

VILLAGES of San Mateo County

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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September/October

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT:

**ENHANCING
FLAVOR AND
ELEVATING
YOUR HEALTH:
OREGANO**



One could easily argue that this little plant needs to be in your kitchen AND medicine cabinet, as it is a delicious healing agent.

There are over 40 varieties of oregano, but *Origanum vulgare* is the one most linked to

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Contact Villages of San Mateo County at: 650-260-4569 or info@villagesofsmc.org
Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village are two local villages under the umbrella
501(c)(3) nonprofit called Villages of San Mateo County

health benefits. You can use the fresh and dried leaves in your cooking for medicinal benefits as well as flavor. Sure, you can keep a little dried oregano in your spice cabinet as a no-calorie pizza topper, but add some of the amazingly verdant fresh stuff to your shopping cart, too. Choose bright green leaves and a firm stem and use the leaves liberally (the stems are inedible). Two teaspoons have no calories and six percent of your daily fiber needs.

Fresh oregano is a great antibacterial agent. It has phytonutrients (thymol and carvacrol), which fight infections such as staph. It's loaded with antioxidants that help prevent cell damage, and it's an excellent source of fiber, vitamin K, manganese, iron, vitamin E, tryptophan and calcium. How'd you pack so much nutrition in those tiny, zero-calorie leaves? *"You go, Oregano!"*

Dried oregano has healthful benefits that mirror fresh, but needs to be handled carefully. Store in a clean, dry, glass container and replace it after six months. Oregano, like most spices, loses its flavor and benefits over time. So embrace your oregano in a timely manner for maximum flavor and health benefits.

PLANTING

- Oregano loves the sun; ensure that your placement has full sun for strong flavor.
- Oregano can easily be started from seeds, though you can also use cuttings from an established plant.
- Plant the seeds/cuttings in well-drained soil any time after the last spring frost. The soil should be around 70°F. For thin plants, plant 8-10 inches apart. The plants will grow 1-2 feet tall and spread about 18 inches.
- Oregano doesn't need quite as much water as most herbs, water when the soil feels dry to the touch.
- Harvest the leaves as you need them. The most flavor-filled leaves are found right before the flowers bloom.

You can freeze the leaves to use during the winter. Oregano leaves store well and are easily dried. Keep them in an airtight container once dried.

So don't wait. Check your pantry, seek out new recipes and challenge yourself to use Oregano more creatively and more frequently, starting today.

COFFEE CONNECTION

Open to all Sequoia Village and Mid Peninsula Village members, volunteers and guests. Light refreshments will be provided. Save the date!



DATE: Wednesday, September 18, 2019
TIME: 10:00 AM—11:30 AM
LOCATION: Veteran’s Memorial Senior Center, Sunset Room
1455 Madison Avenue, Redwood City

PRESENTER: Buffy Martin Tarbox serves as the Communications Manager for the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA. Buffy will share the details of their new Continuing Care Program as well as highlights on the Healing Power of Pets. Join us for this informative and interactive social gathering.



Buffy Martin Tarbox

RSVP: Please contact the Villages of San Mateo County office ***no later than September 11*** via emailing us at info@villagesofsmc.org or by calling us at 650-260-4569 if you wish to attend. Please indicate if you are bringing a guest and/or you need a ride.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #1:

MEET STEPHANIE MEYER

Stephanie has been a member of Villages of San Mateo County since 2015. She has a wide range of interests, talents and hobbies which she shares liberally. Stephanie is the ultimate example of one who embraces change and loves to try something new. Her motto is: “Don’t be afraid to try something new; your body and brain are meant to be flexible”. Stephanie stays on the move and credits her first *Matter of Balance* class as the pivotal point that motivated her to identify a wide range of regular aerobic activities that would be fun.

Stephanie not only walks everywhere she can every day (which allows her to stay more connected to her neighbors) but plays tennis twice weekly, participates in two dance classes and is a weekly volunteer instructor for the *Strength and Flexibility* class at the Adult Community Center as well (wow). She describes her class as “a movement symphony that creates a fabulous feeling and makes my heart happy”.



As a retired librarian she is an avid reader and also an international traveler. Stephanie researches recipes and spices to help make veggies more exciting. Since heart disease runs in her family, when Stephanie’s brother had a quadruple bi-pass she was motivated to move to a plant-based diet and has never looked back.

Stephanie’s volunteer commitment also includes the *Healing Touch Program*. *Healing Touch* is a relaxing, nurturing, heart-centered energy therapy that uses gentle, intentional touch that assists in balancing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Stephanie’s decision to become a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner Apprentice was motivated by the medical challenges faced by another close family member. *Healing*

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Touch served as a very personal and direct way for Stephanie to comfort and support family and others undergoing cancer treatment. The result was a win-win: positive results for the patient and for Stephanie. She remains staunchly committed to her weekly contribution to the *Healing Touch Program*.

Stephanie is yet another quiet treasure among our Village family, who speaks softly and leaves positive energy as she goes about feeding her curiosity and looking to do something meaningful.

~ article contributed by Linda Burroughs, VSMC Executive Director

PENINSULA HUMANE SOCIETY/SPCA CONTINUING CARE PROGRAM

To your pet, you are their family

Family first—the most important lesson we are taught in our lives. This is never more important than when it comes to our four-legged family members. Our pets rely on us for their every need: food, water, shelter, care, security and most importantly, love! What happens if you are no longer around to care for them? The uncomfortable truth is that many of our pets have the potential to outlive us. It's crucial to make arrangements ahead of time for your animals, and our Continuing Care Program can help you make these plans.



Lila—Peninsula Humane Society

Our Continuing Care Program assists you in designing a plan for your pets to ensure their well-being after you are gone. Making these crucial plans for your pets can save them from pain, suffering and confusion during an already difficult time. Planning will also help reduce stress for yourself, your friends and your family. We help with all the details to set your mind at ease and make the transition for your animals a smooth and easy process.

Enrollment in our program is simple. There are no fees associated with joining—all we ask is that you make at least one yearly donation of any amount to our shelter animals. For more information, contact Lisa Van Buskirk at 650-340-7022 or LVanbuskirk@PHS-SPCA.org.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT #2: WHOOPZY!

In 1950, after high school, I immediately got a job as a PBX operator at the University of Oregon. Early in my sophomore year a friend with movie star dreams persuaded me to join her on a trip to Hollywood. Landing a job as PBX operator at CBS studios was exciting and eventful. Mingling with famous and not yet famous people on the phone and on breaks was an adventure.

Sometimes I'd forget my new surroundings and answer the call with, "Good morning, University of Oregon." Most forgave and moved on, but one didn't. I heard a loud voice saying, "My goodness, where are you honey?" I apologized and sent Lucille Ball on to her request, after a brief laughing conversation. **WHOOPZY!**



Donna Fields

One day, on a break, I ran in through the "out" swinging doors, knocking Eve Arden off balance. Apologizing, I helped her up. **WHOOPZY!**

Once I dated a magician and agreed to be his assistant in a USO show at a distant air force base. We boarded a C47 which had been a parachute plane in WWII. Entertainers sat on both sides, with trunks and equipment down the middle. Someone on the opposite side offered me a cigarette. I leaned over a trunk to accept when suddenly we hit an air pocket. My back hit the ceiling and my tummy hit the trunk! I was way out of breath, so the pilot brought me up to the cockpit. When I recovered he asked if I would like to fly the plane. "Yes!" So I took the controls and he said, "Just watch the wings on the panel." It was scary and exciting to be "driving" through the clouds. Then I looked down to my left and said, "Wow, look at all those swimming pools!" He said, "Look at the wings!" **TILT! WHOOPZY!**

About a year later I was working at the Sunset-Clark branch of Bank of America. Many movie stars had accounts there. One day after waiting on a customer I gave him the receipt and said, "Thank you Mr. Colman." When filing the deposit...oh my shock! He was Ronald Reagan. Sometime later the branch was invited to an event. I sat on a couch watching VIPS, when Ronald Reagan passed by. He turned around and came over to me asking, "Do you remember me? I'm Mr. Colman." I asked him why he hadn't corrected me. "Because you put me in such great company!" We both had a good laugh, but I was so embarrassed. **WHOOPZY!**

~ article by Donna Fields, member Sequoia Village

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DOES GETTING OLDER MEAN LESS STRESS?

A recently released Gallup Global Emotions poll suggests that as people age, they tend to experience less overall stress in their lives.

The poll asked respondents from over 140 countries questions about positive and negative

experiences they had yesterday (a single day in 2018). One subset of answers reveals particularly thought-provoking information about which age group of Americans is most stressed, worried or angry. The immediate answers may or may not surprise you, but the way they fit into an entire body of research on happiness in the course of peoples' lifetimes almost certainly will.

Gallup results and corroborating research suggests age makes people less stressed, worried and angry. Similar results have been confirmed by researchers like Arthur A. Stone, professor of psychology, economics and public policy at the University of Southern California and the director of the USC Center for Self-Report Science. Stone co-wrote a paper on stress and age in late 2017, based on research conducted over a five-year period. It included data from more than 1.5 million American respondents. Jonathan Rauch, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and author of the book, *The Happiness Curve*, cites research asking respondents how satisfied they were with their lives on a scale where 1 is the least life satisfaction and 10 is the best. The result: a U-shaped curve of happiness over a person's lifetime (highest at age 20, bottoming out in the 40s to 50s and rising afterwards into the 80s and beyond) persists even after adjustment for income, gender, education, employment, marital status and health. "Your age has a clear relationship with how happy you are," Rauch says.



Credit: Adobe Stock

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VILLAGES OF SAN MATEO COUNTY DONORS

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- *Bristol-Meyer Squibb*
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- *Mid-Peninsula Vineyard Christian Church*
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- *Peninsula Health Care District*
- *Peter & Paula Uccelli Foundation*
- *Redwood City Parks and Recreation*
- *San Mateo Rotary*
- *Sequoia Healthcare District*
- *Touchpoint Foundation*
- *Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Carlos*
- *Wells Fargo*
- *West Valley Federated Women's Club*

(Age and Stress: continued from page 7)

The happiness curve has been validated widely. The question is, why is it true? First, he says, “We readjust our expectations about how happy we’ll be. Second, “we change our values as we age.” Rauch refers to research in this area by Stanford University’s Laura Carstensen, whose “selectivity” theory suggests that as time horizons shrink, people become increasingly selective about how, and with whom, they spend their time.

The third factor contributing to increasing happiness after age 50 is our brains. “It has been documented that our brains change as we age. Our brains are helping us be happier,” Rauch says. One possibility is that older adults become more adept at coping with stressful changes. Another possibility may be an increase in wisdom, which Dr Dilip Jeste, another researcher Rauch cites, defines as “a complex human trait with several specific components: social decision making, emotional regulation, prosocial behaviors, self-reflection, acceptance of uncertainty, decisiveness and spirituality.” There’s some evidence, say Jeste and others, that the potential for wisdom is at least partly neurobiologically based. In other words, it’s hard-wired into all of us. Additional studies show that people can cultivate and enhance their own wisdom by increasing their empathy, compassion, emotional regulation and spirituality through group and individual therapy.

Jeste says research also indicates that retirees can very “positively influence the mental health and well-being of younger people,” and at the same time improve their own physical and mental health, through intergenerational activities...like volunteering.

*Excerpt from an article by [Donna Pols Trump](#), June 13, 2019: Donna Pols Trump writes for the online platforms [Next Avenue](#) and [Build With Rise](#). She also writes fiction; her short stories have been published in *Ploughshares*, *MidAmerican Review*, and the *New York Public Library subway collection*.*