

January 2021
Winter Issue



The Guild Gab



Linda Peterson
President 2019 - 2021

Special Interest Articles:

- Meet Our Members 2
- Holiday Lights Tour 3
- Pandemic Fundraising 4



Eden Garcia-Balis, LMFT
Chief Executive Officer
AMCS

Highlights:

- Calendar 5
- Membership 5



The Prez Sez

As we start a new year, we hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. Our hearts go out to anyone who has lost loved ones or has been afflicted with the virus.

We were very disappointed when the pandemic crushed our plans for our annual **Holiday Home Tour**. For the past 37 years, the Holiday Home Tour had been a special community event, bringing friends and neighbors together to launch the holiday season. We all missed it this year and we especially missed seeing so many of you.

As our sole mission is to raise funds for AMCS, we needed to find new ways to do so. We sold tacos at **Taco Tuesday Takeout** in August and played a virtual **Tricky Trivia** game

Eden's Epistle

At **Airport Marina Counseling Service**, we have seen many parents looking for strategies for how to help their children cope during the COVID-19 pandemic. The best strategies come down to improved communication and recognition that many of us are in the same boat, experiencing the same stressors and frustrations.

Here are some coping strategies specifically for children:

Answer questions about the pandemic simply & honestly.

Talk with children about any

in September. In November, Robin Adams hosted a Zoom **'Pumpkin . . . beyond pie'** demonstration, showing us four different ways of cooking with pumpkin. In December, **Joy 'the Baker' Wilson** demonstrated baking spiced mulled wine bars for us. In addition, we launched a new **Holiday Lights Tour** and Contest in December. There was a big need for something fun yet safe to do in the pandemic, as shown by the fact nearly 850 tickets were sold for the tour of 23 houses and one church. Due to the high public demand, the self-driving outdoor tour was continued even after the contest ended.

We will continue to create virtual fundraising activities as long as it is necessary for us

frightening news they hear. It is OK to say people are getting sick, but remind them that following safety precautions will help your family stay healthy.

Recognize your child's feelings. Calmly say, for example, "I can see that you are upset because you can't have a sleepover with your friends right now." Guiding questions can help older children and teens work through issues. ("I know it is disappointing not to be able to do some of the things you did before the pandemic. What are some other ways you can have fun with your friends?")

to do so. On February 11, AMCS Board member and wine distributor **Bill Priestly** will lead us in a **virtual wine and chocolate tasting**, just in time for Valentine's Day. Watch for details about that event on our website and in your emails.

By the way, if you are not currently receiving our emails, please let us know to add you to our mailing list by sending your email address to info@westchestermhg.org. In addition, your membership is now up for its 2021 renewal, so please send in your membership dues in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for continuing to support the Guild and AMCS.

Happy New Year!

Keep in touch with loved ones. Children may also worry about a grandparent or relative of friend who is living alone. When safe, physically distanced visits aren't possible, video chats can help ease their anxiety.

Model how to manage feelings. Talk through how you are managing your own feelings. ("I am worried about Grandma since I can't go visit her. I will put a reminder on my phone to call her in the morning and the afternoon until it is safe to see her.")

Article concludes on the back page. (Pg. 6)



Meet a Member – Cozette Vergari

Cozette Vergari was born and raised in Westchester and attended USC for both undergrad and graduate studies.

Her first career centered around dance and musical theatre. She raised her sons in the house she grew up in, which was on the very first Home Tour. Her current home has been on the Home Tour twice. Cozette eventually chose to attend law school, with a focus on the issues of domestic violence and sex abuse crimes. Cozette has 25 years

experience in Rotary International and has focused on the issue of human trafficking. She served as District Governor in the L.A. Region. Through this platform, she also serves on the worldwide board for the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery. Additionally, Cozette presently serves as the President of the newly formed Westchester/Playa

Historical Society. She is married to CPA Richard Moon. Together they share 4 children and 4 grandchildren. Cozette enjoys traveling and has visited 47 of our 50 states. Thank you, Cozette, for helping to preserve the history of Westchester/Playa del Rey and for all your generous support to the WMHG's Home Tours.

Meet a Member – Suzanne Simmons



Suzanne Simmons was born in Akron, Ohio where her family has lived since 1917. Her family owned a noted catering company. She attended Ohio University in Athens, receiving her BA in history-government.

Suzanne joined Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) sorority in 1974 and is Kamala Harris' sorority sister. She continued her education at Antioch College receiving a MAT at their Washington, D.C. site. She taught in Akron and Washington, D.C. prior to returning to Ohio working in nonprofit agencies. She moved to L.A. in 1974 because her brother, Lee, the first Black steward on Air Force One, was making California his home. Suzanne had lunch on Air Force One, the plane that brought President Nixon to California and traveled in

President Ford's motorcade when he spoke at the Bonaventure Hotel. When Suzanne was teaching, she took two elementary classes to meet President Ford. She trained board members with the Kellogg Foundation program at United Way and has served on various boards including the Los Angeles Committee on Assaults Against Women (now Peace Over Violence) and recently on the AMCS Board for 15 years. Suzanne enjoys working in communities and supporting various charities. She has served as a Home Coordinator on the Home

Tours, helped get volunteers to be docents and procured annual donations from Union Bank for AMCS. Suzanne owns Purr-Fect Growlings, a pet accessory company, often donating pet baskets for WMHG and AMCS fundraisers. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, traveling, cooking, playing Scrabble and football and basketball games. Thank you, Suzanne, for your years of volunteer service and generous support to WMHG and AMCS. Your friendly personality and smile always brings joy wherever you go.

Meet a Member – Pam Crockett



Pam Crockett was born in Cleveland, Ohio and at the age of 9, moved to Southern California.

Pam attended public schools. She obtained an AA degree in a two-year college and took classes in Art and Art History at UCLA which led to her first full-time job in a commercial design firm. Pam worked at S&S construction-Shapell Industries as Assistant Designer of model home development. Eventually, Pam and a partner created an independent model home design company that catered

to many Southern California and Arizona home builders. Patty Crockett introduced Pam to WMHG and suggested she volunteer. Candy Yip asked Pam to volunteer as her afternoon Home Coordinator during the 2015 Holiday Home Tour. She was hooked! Pam presently serves at Corresponding Secretary for the WMHG Board. Pam and her husband Hugh are retired and enjoy the

company of their 2 daughters, Patty and Kerri and especially 2 grandchildren, Jacob and Kylie. In her spare time, Pam enjoys keeping up with design trends through reading and seminars. She has also gone through 12 boxes of photographs and converted the photos to thumb drives. Thank you, Pam, for all your contributions to the Guild Board and your generous support to WMHG and AMCS.



First Ever Holiday Lights Tour Brightens Neighborhood

When the pandemic destroyed our plans for our annual **Holiday Home Tour**, one of our good friends and supporters, **Stephanie Davis of the Home Town News**, suggested that we host an outdoor holiday decorating contest. It sounded like a great way to bring some fun to the community, raise some money for AMCS, and help some of the struggling businesses in our community by awarding prizes we purchased from them.

We were delighted when one church and **23 homeowners in Westchester and Playa del Rey** wanted to have their decorations on the Tour. Although the contest ended after a week, the tour was continued for a second week due to the high public demand for tickets. **We raised more than \$13,000** with the Tour. 849 tickets were sold for the Tour and more than 160 people made additional donations to support it.

Stephanie Davis, Jane St. John and Nancy Edwards were our judges, and tour participants also voted for their favorite decorations.

Our first place award, the \$200 Cantalini's gift card, was awarded to the Milligan family, at 5752 West 76th Street in Westchester. In addition, our judges decided to award another first place prize, the **'Best Block Teamwork'** prize, to the Ronay family at 8035 Nardian Way, who also received a \$200 Cantalini's gift card, which was donated by Jane St. John.

Second prize, a \$100 arrangement from Flowers by Felicia, was awarded to the Vanderjagt family at 5912 78th Street, in Westchester. The Koenig family at 8030 Dunfield Avenue, won third place, for a \$50 Book Jewel gift card.

We had **two honorable mentions**, who each received \$30 worth of tokens donated by the Westchester Farmers' Market. They were the Gleckman family at 7538 W. 81st Street, in Playa del Rey, and the Reed family at 8032 Rayford Drive, in Westchester.

We hope to get back on schedule with our **38th Holiday Home Tour on November 7, 2021**, but we may also continue hosting the Holiday Lights Tour next December. If you have any suggestions or comments, would like to help plan our Tours, or know of any homeowners who would like to participate in either Tour next year, please let us know at info@westchestermhg.org.

Thank you to the homeowners, judges, tour visitors and all other donors and participants in our new adventure!



Donor List Home Tour Replacement Fund

\$1,500. and above

Nancy Edwards
Jane St. John
Stephanie Younger

\$500. and above

Heather and Kevin Ivey
Linda Peterson and Gene White
Kyra and Robert Waldron

\$100. and above

Jackie Bornstein
Pam and Rod Brown
Julie Case
Pam and Hugh Crockett
Rachel Davenport
Ylla and Mario De Leon
Judy and Daniel Dews
Patricia Fair
Shauna Gerold
Janie Guthrie and Mark Skjervem
Debra Karrenbrock
Linda King
Christine Knight and Jack Nelson
Maria and Jon Koenig
Dianne Landis
Cathy McConville
Laura and Don McGaughey
Janet McMaster
Kenneth Messer
Frances Moreno
Marlene Obrietan
Dana and Rick Perius
Julie Porter
Bill Priestly
William Russell
Alison and Jarred Saba
William Schnicke
Joanne Seruto
Marsha Wietecha
James Workman
Candy and Jeffrey Yip



Fundraising Pandemic Style

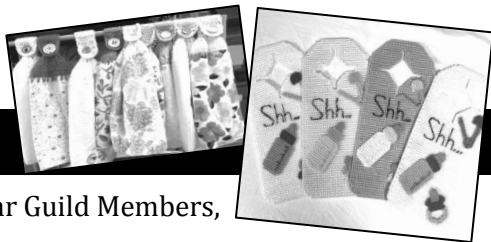
Shifting Gears To FUNdraise

We of the Guild did not let the COVID-19 pandemic slow us down in our continuing fundraising for AMCS. Our Board members immediately started thinking outside the box to create **FUNdraisers** during a pandemic.

In July, we hosted **Taco Tuesday Takeout**. With more than 170 delicious taco meals served, everyone seemed to appreciate the ease of curbside pickup at the home of **Guild Board Member Sandy Luboviski** in Westchester. We are planning another takeout event for the late spring.

After we learned about Zoom, we hosted our first virtual fundraising event with **Tricky Trivia** night in September. From the comfort of their own homes, players answered multiple-choice questions about general knowledge and the history of Playa del Rey and Westchester. We all had fun, even if we stumped the players with a few questions.

Congratulations to the winners: **First place, Geoff Maleman, second place, John Theuer and third place, Candy Yip and Pat Hedge**. We expect the other players want a rematch – stay tuned!



Dear Guild Members,

Thank you for supporting the Guild Crafters during this past very odd and difficult year. Thank you also to the Crafters for all their work. When I was asked, “Do you have towels with hearts?” I called **Petra Castellanos** to the rescue. When someone asked, “Do you have door hangers for babies?” **Laurette Bibeau** stepped up to make some. When we needed 25 face masks with cute fabrics, **Linda Peterson and Robin Adams** stepped in with me and in a few days, they were all ready. Thank you all!

This was a year of “we will try,” “sure we can fix this.” and “let’s do it.” We have learned new patterns and have been able to find fabric with dogs, cats, flowers, sports and wine themes. I never expected to have the bench outside my front door filled with **handmade items** for someone stopping by to peruse for face covers or something cute for a gift.

In November, we hosted a Zoom **cooking demonstration, Pumpkin... Beyond Pie** by our Guild Board Member **Robin Adams**, who once was a recipe innovator for Libby's Pumpkin. Her demonstration started with teaching us how to make a yummy pumpkin pie martini. Then, as we all sipped our martinis, Robin headed to her kitchen to demonstrate her secrets for using pumpkin when making bread, chili, and chutney. Robin was a wonderful teacher, with lots of tips for cooking, baking, and gift-giving, and everyone seemed to enjoy learning to innovate with pumpkin.

In December, we hosted a Zoom **baking demonstration by Joy Wilson, the renowned blogger and cookbook author known as Joy the Baker**, and niece of Guild Board Member Judy Dews. From her kitchen in New Orleans, Joy demonstrated her techniques for making delicious spiced mulled wine bars. A charming instructor, Joy provided guidance and answered questions from audience members, many of whom were baking along with her.

The best part was that we had fun with these events at the same time raising more than **\$6400 to support good mental health in our community!** Thanks to all of those who participated, made donations, or volunteered.

GUILD CRAFTERS Continue Creating In Quarantine

In the midst of it all, as we have faced new challenges and found new solutions, it still has been a busy and interesting year for me. In fact, it has been helpful for me.

So thank you all again. It appears this will continue being our normal for some time. If you need towels, face covers, microwave caddies, crocheted bottle holders, or fabric shopping bags, send me a message and I might be able to find it or find someone to create something for you. dabackman@yahoo.com I wish you all the best for the new year.

Stay safe,
Annika Backman

Editor's note: Largely due to Annika's efforts, the Guild Crafters have sold more than \$1000 worth of items since March, despite not having a boutique of any kind. We very much appreciate what they do for the Guild and AMCS.



Membership 2021



What a year!

Our board has invested time and have been brainstorming with new ideas, new challenges and collaborations for fundraising. We have been fortunate in pioneering new Zoom events that have been successful.

Raising funds this year just doesn't compare to the past, especially to our very successful **Holiday Home Tour**. Fundraising has been quite the challenge. That is why we **NEED** you to renew your membership and make every effort to encourage your neighbors and friends and family to join also.

AMCS therapists are still servicing clients online. They continue training therapists under these very difficult circumstances. But, we are here to support them!

Our MEMBERSHIP dollars make a difference!

A membership envelope is included in this Guild Gab. Our membership term is from January 2021 to December 31, 2021. **CAN WE COUNT ON YOU?**

Thank you for your support through the years. If you have any questions about the WMHG membership or know someone who might want to join our group, please contact me at sjlubo@aol.com or call 310-400-4207.

Sandy Luboviski, V.P. Membership



Donor List Home Tour Replacement Fund

\$35. and above

- Maria Bains
- Diane Barretti
- James Barry
- Shelley Calde
- Corinne Cox
- Jordi Daley
- Mary Gluck
- Patty Hedge
- Jennifer Hooper
- Maureen Jay
- Lori Ann Jemelian-Hobbs
- Joyce and Eugene Koehler
- Julie and Gary Leidolf
- Marva Lewis
- Jeanette McAdoo
- Janet Minium
- Milo Mito
- Ann and John Perkins
- John Ramsey
- Janet Scaglione
- Suzanne Simmons
- Heather and Edson Smith
- Marilyn Smith
- G. Soroldoni-Gobeloff
- Mary Ann and Wayne Stokes
- J. Kevin Swain
- Tracy Thrower
- Gwendolyn Vuchsas
- Merri Walles
- Ursula and Hans Weber
- Sheila and Stan Weinberg
- Tracy Young



Taco Tuesday Takeout



VIRTUAL EVENT • 3 WINES • GOURMET JOHN KELLY CHOCOLATES • LIVE AUCTION 4 GIFT BASKETS



Join us for a pre-Valentine's Day
Wine & Chocolate Pairing
Led by Certified Sommelier Bill Priestly

Thursday, February 11, 2021
6:45pm via Zoom
Registration link on our website
www.westchestermhg.org

CALENDAR

Check www.westchestermhg.org for news and updates



Westchester
Mental Health Guild

c/o Airport Marina
Counseling Service
7891 La Tijera Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90045

* * *

Westchester
Mental Health Guild
and Airport Marina
Counseling Service



Visit our website
www.westchestermhg.org

Contact Us
info@westchestermhg.org

Tribute Cards

Remember to purchase
Tribute Cards to honor family
and friends. **Tribute Forms** are
available on our website.

Accolades in 2020

**Airport Marina Counseling
Service** was awarded 1st place
for **Best Mental Health Service**
in the Argonaut 'Best of the
Westside' issue.
(October 22, 2020)

Welcome New Members of 2021

Lynn Gross
Matthew and Hannah Schaler

BELIEVE
you can
and you're
halfway
there.

-Theodore Roosevelt-

Eden's Epistle *continued from front pg.*

Tell your child before you leave the house for
work or essential errands. In a calm and
reassuring voice, tell them where you are
going, how long you will be gone, when you will
return, and that you are taking steps to stay
safe.

Look forward. Tell them that scientists are
working hard to figure out how to help people
who get sick, how to prevent it, and that things
will get better.

Offer extra hugs and say "I love you" more
often.

If you or someone you love needs to talk or
wants more information about how to deal
with COVID-19 impacts on mental health,
please call **AMCS at (310) 670-1410** to make
an initial appointment.

Wine & Chocolate Pairing

February 11, 2021 at 6:45pm
via Zoom

Information and registration link
on our website.

Westchester Mental Health Guild
c/o AMCS
7891 La Tijera Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90045

