Choir wore a mask. All the guests were also masked, and our vaccination status was checked prior to entering the Cathedral.

The Men and Boys Christmas program is a fund raiser for the Community Preschool at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. The preschool provides an educational learning

experience for children ages 3 to 5. The program is open to all ethnicities, religious beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds, national origins and/or gender identities. The school reaches out to all neighborhoods in the City. The children are accepted for a two-year 12-month program. Enrollment is a combination of full-paying, partial-paying and scholarships for students from the Tenderloin and other at-risk neighborhoods.

It was a worthwhile trip and for a worthy cause. We will see what the 2022 schedule offers. This is a program that all would enjoy.

By Sally Ward

DID YOU KNOW?

This column answers your questions and provides information from around Acacia Creek. If you have questions, concerns or curiosity about things perhaps I can help. Just send your inquiry to Sally to tvlsally@sbcglobal.net and I will see what I can locate.

◆Did you know we have a Notary on site? Carolee Rodrigo in Lifestyles is a Notary and will process your requests. The charge is

\$15.00 per signature. Call #3738 to make an appointment

◆Diamond Cleaners of Hayward will pick up and drop off your laundry. To set up an account call 510-556-8554. Let them know you are at Acacia Creek. Set up an account for either credit card, check or cash. They will drop off two laundry bags for your use. Pick up and drop off are on Tuesdays. The location is on the 4th floor wing at the elevator #1 alcove. This is near the Sewing Room 1441 and the Model Center 1438.

The Masonic Christmas Tree



The Christmas tree in front of the Head Building is an Araucaria araucana or Chilean pine. It is the national tree of Chile. Several such trees-of-life have been planted on our

campus. This is the only one called a living fossil. Walkers should take a detour to see its "reptilian" leaves and its tough, rough bark.

The giant, long-necked Diplodocus dinosaur with a long tail once browsed in tropical forests that included the palm, the fern tree, and Chilean pine. Diplodocus lived at the end of the Jurassic period over 150 million years ago. The first mammals have been identified at this time. Among those was a rodent that looks like the long-haired grass mouse that still lives with the Chilean pine in Chile and Brazil. In contrast to reptiles, the warm-blooded mammals fertilized internally and raised smaller broods. They had larger brains than reptiles of equal size and met the travails of life through intelligence rather than by large numbers of offspring. Cleverly they took the seeds of the Chilean pine down into their borrows to store them for the starvation time. From an abundance of stored seeds, trees were planted by accident.

And so it is that from our little perch on the third planet from a sun, at the edge of a galaxy, we mammals ponder the meaning of life. As my dear friend



the philosopher-poet Roland Fischer saw it, "it is through the evolution of observers that the universe becomes aware of itself and we are able to speak up on its behalf."

By CJ Becker



Chat with Chuck



As we wrap up the Holiday Season I think it is important to remember the warmth and joy shared during the season and to carry those feelings forward throughout the year. The holidays evoke the flame of cordiality and the kindness of being benevolent. A worthy New Year's goal is to continue fanning this flame with friends, neighbors and loved ones.

Whether you call it Hanukah, Kwanza, Yuletide, Noel, Weinachten, or Christmas, people around the world have just enjoyed the holidays and are looking forward to a year of new opportunities, new relationships, new resolutions, and a fresh look on things.

We have had new friends join our Acacia Creek family this year. The joy of watching new friendships develop as residents welcome new neighbors has been very gratifying for me and for the staff. Our goal in 2022 is to return to 90% occupancy and to continue delivering the quality lifestyle Acacia Creek has come to be known for in its short existence.

My wish for you this New Year is to enjoy time spent with your loved ones and friends and relish the warm feelings of caring and camaraderie of your fellow Acacia Creek Residents.

Happy, Healthy New Year.
Chuck Major



Resident Spotlight



Shirlee Crawford Warren

Shirlee Crawford was born in Klamath Falls during one of the coldest winters Oregon ever had. Her mother had gone to await the birth in an OB hospital early, as it was feared that the roads could become impassable, but Shirlee was late! Her parents lived on her grandfather's cattle ranch about 30 miles from town, living in an uninsulated one-bedroom bunkhouse. They moved to the elegant main ranch house which had hot and cold running water. Almost to the day one year later, a baby brother came along and again almost to that day, a baby sister. The grandmother and an aunt lovingly helped take over care of the three babies.

Her dad was a Forest Ranger. The family ate the fish he caught from the Williamson River: Rainbow and Dolly Varden trout and other fishes. Venison was often on the table. Her grandmother used natural leaves, roots, and tree sap salves from the surrounding forest for effective cures. Aunt Betty taught the three preschoolers. Her Uncle Bob taught Shirlee to read by 4 years old. Shirlee was enrolled in a local Indian school at Chilikin, where she got in a fight at recess. Because of the bullying, her mother removed her from the school. Since there were no other schools nearby, Shirlee was enrolled in an Ashland, OR school. The youngsters and their mom lived in town in a rented house, but that long distance did not work out. She and her sister were sent to a wonderful Catholic boarding school in Klamath Falls and stayed there until high school graduation while her brother studied in military boarding school. A streetcar ad which advocated nursing schools prompted both sisters to train

at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland. Shirlee went on to earn her RN in a three-year program. Shirlee then enlisted in the Army Air Force Flight School. At a preliminary training program, she met and then married Richard Warren, a medic in the Air Force.

Richard was posted to a suburban Seoul hospital in South Korea. Shirlee was sent to a MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit in the battle zone where she was the nurse with two med techs. They were assigned to accompany the wounded soldiers to the Seoul hospital. The Greek pilots would land the plane in a flat-appearing field as close as possible to the injured. It was not a regular landing field, just bumpy and rocky, scary. 5 gurneys of very young, severely wounded soldiers were loaded on the plane which then took off for Seoul. The two women nursed the young men on the way, and on the return flight from Seoul carried back medical, food, mail, and any needed supplies. She served 3 months in South Korea, working every day. Toilet facilities were an open shed, so when the women needed to use them, the enlisted men were ordered to turn away!

After Army Discharge, Shirlee and Richard each used the GI Bill to study at University of Oregon for three years. Shirlee studied nursing again and anthropology, a stimulating subject. After graduation, the pair moved to Chicago so Dick could attend a post-graduate course in hospital management. Then came a residency in Chattanooga, TN for a year, with 6 months of overseeing a large hospital. Next was Seattle where Shirlee read an ad in a professional journal to "Come to Paradise". Paradise was in American Samoa where everyone watches all the kids, and the residents love to party, without alcohol (a Mormon influence). Also, the island had heavy rains and rats as large as dogs, which were ignored by the residents. Richard and Shirlee and their toddler daughters lived there two years while the new Federal hospital and a new clinic on a neighboring island were established.

Then they travelled to Fremont to see Washington Hospital, a small one-floor hospital of eight physicians. Shirlee was wary of such a small place. Richard Warren served as Washington's Chief Executive Officer from 1969 to 1994, a long tenure in the hospital industry, where CEOs typically last three to five years. He kept Washington Hospital as a public hospital while expanding it from a small hospital to a Regional Medical Center.

Richard died suddenly in 2006, ending a long satisfying marriage and partnership with Shirlee. They spent many years in the medical field and travelled to many places together with their two loved and loving daughters.

By Clarice Hill

Team Spotlight



Saying goodbye to Monica

Monica Pelcastre, our Marketing Associate, who supported us in publishing the Acacia Creek Resident Journal, has left us for greener pastures. Monica had a long history with Acacia Creek. She first came to work as a Dining Room Server after graduating from high school. She

worked part time for three years in the Dining Room while attending Chabot College. She finished her college degree in English at UC Irvine. While there, she also studied abroad for a semester at the University of Warwick (near London). Thus began her love of travel, with travel around Europe, followed by vacations in Japan, Korea, and Mexico.

In October 2015, she was hired at Acacia Creek to assist the Marketing Department in managing a big off-site estate sale, and in March 2016, she was hired as a Concierge, and was so successful that she became one of the first "Team Members of the Quarter". Shortly thereafter, she transferred into the Marketing Department to work on marketing events, and became involved with printing, photography, and video. She was responsible for producing "Captures Around the Creek" featured in the AC lobby. During COVID she helped to keep residents happy with hallway entertainment activities.

As Monica broadened her job skills, she started looking for job opportunities that would broaden her horizons. She has accepted a job as a Project Manager for MovePlan, a women-owned British company that is expanding into California and the West Coast. The diverse experience she has picked up here should be very useful in dealing with the unexpected on her new job.

We wish her well!

By Sophie Hudnut



Winter Lights Fest 2021

Award-winning display was created by Marketing & Concierge

