

# Letter from Home

The British Home in California, Ltd.

## Residents' Birthday Party



November 1, 2008

Volume 4, Issue 4



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### Forthcoming Events:

- November 20<sup>th</sup>  
**Tree Trimming**
- December 21st  
**Residents Christmas Party**
- April 25<sup>th</sup> 2009  
**Home AGM and Luncheon**

On October 23rd, the Residents were entertained for their "official" annual birthday dinner at the Beckham Grill, Pasadena, for the 3rd successive year. The event was well organized by Jill Southworth; Rhona Jorgensen prepared the lovely table decorations. The food was excellent. Fourteen Residents attended, including Nell Parks, who is now into her 100th year! Two Resi-

dents, Prudence Smith and Ed Hart, did actually have birthdays this week. The Executive Board and Staff got together to sing Happy

Birthday to them all. Honoured guests included Berne and Pat Miller, Keith McDonald, Elissa Stein, and Bob Wilson.



# Edith Caponigro - Director

Edith was born in Bowden, Cheshire, but lived most of her early life in Manchester, England, before emigrating to the United States. She attended Chorlton Central High School and received her degree from Manchester University.



Since age eight, Edith had been writing to her pen-friend in Baltimore, Maryland. So when, at 21, she decided to come to the US for a lengthy stay and with plans to work and travel the country, she was thrilled when her pen-friend's family encouraged her to stay with them and use their home as her base. She left England on December 8, 1964, sailing on the Queen Mary to New York and then by Greyhound bus to Baltimore, Maryland. After just a couple of weeks in Baltimore she sought employment and was hired as a secretary for the President of a chemical company; a few days later she met one of the Research Chemists, Dennis. The rest is now history!

In 1966 Dennis and Edith were

married at Villanova University chapel (the university where Dennis had graduated); they lived on both the east and west coasts before settling in Pleasanton in 1972. Edith and her husband were blessed with two sons, Derek (born in Bryn Mawr, PA) and Craig (born in Fremont, California), and now also have five wonderful grandchildren. In August, they happily celebrated 42 years of marriage.

Edith has owned and operated her own administrative business service in Pleasanton since 1975 and works closely with many local businesses. For the past 20 years she has also acted as Recording Secretary for the City of Pleasanton, and in the past held several positions on the Boards of the Castlewood Homeowners Association and Pleasanton's Ballistic United Soccer Club.

As a Charter member of the DBE John McLaren Chapter that was formed in 1973 in Pleasanton, California, Edith served several times as the chapter's Regent, Recording Secretary and Treasurer, and was actively involved with all of the Chapter's fundraising activities. In November 2003, she became a Charter mem-

ber of the Roses of Britain Chapter, served as its Regent for four years, and is currently the chapter Treasurer. She has also been a dedicated and active DBE Northern California State Board member for over 16 years, is currently serving her third term as State President, and has served as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Presidents in prior years. Edith has served as Chairperson of the DBE Northern California Nominating Committee, Scottish Games Tea Room Committee, and the 2006 DBE National Convention Committee. She is a dedicated member of DBE and "the Cause", and has the best interests of the Western District's British Home in Sierra Madre, California close at heart.

Edith is most appreciative of the wonderful friendships and blessings that have come into her life because of her membership in DBE, and wants one and all to know there are not enough ways or words to thank you all and let you know how much you all mean to her.



# Fred Leoniak - Resident

Fred was born in Old Forge, PA. His parents were both Polish. Fred's father was from Warsaw and when he was 30 years old moved to America where he met his future wife. She was living in a rooming house with three other ladies; Fred's father escorted them all to the movies. He eventually chose Fred's mother to be his wife. Fred's father was a foreman in a factory in Jersey before moving to Old Forge. He could not read or write and had trouble signing his name but he was adventurous and let nothing hold him back.

Fred had 3 brothers and 3 sisters. He graduated from Old Forge High School in 1940 at the age of sixteen. Whilst Fred was still attending school, he helped a friend on a paper delivery round.

Fred was rejected from the services because he had a hernia. After having it repaired he found out that he would have to wait for 3 years before he could join so he decided he

would attend Merchant Marine Academy in San Mateo, CA. After basic training, he was shipped out to Australia. During his eight and half years in the service he travelled to several countries. Fred says it was a good life. During his working life Fred



was also employed by a Textile company and as a Dental Laboratory Technician.

Fred married and had two children, Cheryl who lives in Sierra Madre and is a clinical dietician, and Fred Leoniak II who lives in State College, PA, where he runs

his own CPA firm.

When asked what kind of hobbies he enjoyed Fred replied that he is lazy! However, he does enjoy watching sport on TV, particularly baseball and football. He also likes watching movies; his favourites are Westerns. Fred spends quite some time reading; he particularly takes pleasure in the Penn State newspaper. He enthusiastically participates in the exercise classes run by Connie at the Home.

Fred's wife died in 1983 but when they were together they enjoyed vacationing on the Jersey shore. In more recent times he has vacationed in Fort Myers.

Fred likes Opera and Country music - particularly Jonnie Cash. He enjoys all food, especially when he doesn't have to cook it himself; he says he can't boil water without burning it!!

Although Fred has only lived at The British Home for 5 months he has settled in very quickly. When asked, Fred will tell you he is very happy with us.

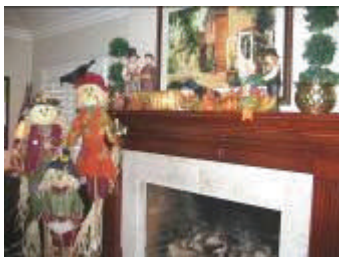
## More Birthday Party Pictures



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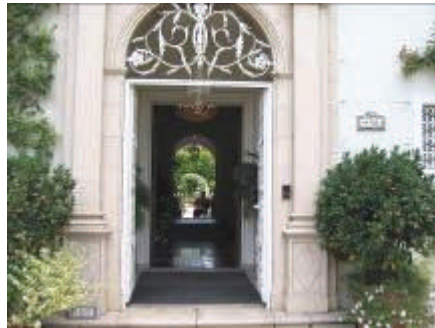
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## Resident Activities

During the Summer months the Residents have enjoyed a wide variety of social activities. On June 7th, they participated in the Home's June Faire. On the 14th, the Scottish Knights Templar made their annual visit and entertained residents with a Scottish piper, Highland and Irish dancing.



On June 16<sup>th</sup> the Residents were graciously entertained by the Consul-General, Bob Peirce, and his wife, Sharon, at their home for luncheon and then music provided by Julia Cunningham on the harp.

There was a lovely piano recital by Betty Oka and her students at the British Home on June 21st.

The Residents had their Fourth of

July Barbecue on the patio. Also in July, the DBE State Board of California, Inc. hosted their Annual Doggy Day afternoon. The Residents sat under the shade of a tree watching the dogs (and their handlers!) perform and ate strawberries with ice cream.

During this busy time, Residents also attended the 2008 Summer Concert Series, beginning in July and continuing through August. This is held on the west lawn of the City Hall in Arcadia. Connie transported the Residents and took them specially prepared dinners to enjoy whilst listening to the music.

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, a late Summer barbecue was held on the Home patio. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Ed Simpson entertained the Residents on the piano, playing a great variety of music from the 30's 40's and 50's, including tunes from the Broadway Musicals.

In October, Connie introduced a "World Events" program, with the Residents enthusiastically participating in current affairs discussions.

