

City of
Thousand Oaks
 Council on Aging

SENIOR BUZZ

FALL 2016

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Aging is an inevitable process. I surely wouldn't want to grow younger. The older you become, the more you know; your bank account of knowledge is much richer.

The Senior BUZZ is published quarterly by the Thousand Oaks Council on Aging to provide information to seniors about services available to them in the Conejo.

2016 Senior of the Year

On Thursday night, June 2, 2016, almost 200 guests and dignitaries gathered to find out whom the Council on Aging had picked as the outstanding Senior of the Year. This year six candidates had been nominated by their sponsors as worthy volunteers due to their willingness and commitment to doing their best at whatever task came their way.



Above, the six nominees: Ed Craven, Margo King, Sue Lindermann, Sydelle Lopez, represented by her daughter, Pamela, Nancy Nelson and Jim Seerden, represented by Brenda Birdwell, pose with Councilmember Al Adam.

Mayor Joel Price opened the evening with a welcome and expressed gratitude to all community volunteers. The stage was cleared and a chicken dinner prepared by the Conejo Creek Grill was served.

After dinner, nominees were introduced and Representatives from local, county, state governments and Congress presented each nominee with certificates of appreciation for their service to this community.

Councilmember Al Adam then announced the nominee chosen as Senior of the Year. As he began his opening remarks, the audience immediately recognized that the person about to be named as Senior of the Year was Jim Seerden. This year's Senior of the Year, Jim Seerden, has been an advocate for older adults for over 20 years. In that time, Seerden has spent time on the Goebel Senior Center Commission, the Council on Aging and the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging. Adams continued "Seerden was nominated for Senior of the Year by Mike McAdam, recreational coordinator at the Goebel Adult Community Center."



Pictured above: Left—Jim's wife Jeanne accepting the award for him; Right: Jim beaming holding his award.

In addition to his roles on several boards, including Ventura County Housing Options Made Easy, Seerden provides respite time weekly for caregivers through Hospice of the Conejo" Seerden said his first volunteer experience after retiring from the electrical sales industry was with Conejo Recreation and Park District's therapeutic sports program, where he worked with children with special needs.

Jim was unable to attend but his wife Jeanne was there in his place and it seemed that all eyes in the audience were trained on her as Councilmember Adam read Jim's service citations.

Every year, on the first Thursday in June, the Council on Aging holds its annual awards dinner.

Recognizing Early Signs of Alzheimer's Disease



September is designated “World Alzheimer’s Month” and September 21 is “World Alzheimer’s Day” to help bring awareness to an all-too-common and life-changing form of dementia.

Dementia is a general term used to describe cognitive deficits, and Alzheimer’s disease is a specific type of dementia. Just as there are many types of cars, there also are many types of dementia, with Alzheimer’s being one of the most common. Other common types include vascular dementia, which is caused by stroke, and mixed dementia, which is a combination of the two.

Alzheimer’s disease is marked by memory difficulties that affect daily life. There are varying degrees of severity. People with early, mild symptoms may go undiagnosed for years. Below are several common signs that are described in greater detail on the Alzheimer’s Association website at www.alz.org:

- **Short-term memory loss**, such as forgetting recently-learned information like important dates and events. The individual may rely increasingly on reminder notes or ask his/her family to help with things previously done without assistance. As the disease progresses, there is long-term memory loss, such as forgetting names of loved ones or important past events.
- **Difficulty performing complex, familiar tasks** that involve planning and higher cognitive functions. It may take longer to finish certain tasks, such as balancing the checkbook and completing forms (e.g. income taxes), or they get done incorrectly. Nowadays, with online banking and automatic payments, it may take longer for an individual and his/her family to realize there is a problem. The individual may get lost driving to a familiar area. However, with the advent of computerized navigational aids, this symptom can go unnoticed for a while.

- **Visuospatial difficulties** that cause someone to become disoriented or lost in familiar environments.
- **New problems with language.** For instance, being unable to follow a conversation and/or frequently asking or repeating the same things.
- **Worsening judgment.** I have patients who have lost valuable assets to scams that they may not have fallen for at previous times in their lives.
- **Changes in mood and personality** and withdrawal from social activities. Untreated depression can cause “pseudodementia,” which mimics the real thing, so it is important to rule out or treat depression before dementia can be diagnosed.

If you or your loved one demonstrates any of the above signs or symptoms, please reach out to your doctor! Early diagnosis can help you and your family better plan for your future.

UCLA Health has launched an Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care Program to help patients and their families deal with the complex medical, behavioral and social needs of these conditions. Services include visits with expert dementia care managers, personalized treatment plans, ongoing follow-up and access to other resources, including the “Beyond Alzheimer’s” support group. For more information, visit the program website: www.dementia.uclahealth.org.

by Hong-Phuc Tran, M.D.

Dr. Hong Phuc-Tran is a board-certified geriatrician with the highly regarded UCLA Geriatrics Program in Santa Monica and Westwood. For more information, visit uclahealth.org or call (310) 319-4371.

Volunteerism – By Barbara Minkoff,

Being a volunteer is an opportunity to slow down and enjoy life. We all have something to offer our community. Each of us has the capacity to care and work to contribute to human dignity and ease human suffering. Our goals do not need to be so lofty as ending wars or eradicating hunger. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." (Lao Tzu)

As an adolescent, I collected money for various campaigns such as polio (yes it did exist in my time) and later worked as a Candy Striper at a local hospital. When I was a young parent, I was a classroom aide, cub scout leader and team mother. With my children growing older, I returned to school and learned as much about the law working as a volunteer as I did in law school.

As a newly-minted attorney, I volunteered at the Harriet Buhai Family Law Center which was wedged between a liquor store and gun shop. I worked with women of limited means who needed help for divorce and paternity cases. They taught me volumes about facing the obstacles in life head on.

Later I became a member of the Women Lawyers of Los Angeles and was the chairman of their jail project. We would go to the jail and help inmates complete paperwork as to the care of their children, belongings and other civil matters. The women's gratitude for even the smallest measure of help was a more fulfilling reward than any bonus I received as a corporate attorney.

Acting as a guardian *ad litem* for Public Counsel for foster children injured while in the dependency system sustained me through the long hours as a private attorney representing insurance carriers who were far less appreciative of my efforts, no matter how successful the outcome.

Now I am retired and I still volunteer because, like oxygen, giving back supports and nourishes me. These are just a few reasons for all of us to volunteer:

1. When you stay home you get too many telemarketing calls.
2. Soap operas all sound alike.

3. You might need help yourself someday.
4. It's hard to win a game of solitaire.
5. You need a break from your spouse and/or family.
6. If you don't go out each day, you get old.
7. The car needs a workout.
8. Your parents would be proud of you.

Volunteerism is the core of our society. The social and political movements, health, education, housing, environmental programs as well as those in the public and private sectors only thrive because of volunteers. It is the focus of our relationships and has the potential to strengthen the wellbeing of individuals and their communities. If compassion, empathy, solidarity and respect for others are deeply ingrained in us, our world will be a better place.

This is an excerpt from the amazing speech Barbara delivered to the Council on Aging at its June 1, 2015 meeting. The video of Barbara giving the speech is available at <http://www.toaks.org/cityvideos.asp> and click on Council on Aging.

Health Tips from Arthritis Today

Prevent Falls: To improve your balance and lower your risk of falling, try toe raises. Hold on to a chair for support, then rise up on the balls of your feet. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds and then lower your heels to the floor. Once you work up to three sets a day of ten each day, do one foot at a time and let go of the chair.

Reach for the Stars: To strengthen your reach, start with 6 repetitions of this exercise and work up to 8 as you get stronger:

Sit or stand with arms at sides, palms facing forward and elbows straight.

Raise arms out to sides and up, crossing wrists above your head.

Lower arms slowly to sides, palms inward and cross wrists in front of you. Do three sets of ten each day.

To help you reduce pain and ease joint stiffness, trim your weight and boost your strength through a regular exercise program.

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Editor

Harry Norkin

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY Dial 9-1-1

Police (non emergency) 805-654-9511

Crime Prevention 805-494-8526

Neighborhood Watch 805-494-8267

Crime Stoppers (Anonymous) 805-494-8255

City of T. O. Graffiti hot line 805-449-2488

City of T. O. information 805-449-2290

Animal Control 818-991-0071

Goebel Senior Adult Center 805-381-2744

Bus Information (VCYC) 800-438-1112

Dial-A-Ride 805-375-5467

Thousand Oaks Bus 805-375-5473

Grant Brimhall Library 805-449-2660

Conejo Valley Village Update

The Village concept for seniors, a national movement designed to provide support to seniors to help them stay in their homes and stay active in their communities – or age in place – as long as possible, is alive in our community. Conejo Valley Village was formed as a nonprofit in November 2015 and is now under development with launch set for April 2017.

Over 340 communities across the US have villages either in operation or in development. Conejo Valley Village will be the first in Ventura County, serving as a model to our local communities looking for ways to support the needs of our seniors.

It is well known that most seniors desire to stay in their homes as they age, but maintaining a household becomes more difficult as they get older and they may tend to become more isolated, especially if they are no longer driving or have lost a spouse. To address these issues, Conejo Valley Village's mission is to provide supportive services and social activities to help older adult members stay in their homes and enjoy our community.

In a time when seniors need to come together to help themselves and others, the founders of Conejo Valley Village believe the village model will be a very cost-effective way to help seniors age in place in the Conejo Valley communities they love. Those who join the village will have an opportunity to shape the character of the village since services and activities will be based on input from members and will reflect their interests.

For more information about membership or volunteering opportunities, visit www.conejovalleyvillage.org, or call Nancy Healey at (805) 231-5147. Interested in helping the team with pre-launch activities such as operations, marketing or fundraising, please call Dinah Frishling at (805) 231-9712.

Attend an upcoming community meeting to learn more about Conejo Valley Village. Please check the website at www.conejovalleyvillage.org for scheduling and registering for meetings. Also on our website, please note information on upcoming gatherings for those who want to be members and/or volunteers; scheduled in Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, and Westlake Village in the October-November timeframe.

**One of the hardest
decisions you'll
ever face in life is
choosing whether
to walk away or
try harder.**