

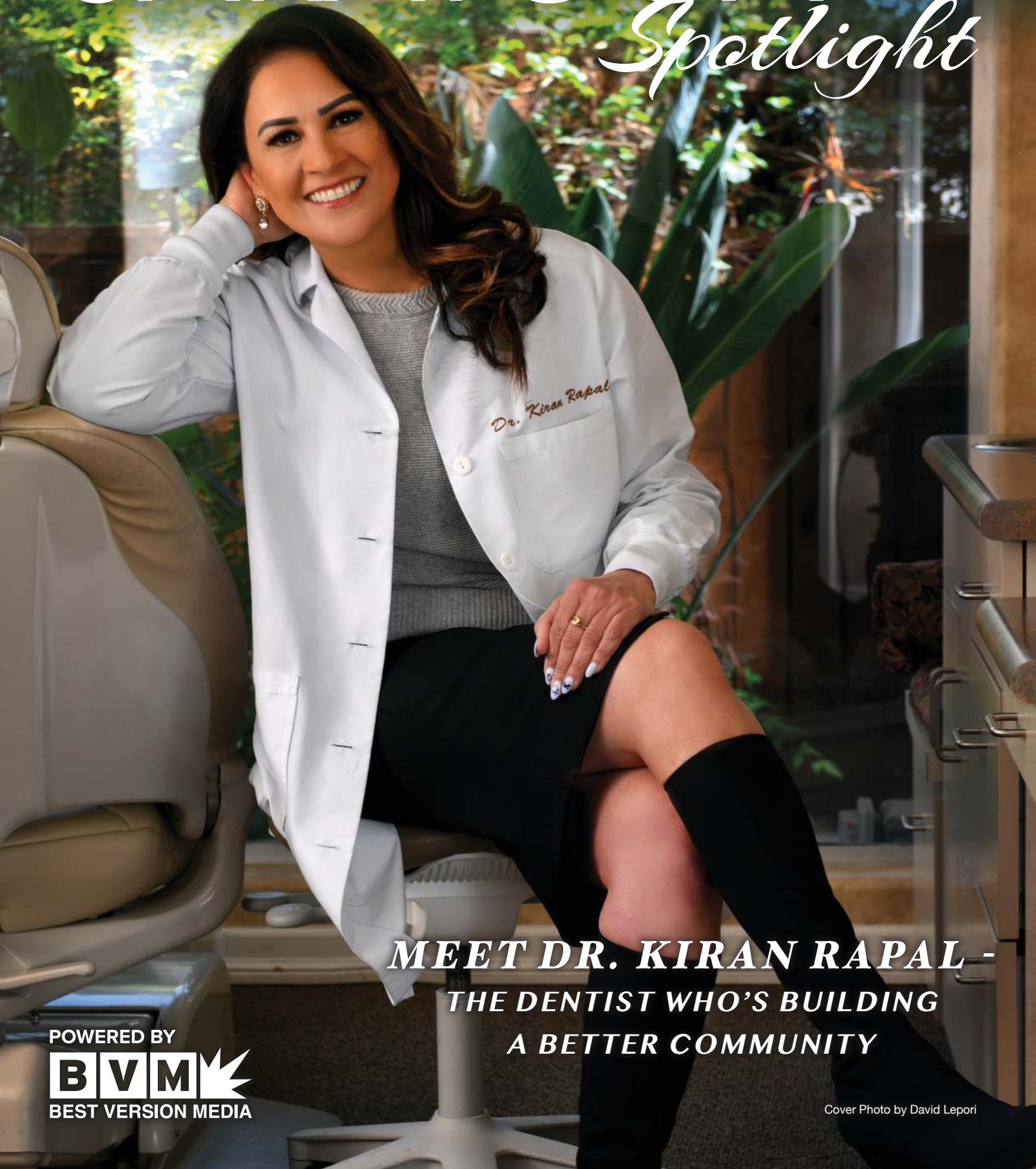
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MAY 2025

SARATOGA

Spotlight



**MEET DR. KIRAN RAPAL -
THE DENTIST WHO'S BUILDING
A BETTER COMMUNITY**

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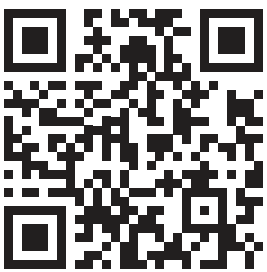


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Spotlight

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Content Due:	Edition Month:
December 8	January
January 8	February
February 8	March
March 8	April
April 8	May
May 8	June
June 8	July
July 8	August
August 8	September
September 8	October
October 8	November
November 8	December

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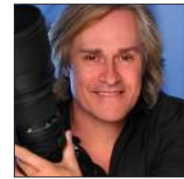
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MEET DR. KIRAN RAPAL - A COMPREHENSIVE BIOGRAPHY

By Stephen Guruwaiya | Photos by David Lepori

MMeet Dr. Kiran Rapal, a dedicated dentist in our community of Saratoga. She has been restoring smiles for over 25 years at her thriving dental practice in Saratoga. For her, dentistry transcends a profession; it's an art. She believes every smile holds beauty and a unique expression of the individual. She emphasizes the vital role of teeth health in overall well-being. "Mediocrity is not my style", says Kiran. I am passionate about the Art and Heart of Dentistry. "At my office, we cater to your individual needs", states Dr. Rapal. This profession is ever-evolving with technology and materials so much that "missing teeth" are a thing of the past.

She has two grown up boys, Shawn and Jamie, who attended Saint Francis High and Bellarmine respectively. A proud mother

of soccer boys, aged 23 and 22 now, Dr. Rapal has spent many weekends at high school and club soccer fields, cheering on the teams. Soccer not only kept her active but also fostered strong connections with fellow soccer parents. "I believe that any kind of sports instill confidence and perseverance for our children and young adults and helps them be resilient through life circumstances", she states enthusiastically.

Community engagement is another passion for Dr. Rapal. She notes the changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, but now loves seeing families come out again, enjoying evenings filled with crowds in downtown Los Gatos, Saratoga, and socializing in bustling local restaurants. With a commitment to fostering

connections and encouraging social activities, Dr. Rapal believes in the power of community engagement to bring people together. She actively seeks out leadership roles that allow her to contribute positively to the local landscape, demonstrating her passion for collaboration and community spirit. She recently joined the Board of Directors for the Saratoga Chamber and hopes to create opportunities for Saratoga residents to reconnect, share experiences, and build lasting relationships, strengthening the fabric of the community she has served for so many years. Dr. Rapal is also a passionate advocate for animal rescue, having welcomed her seventh rescued dog into her family, she notes her boys are very dedicated to this vision. She encourages others to visit the Humane Society instead of purchasing pets from breeders, believing that adopting is a noble cause. Dr. Rapal argues that every day, countless dogs and cats are euthanized. Giving a loving, safe home to a rescue pet is one of the highest acts of kindness. In return, she believes they offer the most abundant and unconditional love.

Additionally, Dr. Rapal has a big heart for veterans. She strongly believes in providing more resources for veterans regarding housing, mental health, healthcare, and other pressing issues. Recognizing the sacrifices they make for our freedom; she feels a deep respect for their service and commitment. She will be leading the “Wreaths Across America” organization this year. Last year, as a participant, she managed to raise over 300 wreaths for the veterans resting at Madronia Cemetery in Saratoga.

As an immigrant, Dr. Rapal values the American dream and the freedoms it represents. She graduated from San Jose State University and earned her dental degree from the renowned Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco. Throughout her career, she has been committed to personal and professional growth, constantly seeking new ways to elevate her practice and provide the utmost dental care to our patients. She thrives on her role as a dental caregiver and continuously strives to enhance the lives of her patients, ensuring they feel valued and cared for in her beautiful Saratoga office.

In 2016, Dr. Rapal completed her MA in Spiritual Psychology from the University of Santa Monica. “To the world, you may be just one person, but to one person, you may be the world.” This quote by Josephine Billings beautifully captures the essence of our connections. “I am excited to share that I am launching my coaching business, an endeavor born from my journey in spiritual psychology. Since completing the program, I have collaborated with various coaches and mentors to deepen my understanding and enrich my skills. We deal with much stress over the issues that weigh on our hearts and block us from realizing our true potential and the Light we are meant to be”.

Her coaching practice is not anchored in any specific religion or philosophy. Instead, it draws inspiration from the wisdom of diverse thinkers and the pearls of knowledge that she has gathered over the years. She states, “While I will continue practicing dentistry, which I am passionate about, my heart also yearns to serve in this new capacity”.

Dr. Rapal truly embodies the spirit of compassion, community, and commitment in both her professional and personal life.



ELDER LAW: BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR— PROBLEMS WITH NAMING CO-TRUSTEES

By Lisa Bryant

The foundation for any elder law planning, including legal strategies for long-term care nursing home planning, is a living trust. A living trust is a legal document that serves you during your lifetime and at your death. When you create a living trust, you are typically the trustee (the person in charge of the trust) and the settlor (the creator of the trust). When you pass away your back-up agent (successor trustee) will step up to administer your estate. In addition, if you become unable to manage your assets due to health reasons, you can voluntarily resign or be removed as trustee by a doctor's note.

Often, parents look to their adult children to serve as their successor trustees. When parents have more than one child, sometimes they feel like they need to name all their children to act together as co-trustees. They are worried about hurt feelings, or they truly believe that they are making it easier for their children by having them act together.

Before determining whether having multiple children serve as co-trustees together, you should consider that there are simply some practical administration issues. For example, many trusts require that the co-trustees must act together, meaning that for dealing with paperwork, signing checks, and real property sales, the trustees must be in the same place at the same time. This can really slow the process down if the trustees do not live near one another, or if they do not communicate their availability to each other. Even though some trusts do include provisions that allow co-trustees to act independently of one another, it depends on whether financial institutions will honor the language (some do not or make it really difficult)—this can cause a lot of headaches for the co-trustees.

More problems can arise when your co-trustees disagree about the trust administration process. Although your children may have good relationships with each other now, stepping into the role of trustee

due to a family crisis like death or serious health problem can be emotional and stressful. When co-trustees try to work together at an already heightened level of emotion, disagreements do happen. The trust usually dictates how the co-trustees need to proceed when they disagree. Sometimes that means that they must come to a unanimous decision, and if they cannot, then a court must decide. In other instances, when there are three co-trustees, trusts will often say that a majority controls. Again, this can lead to hurt feelings and family strife.

As noted above, the proximity of where your co-trustees live to each other and to you can impact the trust administration. The co-trustee that lives locally often is burdened with much more of the day-to-day work. Not only can having a non-local co-trustee slow the process down, but it can often create resentment amongst co-trustees.

For many families, having one child serve as sole trustee is often the best solution. However, if you really believe choosing one child over another will cause a fight, you can opt to appoint an independent trustee. Specifically, a corporate trustee (e.g., a bank or financial institution), or a private professional fiduciary (an individual, licensed and bonded by the State of California).

It is important to carefully consider whether or not co-trustees are the best fit for you and your family. Please visit our website at www.BryantElderLaw.com, or call (408) 286-2122 to schedule your complimentary consultation if you would like to discuss successor trustee options.

All materials have been prepared for general information purposes only to permit you to learn more about our firm, our services and the experience of our attorneys. The information presented is not legal advice, is not to be acted on as such, and may be subject to change without notice.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE: SARATOGA HISTORY PODCAST LAUNCH

By Mayor Belal Aftab

My parents immigrated to the United States from Pakistan and purchased a home in Saratoga in the late '80s, which is when we officially moved here. From that moment on, I've felt I had multiple identities: American, Warriors Fan, Pakistani, Muslim, Saratogan, Bellarmine Bell, Cal Bear, hiking enthusiast—the list goes on. One passion that remains constant is my love for history. It teaches us who we are and reminds us that many things we consider “new” have happened before. To quote *The Onion*: “History sighs, repeats self.”

Growing up in Saratoga, I learned about American history—the founding of our nation, the removal of Native Americans, slavery, wars, social movements, and more. But what I find equally fascinating is our local history, which reflects the diverse stories and personal journeys of the people who call Saratoga home.

Saratoga's diversity is one of our greatest strengths. The community here represents people from every corner of the globe. I grew up with friends of Chinese, Indian, African American, and Pakistani descent, among others. Despite global tensions—such as those between India and Pakistan—people here form friendships and share a commitment to making Saratoga an inclusive place. That sense of unity is a testament to how communities can come together and shape a collective future.

What does this have to do with Saratoga's history? Every person who passes through our city—whether they've lived here for decades or just stopped by for a quick meal—is part of the narrative. We're all contributors, leaving footprints that shape Saratoga's identity.

In 1966, Florence Cunningham, the founder of the Saratoga Historical Foundation, wrote *The First Hundred Years of Saratoga*. Though out of print, it contains an incredible collection of stories from 1866 to 1966. These accounts aren't just relics, they reveal how we became the community we are today. They explain why certain roads are named as they are, why certain traditions endure, and what values guide the city's development.

After reading Cunningham's book, I realized these stories deserve a modern platform. Enter the Saratoga History Podcast. Hosted on Apple and Spotify, the podcast delves into our city's history from multiple angles—Saratoga's founding, notable landmarks, and the personal accounts of everyday residents who have quietly shaped our community. We've published two episodes so far and plan to release more throughout the year, each exploring a unique facet of Saratoga.

Why a podcast? It's accessible. Most of us are busy, and it's often easier to listen to a story while commuting or cooking than to read through entire books. It's

also an opportunity for newcomers, longtime residents, and even curious visitors to learn about Saratoga's past in a fun, and engaging way. Along the way, we hope to spark new conversations and foster a deeper sense of belonging.

Ultimately, I hope you'll tune in, learn something new about where we live, and maybe be inspired to share your own memories or perspectives. After all, history isn't just about the past—it's about how we choose to shape our future. By understanding how we arrived here, we're better equipped to decide where we go next.

If you have ideas or personal experiences you'd like to share, or if there's a specific topic you'd like us to cover, please reach out to podcast@saratogahistory.com. This podcast isn't just for history buffs—it's for everyone who values community, diversity, and the stories that unite us.

Whether you're tuning in from across the world or from just down the street, I invite you to join me on this journey through time. Our collective histories, backgrounds, and perspectives intersect in Saratoga, forming a tapestry we can all be proud of—and continue to enrich for generations to come.

Stay curious, stay engaged, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the *Saratoga History Podcast*.



SARATOGA FOOTHILL CLUB

By Judy Goldman



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THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jennifer Taylor-Mendoza, Ph.D. President, West Valley College

Dear Neighbor,

At West Valley College (WVC), we are passionate about providing a truly accessible learning environment for everyone, from students to community partners.

This commitment translates into tangible on-campus solutions: from agile scooters that enhance mobility in our bustling

hallways to cutting-edge apps empowering our visually impaired students. As a leading voice for disability justice, we foster vital conversations that shape West Valley College culture and inform our broader community. Early in the spring semester, for instance, we held our inaugural WVC Assistive Technology Fair. Kicking off the free event was a keynote address by disability rights lawyer and inclusivity advocate Haben Girma, the first Deafblind graduate of Harvard Law School.

These activities and resources represent a handful of what West Valley College offers daily in cultivating an environment where all belong. As the community's campus, we also embrace opportunities to join hands with partners in further serving and promoting inclusivity.

Coming up on April 25, we are thrilled to welcome to the beautiful West Valley College campus the 45th Annual Kiwanis Special Games! The spirited event—organized by Kiwanis Club of Los Gatos, Saratoga and Monte Sereno—provides fun, competitive activities for some 1,000 Santa Clara County kids enrolled in their schools' Adaptive Physical Education program.

In a March column in this magazine, past Kiwanis President Nancy Pearson wrote about the Kiwanis Special Games: "The Kiwanis partnership with West Valley College and the Santa Clara County Office of Education is the true definition of 'collaboration.'"

We are honored to collaborate, as always, with esteemed community partners who live our shared values.

Please plan on joining us for the Kiwanis Special Games at West Valley College, as one of the anticipated 300 student volunteers who power the games or among the fan base of around 3,000 cheering on our young athletes.

Together, we are making a difference in all students' lives.

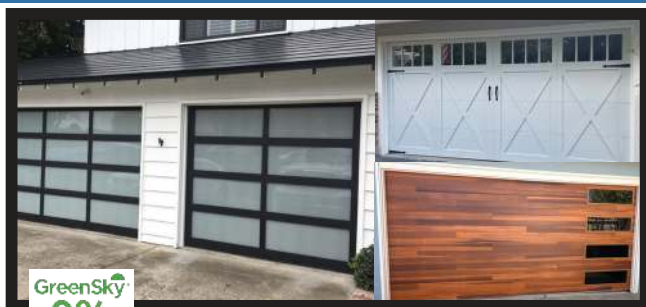
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MEDICARE AND UNCERTAIN TIMES

By Lucille Maravilla



I have been receiving many calls from Medicare clients concerned that their Medicare coverage could change, or if they are new to Medicare, wanting to know if there will be problems enrolling in Medicare. Since the start of the new year, we have been hearing about proposed changes in our health care coverage. Let's focus specifically on Medicare.

The United States has a very complicated system. Congress passes laws which determine who can receive health care and how they will be covered. Congress and the executive branch may authorize entities like Social Security and the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) to provide the framework and the regulations for enrollment, program design, rules for the kind of care that will be provided, the payment form, etc. Each state determines how insurance companies will be regulated and whether their particular state will make exceptions to some federal laws and rules. The IRS, reporting to Social Security, can report income levels that require extra Medicare costs for high income earners. The list goes on and on. I think of all these connections as an intricate web of relationships. For good or bad, it's not easy to make changes. There are unforeseen consequences when something is added or removed, in even a small part of the overall system.

We have been hearing about examples of these changes, like less staff at Social Security. That could mean longer times to process Medicare enrollments or less experienced staff providing incorrect guidance about coverage and penalties. CMS may propose privatizing Medicare. So, coverage would be provided by insurance companies instead of the government. Would the insurance companies' focus be on profit or care? Would that mean that these companies would determine who is covered and how they receive that coverage? There is an executive order that removed the cap on drug costs. It has not been implemented yet. Will something else take its place? Questioning these possibilities does not mean that things should stay the same.

This is more of a reminder of the interconnectedness of all these systems.

Until the end of the year, we probably won't know how Medicare will change. Everything is in flux right now. It's important to stay calm. An experienced Medicare agent will try to help navigate truth from fiction. We have access to industry news and our professional associations, as well as updates from insurance companies. Contact your agent if you want more information. Your questions are valid.

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MAY DAY - THE LASTING BLESSING OF OUR OWN BETTY PECK

By Anna Rainville



Knowing that the miracle of community and friendship can lift spirits is a cause to celebrate in spring.

Betty Peck, long-time resident of Saratoga, believed in the celebration of life. This lived strongly in her love for teaching kindergarten, gathering people together for quarterly Forums, weekly Salon, and seasonal festivals. Each year, she anticipated the first of May by preparing the garden, ordering strawberries, and choosing a May Queen. As a child, I danced around maypoles on the front lawn, at the former Saratoga Community Garden, and back in the Peck family home and garden.

The day before May Day, the kitchen bustled as my mother and friends sat at the round table cutting fresh strawberries. The whole house smelled delicious as dozens of shortcakes baked in the old oven and then were placed in large antique bowls and covered with white linen cloths from the family trove. Bottles of fresh heavy cream for whipping from long-beloved and now closed Mr. Peake's Claravale Dairy and quarts of vanilla ice cream waited in the refrigerator. Flats of strawberries from local farmers and markets sat on the back porch ready for slicing.

Our family was up at dawn on every May Day, dressing the round tables in the back with blue-checked tablecloths and carrying out the festive fare and urns of hot tea and coffee. Friends arrived with buckets of roses and vibrant yellow French broom from the mountains to top the maypole, a long PVC pipe with an upside-down wire canning basket



to which the foliage and yellow and green ribbons were carefully attached. We stuck the pole into an old iron structure that must have had a special use in a previous life, but now served as its sturdy base. We layered colorful cloths to make a throne at the edge of the dancing ground and set out wreaths we wove from the smilex vine.

Our garden was a magnetic destination for friends and former students who would show up year after year at the appointed 7 a.m. More than once, as cars lined the avenue in both directions, a curious policeman would stop in to see what was happening so early in the morning.

The event was a remarkable collaboration of many dear family friends and artists. Former kindergarteners - now grown - played brass fanfares from the rooftop deck to herald each year's Queen's entrance into the amphitheater, where everyone gathered under the oaks. Lee Anne Welch brought her flock of fiddle students to accompany the procession and play for the dancing. The Queen welcomed everyone, as students played the roles of dueling Spring and Winter. Then everyone followed the Queen and the fiddlers to the maypole for many rounds of weaving and

unweaving the colorful ribbons. My father, Willys Peck, held court amidst an abundance of conversations, good company, and refreshing strawberry shortcake. Many of us rushed off by 8 to our other lives, having started the day in a festive mood. May the spirit of countless May Days live on.

LOCAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC

By Lee Anne Welch

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Sidesaddle & Co

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7-9 pm 408-354-3263



A MESSAGE FROM THE SARATOGA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT

By Vicki Seelig, President | Saratoga Chamber of Commerce

Spring is here, and the Saratoga Chamber is enjoying the weather and the community. The first Saratoga Nights was an ABSOLUTE SUCCESS! There were vendors, performers, alumnae groups, and a great crowd. You could learn a beginning fencing skill, sign up for High School Reunions, get a back massage, and watch the Saratoga youth persons performing, doing robotics, and cheerleaders leading our high school teams. All through there was good music from a local band. It was a fantastic evening that if you didn't attend on April 3 you should attend on the first Thursday in May through October. Thank you for our President Elect and the community group that put so much effort into this. We appreciate you so much. If you are interested in participating in future Saratoga Nights, contact Jim Cargill at the Saratoga Chamber. 408-981-4407.

Our slate of new officers for the coming year was published. We have some new community members coming on the board. Please

support all of them, and if you would like to help us in any way by volunteering for an event, contact the chamber.

It has been a great year as President of the chamber. It was a little rough to start with, timing all the events in my life, but support from all the community and board members made it a great and easy year. I look forward to the next Board of Directors participating and bringing new ideas and events. I am always accepting any contacts for information you may need.

Vicki Seelig, President
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KIRAN RAPAL, DDS

COURAGEOUS KIDS

By Gay Crawford

A heartwarming fundraiser at Sorelle Italian Bistro in Campbell brought together friends, good food, generous hearts, and a shared commitment to fighting pediatric cancer. The sister-owned restaurant hosted a private lunch for 40 guests, raising an impressive \$12,000 in support of the American Cancer Society's Courageous Kids program and pediatric cancer research.

The Sorelle sisters Deanna, Lori and Teri, honored their mother, Fran Rude, who loved Courageous Kids. Fran had purchased Sorelle for them before losing her battle to cancer in 2016. They continue to support Courageous Kids in her memory with the fundraiser at their restaurant. Among the highlights, according to volunteer auctioneer Cody Teerlink of Compass Tiger Teerlink Team, were sports memorabilia, including a signed Stephen Curry Warriors jersey, signed baseball by Barry Bonds, and signed footballs by Brock Purdy and Fred Warner.

Julie Lin-Friss had the winning bid for the Steph Curry jersey, placing the winning bid on behalf of several supporters of another charity, Cancer CAREpoint, where the item may be on the auction list for that charity's August 24 Garden Party at Nestldown, making a ripple effect of generosity.

Campbell City Councilmember Dan Furtado publicly thanked the Sorelle sisters for their generosity, praising their donation of the meal and auction items as a beautiful example of local businesses stepping up for the community and the importance of cancer research. Clareen Dunivin, Los Gatos, thanked the girls with special aprons and gifts for their generosity. People wishing to sponsor Courageous Kids, which will be celebrating its 36th year at California's Great America on May 11, serving some 400 kids with cancer and their families from all over California. For more information, Courageouskidsday.org, or contact Pam Dunnett pdunnett@me.com or Donna Adam, dna98665@gmail.com.



Sisters Serve up Support at Sorelle Fundraiser, Raising \$12,000 for Pediatric Cancer Research By Pam Dunnett and Donna Adam



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