



The challenge for our society is to find new ways to enable our seniors to remain in their own homes and help them maintain a life with dignity, independence, and self-respect. High Desert Village is an innovative approach, dedicated to making this a realistic and cost-effective option. **Village Life** is a place to share stories and resources on making it happen.

High Desert Village members enjoyed the

# After Holiday Party

held at the Phoenix Restaurant

Tuesday, January 17, 2017



*photo compliments of Ed Green*

# Meet Alice Johnson

*Submitted by Linda Melton*

Although most of us in High Desert Village are aware of Alice Johnson's decade-long work on behalf of this organization, many of us are not aware of the fascinating background of this woman, and what it took to get her "from there to here."

Alice was born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota, where she attended Catholic schools for 12 years. Though she toyed early on with the idea of a career in journalism, she ultimately decided to pursue nursing. In fact, by 9<sup>th</sup> grade, she was so sure of her future path that she was taking classes in math and Latin toward that goal.

College in Minnesota followed, where she obtained a B.S. in nursing. It was there that she met her future husband, Art. She laughingly recalls that they met in a bar where he was "passing through!" (At the time Art was in the military, stationed in Canada.)

As luck would have it, their paths would cross again. He had been transferred to Tacoma, and Alice accepted a nurse's job at the University of Washington in Seattle following graduation. After a nearly 2-year engagement, they married and moved to the Bay area. By that time, Art had been honorably discharged from the military, and was ready to pursue his own education in Criminal Justice. While he went to school and worked in the local sheriff's department, Alice stayed busy working at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, and raising their two young daughters. Makes one wonder how they had the time to make those pregnancies happen!



Following the completion of his degree at Sacramento State College, Art went to Washington, D.C., for 3 months for training to become a DEA agent. Alice stayed behind, working as an evening supervisor in a 350-bed hospital.

Art's first assignment was in San Francisco, where Alice became a full-time homemaker, and gave birth to their third child, Art, Jr.

At that point their lives were about to take a major detour that would last for years—overseas assignments. First stop: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Alice characterized it as a "big village," before oil was discovered there. Life was good, with a housekeeper and a gardener. Art's job was connected to the American embassy, and they became friends with members of this close-knit community. Unfortunately, their assignment came to an abrupt end when Art's undercover identity as a Mafioso was exposed! When asked if his job ever worried her, Alice paused and said, "No, I had to trust his good instincts."

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Following this relatively brief stateside interval, the Johnsons next found themselves in Hong Kong. Alice loved it! As a believer in reincarnation, she felt like she was “Chinese in a former life!” She and the family felt safe, and the children had a real sense of freedom, coming and going much of the time on their own. Alice stayed quite busy in this new setting, working as a substitute school nurse, starting the first and only League of Women Voters (as an overseas American voting bloc), and managing a Little League team. She and Art were also able to do some traveling in those 4 years, notably to China, and a 6-week round-the-world trip. Alice’s love of “all things Chinese” is evident in their home, where there are beautiful decorator items throughout.

After their mostly idyllic life in Asia, the Johnsons found themselves living in Los Angeles for 5 years. This was not a very good experience. Their children had a difficult time adapting to the lifestyle, especially cliques in school, and Art was gone a great deal as his undercover job required. Alice returned to part-time nursing, first as a supervisor in a small hospital, later as an intensive care nurse, and finally as a home-care hospice nurse.

But life was about to take another turn, this time to Denmark for 6 years, where Art was to be responsible for all the Scandinavian countries. For the most part, this was a good experience. Alice was president of the Embassy Wives Association, and they were able to travel extensively throughout Europe. Their daughters were now off on their own, and only Art, Jr., was left at home. However, Alice and Art suddenly found themselves with “temporary custody” (lasting for 2 years) of his two troubled teenage nieces. Accepting that level of responsibility was difficult and demanding.

Then it was time for a return to Washington, D.C. Alice enjoyed the sense of living in the seat of American democracy as she continued her avid interest in politics. It was at this point in her life that she really became committed to hospice work, which she regards as more of an art rather than strictly science. Many of her early patients were dying terrible deaths from complications of AIDS. She still believes in “death with dignity” and that hospice nursing is best served by people with “some age and life experience.”



After Art retired in 1994, he worked on their 40-foot sailboat for 2 years, after which they took a 6-month trip down the Inter-coastal Waterways to the Bahamas.

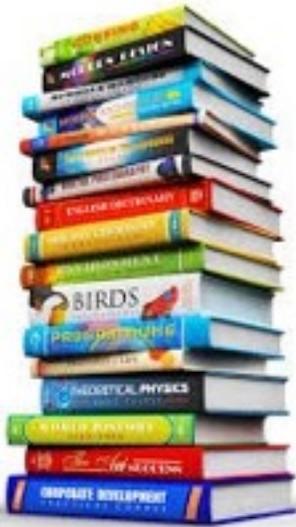
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They finally moved to a home with some acreage in Powell Butte in 1998. After several years of volunteer hospice work in Redmond, Alice ultimately traded that endeavor for helping to organize HDV, where she has subsequently served as president for the past 3 years. As she

now looks forward to stepping down from her responsibilities as board president, she sees more opportunities for travel in their RV as well as some overseas trips. Alice is also an enthusiastic duplicate bridge player and enjoys book club. Finding a bit more time now to “kick back” and relish life seems to add a new purpose in retirement, a new wrinkle in this remarkable life.

## Book Clubs



It seems to be universally accepted that activities which require thinking or strategizing are helpful in keeping dementia or Alzheimer’s at bay. These activities include things such as playing chess or bridge. They certainly also would include reading, and in particular, discussing what has been read. And so—book clubs!

Probably the biggest promoter of book clubs in recent years was Oprah Winfrey, who was responsible for selling huge numbers of books because of her enthusiastic recommendations. Interestingly, however, the concept was first brought to life in the mid-1920s with the Book Club of the Month and the Literary Guild. But these were primarily book publishers’ suggestions for individual reading enjoyment rather than for group discussion.

Nowadays, it is estimated that there are more than 5 million adults participating in book clubs. Many are women-only groups, and many include both women and men. They run the gamut from afternoon coffee and dessert gatherings to evening wine and cheese get-togethers. Some plan their books a year in advance, and some make selections month-to-month. Some concentrate on specific genres, while others include classics and today’s best sellers and everything in between.

For a number of years, I resisted joining a book club, preferring instead “to read what I wanted to read, when I wanted to read it.” But when I finally decided to give it a try, I quickly became a believer! I was introduced to books I would never have chosen on my own. And the lively and thoughtful discussions were eye-opening and mentally rewarding. It has since become one of my favorite activities.

Many bookstores and libraries are happy to help organize book clubs for obvious reasons. But if you have friends who enjoy reading, it is easy enough to start your own. I promise you won’t regret it!

*Submitted by Linda Melton*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Our January "After the Holiday Social" was thoroughly enjoyed by all the attendees. A new venue at the Phoenix was given high marks for its food, service, beverages and ambience. Many thanks to Patti Anslinger who pretty much handled the whole event once again.

The board is back to working on what we call "strategic planning for the future of HDV". Decisions are being made as to our geographical boundaries, formation of committees, policies regarding membership eligibility, a possible restriction of the numerical total of membership and other issues. As I have written previously, we will be presenting this to all of you at the General Meeting in May (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday). Prior to the meeting, you will receive an outline of what will be presented so you can participate in the discussion more fully. Please mark your calendars now so you can be part of this very important meeting.

As I mentioned at the January Social, members often complain that they are more than ready to volunteer, but never get called. Part of the new plan, is to have members more widely involved with HDV by serving on committees which will cover services and planning. All this will be made clearer the closer we get to May's meeting. The Board is excited by this new vision. It brings clarity and a way forward for our organization.

Speaking of the board, we will be having elections in June. Some of us have served since HDV's inception 10 years ago. Sometimes, when you have served that long, you lose a certain amount of enthusiasm as well as new ideas. Newer board members can put a fresh perspective on where we are going in the future. I ask you all to think about serving on the next board. We ask for a two year commitment. It would be good if people volunteered, but believe me, if no one volunteers, you may be asked, so be prepared. No special talents are required, only an acute interest in seeing HVD continue to serve our special community.

## What are SHINGLES?

I hope all of you got through the snowy weather without falling! I know a lot of home owners experienced leaks, ice dams, and other inconveniences - hope you and your home are safe and sound and that this unusual weather is behind us.

If any of you have experienced shingles, you are aware of how painful and miserable this condition can be. Shingles, known as *herpes zoster*, is caused by the same virus that results in chicken pox when you are a child. It is likely you had chicken pox at that time. Once the virus is in your body, it can lie dormant for many years. Most cases of shingles occur in people over 60, and presents when the immune system has been weakened due to illness, stress, or sometimes the effects of medication. The active virus is insidious in nature, and the only warning signs are the onset of itching, burning, and tingling. After several days, fluid-filled blisters appear along nerve pathways. The word "shingles" is derived from the Latin word for "belt"; and these belts can appear on the shoulders, back, waist, face, scalp, and occasionally the arms or hands. If a diagnosis is made early enough, there is an anti-viral drug available that can lessen the severity of the shingles.

You may be aware that there is good news! A vaccine is available called Zostavax that offers protection from shingles. Most physicians believe the vaccine is effective for up to 10 years and is given to people over 60. It has no significant side effects. If you have not had this vaccine, please consider getting it. Shingles is serious business and sometimes results in long term neurological pain.

## HAPPY SPRING AND ST. PATRICK'S DAY!

### SNICKETS by Midge

... submitted by Midge Michael

#### TRUTHS FOR MATURE ADULTS

I think a part of a best friend's job should be to immediately clear your computer history if you die.

Nothing sucks more than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong.

There is a great need for a sarcasm font.

Map Quest really needs to start their directions on #5.  
I'm pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood!

# MEMBER SERVICES

## Daily Living and Home Services

- Meal preparation when ill, injured or recovering from a surgery
- Errands
- Wait in home for a service or delivery
- Pet care or dog walking
- Basic housekeeping on a temporary basis
- Taking out trash and recycling
- Mail collection when out of town

## Transportation

- Airport
- Shopping. Will walk member to door and carry in packages
- Hair and or nail salon appointments
- Doctor and Dental appointments
- HDV events

## Handyman/Light Home Maintenance

- Simple house repairs
- Changing lightbulbs and smoke alarm batteries

- Heavy Lifting
- Referral to reliable vendors when problem needs more expertise assistance

## Medical Advice and Advocacy

- Accompany to Doctor's office at member's request
- Calls and visits to discuss and advise members about medical conditions by RN
- Assist with obtaining durable medical equipment

## Electronics and Computers

- Simple solutions for computers, DVD, phones and clocks

## Gardening Advice and Help

- Water outdoor and indoor plants during brief absences
- Gardening advice
- Mow lawn and weed when member incapacitated temporarily

*The following services were provided to our members by our members in January and February*

<b>HANDYMAN.....8</b>	<b>NURSING.....3</b>
<b>TRANSPORT.....14</b>	<b>GARBAGE.....1</b>
<b>HOUSEKEEPING.....1</b>	<b>INCLEMENT WEATHER</b>
<b>HOUSE CHECK.....9</b>	<b>CHECK .....1</b>

**Call 24/7/364..... 541-419-9912**

High Desert Village Newsletter is published for the  
members by the members.

Please share your areas of interests with your fellow members.

Submit photos and articles  
to Linda Melton (editor) or Nora Miller (publisher)  
for newsletter consideration!

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**Village Life** is a monthly publication of High Desert Village, a non-profit organization where friends help friends stay in their homes longer.

**Interested in becoming a Villager?**

Call us at 541-419-9912.

Check out our web site at <http://highdesertvillage.com>

Email us at [desertvillage@gmail.com](mailto:desertvillage@gmail.com)

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