

Letter from Home

The British Home in California, Ltd.

Residents' Christmas Party

The Residents' Christmas Party was held on Sunday, December 21, 2008. A wonderful roast beef dinner was cooked by our excellent kitchen staff headed by Arthur. Everyone worked so well together to make the evening very enjoy-



able. Our special guests included the Consul - General's wife, Sharon Harroun Peirce. This year Sharon had a very



busy schedule and was only able to visit for Happy Hour but the Residents always enjoy her visits. Leo and Karen Lewis also attended - Leo, as usual, making good use of the great photo opportunities. After dinner Santa Claus arrived and presented each Resident with a gift. Home-made mince pies and port were served during this time.

Dr. White presented a basket of locally made preserves that the Residents always appreciate. MC for the evening was Carl O'Callaghan who provided the music for singing and dancing. The Residents enjoyed this and a number of the them found the energy to dance the night away.



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Margaret Harris - Director

Margaret was born in Berkshire, England, and raised in southeast Essex, where her father's family had its roots. She attended Grammar School and then went to work at the Bank of England. At the age of 20 she married Barry, (who refers to himself as



“Margaret’s slave in residence” - he does all of her e-mailing). Barry’s father’s family also has deep roots in southeast Essex; after they were married they discovered they are probably third cousins! In 1965 the contract companies were offering enormous sums of money to engineers prepared to leave home and country for 6 months, so Barry did. Six weeks later Margaret and their two children, Mark and Pippa (Philippa) joined him in Seattle where he was working at the Boeing Plant. Both of them regarded this as a great adventure, after all it was only for 6 months. In that time, they were determined to see as much of the country as possible so when Barry came home on Friday night they packed the kids in the car and drove; how-

ever, a three day weekend is necessary to get to Yellowstone from Seattle. A year later they bought their first house and stayed there for 33 years! While the children were in school, Margaret did not work outside the home for money. Instead she was a den mother, soccer coach, softball scorekeeper, and Girl Scout badge coach, amongst other things. She joined the DBE after the children had left school. When her son was in college Margaret decided to follow her dream and

went to university herself, eventually graduating summa cum laude with a major in History. What she really wanted to study was Horticulture but to do that she would have had to leave home so settled for her second love. About this time she joined DBE and within a year was chapter regent. At the same time she joined her local Rose society and after 5 years as a member of the American Rose Society became a consulting rosarian, getting into Horticulture via the back door. Since being Regent that first time she has served on her chapter board continuously in one or other capacity. She has served on the Washington State Board 14 years, 6 years as Recording Secretary,

4 years as 1st Vice-President and is in her second term as State President. Being part of the DBE has been enormously rewarding. Not only has she made many lifelong friends, (men think they invented networking, Huh!) by attending National Conventions she has seen a great deal more of the U.S. than she would normally have done. She is proud of the fact that she persuaded her daughter to become a member of her own chapter; Pippa is now Windermere Chapter’s web master. Margaret is especially pleased to have been able to visit the Home and meet the residents in her capacity as a Director. Although she still feels the need to visit England at least every other year, both her



mother and mother-in-law still live there, she is perfectly happy in the U.S. with her son and three grandchildren very close and her daughter and 5 grand-dogs even closer.

Zofia Proniewicz - Resident

Zofia's parents were both from Warsaw but met in Cleveland, Ohio. Zofia's father met her mother's sister first but that relationship didn't work out so he married Zofia's mother. Zofia's recollection is that her father invented 'things'. He didn't really invent them but he worked at perfecting other people's inventions.

Zofia had three brothers, two were older and one younger than her.

Zofia lived most of her early years in Cleveland where she went to school and graduated from high school. In 1936 Zofia won a scholarship through the American Scouting organization, to visit Poland. To win this she had to write and speak Polish. Her father borrowed \$500 so Zofia could have an evening gown. He was so proud of her.

After Zofia graduated from High School she became a practitioner nurse. Eventually

she met and married her husband who was also Polish and they had one son, Walter, who lives in Pasadena. Her husband worked for the Government as a



linguist. He spoke 5 languages. During her marriage Zofia was asked if she would travel to Brazil with a man who was in the diplomatic service so that she could act as his interpreter to interpret English into Polish. She tells us this was a great experience. At the time her son was only 10 years old and he gave Zofia his pocket money - \$20 - so that she could buy some gem stones whilst she was in Brazil.

Later the family moved to Indiana. Zofia's husband had a bad

accident and wasn't able to work so Zofia needed to find a job. She was offered employment taking care of apartments for seniors in Pasadena. Walter took care of the yard work.

Zofia was very interested in gem stones and got a job in a gem store, eventually becoming store manager. This is where she learned the art of lapidary - a cutter polisher or engraver of precious stones. Whilst Zofia was working she was able to put her son through gemology school.

Zofia told me if you have a dream follow it.

Zofia enjoys living at The Home and she entertains herself making pin cushions. She is also an avid reader. Her favorite meal of the day is breakfast. This starts the day off right.



More Christmas Party Pictures



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In-Gathering

The annual In-Gathering tea was held on Sunday November 2nd. It became a lovely sunny afternoon after rain in the morning and the 120 people who attended were able to enjoy their tea out in the gardens. The female Residents acted as hostesses, pouring cups of tea for their guests. Included in

the guest list were Leo and Karen Lewis who publish a column in the Union Jack Newspaper. After their first visit to The Home in 2007, they have become regular visitors. They really enjoy spending time with the Residents on these social occasions, and the Residents enjoy them very much!

Christmas Tree Trimming

The Tree Trimming Party was held on November 20th. The Residents always look forward to this event heralding the start of their annual seasonal events. The evening commenced with Happy Hour. After a lovely supper the tree was decorated with ornaments and artificial

snow. The gardens looked particularly attractive after dark, with the multi-coloured lights, numerous reindeer and Santa Claus on his sleigh. Arturo and Connie did a great job, working hard the week beforehand to get everything prepared.

