

PEP Talk

Building Communities... One Project at a Time

Surviving With A Song In Her Heart

by Buz Hermes, Resident Services Coordinator

If ever there was an inspirational model for turning a life of lemons into lemonade, it is Dianna Carlson, one of our newer residents at Lieb Senior Apartments. She was interviewed by Buz Hermes, one of our Resident Services Coordinators, on a recent Spring morning in her sunny apartment filled with her own original artwork.

Q: What brought you to PEP Housing and Petaluma?

A: I was living in a HUD-subsidized senior housing community in Davis where one of my sons and his family live. However, when his job situation became insecure and it looked like he might have to relocate, I decided to move closer to my other two sons and their families who live in this area. I have a chronic incurable blood disease that requires regular treatment and makes me very vulnerable to contagious illnesses so I have to limit my exposure to other people and I rely on my sons to help me with many of my needs.

Q: What has been your experience living here?

A: I love my apartment and this community! Compared to where I was living, this is so much more spacious and I am impressed with the quality of the construction and fixtures and the well-designed kitchen since I love to cook! The other residents have been very friendly and helpful and I appreciate having a manager who is so committed to maintaining a clean, safe and well-functioning complex. Having a Resident Service Coordinator who helps me get connected with paratransit, the food delivery program and other local services was an unexpected benefit. We didn't have one where I lived in Davis.

Q: What can you tell me about yourself?

A: I grew up in Chicago. Unfortunately my mother couldn't handle being a single parent, so at age six she placed me in a convent where I was the only child. The nuns were very strict and I was often lonely so I became quite shy and introverted. Because of my shyness and having been raised in a rigid environment, I wound up married to a man who tended to be restrictive. But I guess I was always had the survivor instinct in me that yearned for

me to express myself! Living in the convent, I learned to entertain myself by singing, so after divorcing my husband, I started singing in nightclubs and was eventually hired to sing with a band. They said my voice was 'clear, pure, and sultry' and at one point I was even offered a contract by Hugh Hefner to sing in his clubs! However, I turned it down because raising my three boys came first.

In 1987, after too many challenging years and unsuccessful attempts at relationships, I realized that it was time to take responsibility for my own actions and experiences. I made some major changes in my life and began reading self-help books and studying metaphysics to help me shift to a more positive life-affirming attitude. That shift has helped me cope with my illness and is probably the reason I am still alive. In fact, I continue to do a lot of research so that I can ask the right questions and make more informed decisions about my treatments.



Resident Profile: Dianna Carlson

Q: Since your illness limits your socializing, how do you spend your time?

A: I spend a lot of time on my computer, and since my medical condition requires healthy eating, I do a lot of cooking for myself. I love to knit and I always have a jigsaw puzzle going. I like to paint using a combination of watercolor and pastels, although I haven't done any since I moved. I don't know why, but I love anything Egyptian and I am looking forward to learning French with the help of my new neighbor!

Q: What advice would you give to others?

A: Life is unpredictable. Always tell those you care about that you love them... and be grateful for the love you receive!



Executive Director's Message



Mary Stompe

I am so proud to announce that PEP Housing Board member Leota Fisher has been named Petaluma's Volunteer of the Year! Leota joined PEP Housing's Board of Directors in 1991. Now in her 90s, Leota is still an active participant in Board meetings and agency events. We nominated Leota for the the Community Recognition Awards, organized by the Petaluma Chamber of Commerce, in the category of Service to Seniors. However, the selection committee was so impressed with her dedication to the community, that they named her volunteer of the year. Congratulations Leota – it's a title that's well deserved!

We're also happy to share that our other nominee, Preferred Sonoma Caterers, has won the Small Business of the Year Award. Owners Amber and Jim Balshaw have been substantial supporters of PEP Housing, as well as many other nonprofits, over the years and we're ecstatic that our nomination has given them public recognition.

A special congratulations to our newest Board member Mary Celestre and her bank, Summit State Bank, for winning the Large Business of the Year Award. We are so lucky to have you on our Board!

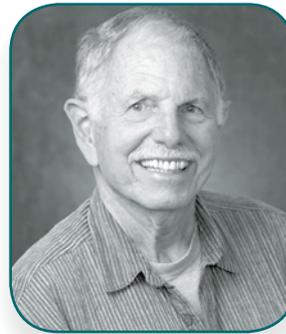
I'm also thrilled to announce that Midstate Construction Company has received the Outstanding Partners in Development Award from the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH). This is the first year that this award has been offered and we jumped at the opportunity to nominate Midstate. As a company, they are extremely dedicated to the relationship they have fostered with PEP Housing and are in this for the long run. PEP Housing is proud to be working with Midstate Construction and takes great pride in our ability to build such wonderful projects together. We are now working on our fourth affordable housing development with Midstate Construction – Toussin Senior Apartments in Kentfield, CA. Other PEP Housing developments that they served as general contractor include:

- ▲ Edith Street Apartments, Petaluma, CA – completed in 2001
- ▲ Richard S. Lieb Senior Apartment, Petaluma, CA – completed in 2004
- ▲ Casa Grande Senior Apartments, Petaluma, CA – completed in 2008

We are truly blessed as an organization to have such generous and dedicated people and businesses as our friends, supporters, and colleagues. And while I only have the opportunity to mention the few above, we are grateful to each and every one of you who cheer us on in our effort to provide seniors with the affordable housing they so deserve. ▲

What's the Buz?

by Gary "Buz" Hermes, Resident Services Coordinator



The Joy of Being Complicated!

Linda, a friend and former neighbor recently died unexpectedly. Nearly 200 people attended the celebration of her life and in sharing their experiences each speaker emphasized a particular quality that she embodied. There were the usual praises, all true.

Linda was indeed generous, witty, loving, kind, curious, creative, hospitable, and compassionate. She loved walking in nature, reading mysteries, painting, writing, watching old movies, and being mesmerized by the moon.

Linda was also a person of many contradictions, including a tendency to be exceedingly liberal in her ideals and ultra-conservative in her politics. She was passionate about her beliefs and values and, as more than a few observed, could be irritatingly stubborn, opinionated and outspoken. As a fierce advocate for the causes she believed in, she was both a great community organizer and a notorious gossip.

Much like a hummingbird gathers its nectar from a variety of flowers, Linda was a spiritual seeker who flitted from one faith to another, taking from each whatever enhanced her understanding of her life journey. She also experimented with different health regimes, healing modalities, and hair colors.

If there was one adjective that we could all agree on to describe Linda, it was that she was "complicated." Now some may look upon that description as a negative one, but I personally think it honors a person who has flushed out his or her character. We humans are complex creatures. While we may like to define ourselves by the face we show the world, the truth is that we all have many facets to our personalities. If we are not sometimes abrasive, surprising or perplexing to others, than perhaps we have not yet fulfilled our potential, not yet fully blossomed as an individual.

Although Linda was only in her 60s, she was a model elder in the traditional sense. She lived authentically and she spoke her truth. People who are complicated make interesting friends and good teachers. They give us permission to stop editing who we are for fear that we will offend or upset or confuse someone. As we have observed, age brings with it a diminishing of ego restraints. We are free to break the mold that formed us and be who we really are... which is, well, complicated! ▲

Kick Up Yer Heels for Affordable Housing!

Get out yer fancy duds because PEP Housing's annual benefit has gone country this year! Thanks to the generosity of the Hendricks family, PEP Housing's 8th annual benefit will be held at the Rockin' H Ranch. This magnificent spread is one of Petaluma's most beautiful pieces of land with a history that dates back to General Vallejo. Surrounded by rolling vineyards, you'll be treated to views of the Petaluma River, Mt. Burdell and Mt. Tamalpais.

Once you're able to drag your eyes away from the stunning view, you'll experience a shindig that's reminiscent of a barn dance, with PEP Housing's own special flare. In keeping with the "country chic" theme, the event will feature barbecue from different regions across the country. One whiff of those Memphis ribs will make your mouth water. You might have to loosen your belt for that Texas-style slow smoked beef brisket. If you're hankerin' for something on the lighter side, you'll want to sample the California barbecue featuring grilled chicken with grilled locally-grown vegetables.

What would barbecue be without local beer? Wet your whistle with a sampling of microbrew beers from Lagunitas Brewing Company, Dempsey's, and more! If you're not a beer drinker, don't you fret. It wouldn't be a PEP Housing event without a sampling of regional wines, too! And, of course, plenty of thirst-quenching iced tea and lemonade.

In between kickin' up yer heels to live country music provided by New Skye, you'll find some great deals at the silent auction – trips, shows, art, jewelry, dinners and so much more!



Of course, the best part of the evening is joining together as a community to support PEP Housing and the limited-income seniors we serve. This is the one special time of year that you can talk and laugh with old and new friends who all share a passion for helping seniors live out their retirement years in dignity and comfort.

You won't want to miss this wonderful "country chic" event!

Rockin' Country Chic

Thursday, May 13, 2010

5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Rockin' H Ranch

6614 Lakeville Highway
Petaluma

\$55 per person

Don't wait to register!
Call 707-762-2336 or
Email pep@pephousing.org

Here are just a few samples of the auction items that are rollin' in:

- ▲ Disneyland Park Hopper Tickets
- ▲ A Case of Korbel Champagne
- ▲ 4 Hour Stretch Limo Ride
- ▲ San Francisco Giants Tickets
- ▲ Two-night Stay at Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno
- ▲ VIP Pass to a Live Taping of the "Dr. Phil Show"
- ▲ American Conservatory Theatre Tickets
- ▲ Roundtrip Southwest Airlines tickets



Save up your vacation time for this year's live auction!

Our featured item is a one week stay at the "Keoniana Kai" vacation home on the north shore of Kauai. It has a full 180 degree ocean view and is just minutes from the Princeville/Hanalei area. Perched on a dramatic ocean bluff above the surf, Keoniana Kai features:

- ▲ Panoramic open ocean and white water surf views
- ▲ 3 Bedrooms, 4 Baths – plus Jacuzzi on a spacious deck
- ▲ 2,700 square feet of living area with two covered lanais
- ▲ Gourmet kitchen with Granite counters
- ▲ Close to gift & grocery shopping at Princeville Center
- ▲ Near Princeville Spa & Country Club at the Prince Golf Course

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News from the

Housing Development Department



Toussin Senior Apartments – Groundbreaking

We had a successful Groundbreaking Ceremony at the site of Toussin Senior Apartments on Monday, February 1, 2010. There were a number of attendees from PEP Housing, County of Marin, Bank of Marin, Merritt Community Capital Corporation, Marin Community Foundation, Marin Housing Authority, Midstate Construction and other individual community members. The neighbors have been very welcoming and are looking forward to our seniors joining their neighborhood. Despite the many rainy days in February, construction is progressing on schedule we look forward to meeting our goal of completion by November 2010.



Acacia Lane Progressing Well

Our Housing Development team is making progress with securing the last sources of funding needed for the Acacia Lane project in Santa Rosa. We are applying for 4% tax credits in May, which will be combined with Tax Exempt Bonds. We received our final design review approval in February, and are wrapping up various other aspects of the pre-construction process. Our goal is to break ground on this 44-unit project, our first in Santa Rosa, in early October 2010.

Wood Sorrel, Petaluma

We're very excited to announce that the firm of Tierney/Figueiredo Architects was selected as our Architect for Wood Sorrel project in Petaluma. Ten very qualified firms submitted proposals for the project, however Tierney/Figueiredo Architects clearly stood out. We are in the process of applying for

HUD Section 202 funding for this 50-unit project. The development will be a mixed-financing deal with 4% tax credits, City of Petaluma redevelopment funding and HUD Section 202 funding.

Oroville Senior Apartments – City Council Approval

In March, Oroville's City Council approved the first senior housing project to be built in their area. We submitted an application for predevelopment funding and intend to submit development funding requests in the near future. Our architect, Jonathan Hammond of Indigo Hammond & Playle Architects, LLP, has been working closely with us to secure entitlements and design an outstanding project. We are considering this development for PEP Housing's first LEED certified senior project. ▲

Welcome Ardith da Costa to PEP Housing!

We're pleased to announce the addition of Ardith da Costa to our Housing Development team. In this position, Ardith prepares all financing applications, provides pertinent information to project financiers and processes all draw requests for projects under construction. Prior to joining PEP Housing, Ardith worked in the title and escrow industry. Her real estate background provides transferable skills that have proved invaluable on the Housing Development team at PEP Housing.



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