

January 2024
Winter Issue



The Guild Gab



Janie Guthrie
President 2024-2026

Special Interest Articles:

- Meet Our Members 2
- Holiday Lights Tour 3
- Annual Meeting 4



Eden Garcia-Balis, LMFT
Chief Executive Officer
AMCS

Highlights:

- Membership 4
- Crafters 5
- Calendar 5



The Prez Sez

If you are anything like me, the new year is a wonderful time to reflect on the successes of the past year and look forward to what is to come. You have contributed to our success this past year with your generous contributions, allowing us to present approximately \$50,000 to AMCS. Throughout 2023, you have helped raise funds through your donations and participation in our FUNdraisers. Some of these include our popular Taco Tuesday Takeout, a holiday baking demonstration, and our 4th Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest. A special thank you to all the sponsors and the participating homeowners. We are so blessed to have such dedicated members and supporters, who care deeply about our mission to advocate and financially support AMCS.

I would like to convey our appreciation for the outgoing members of the Board's Executive Committee. Myra Kriwanek, Robin Adams, Ylla DeLeon, Candy Yip, Linda Peterson, and Mary Gluck. Your dedication and time have allowed the Guild to accomplish their goals. And a warm welcome to the incoming Executive Committee members, Sue Henderson, Bill Morgan, Ylla DeLeon, Heather Ivey, and Linda Peterson. It will be an honor to serve with you all.

This year has the Board investigating opportunities for the betterment and advancement of the Guild, so we can grow stronger and better achieve our goals efficiently and effectively. We will do our best to make you proud of our organization and its association with AMCS. We will keep you updated as we

commence this journey.

The Annual Membership/Supporter Meeting & Luncheon on January 24 kicks off our 2024 calendar of events. That is followed by a Restaurant Fundraiser at Tony P's on January 28 to February 1, where Tony P's will contribute 20% of your purchase to WMHG. Please look for the required coupon in the newsletter. We also have exciting news with a new FUNdraiser event for the Guild - Casino Night on March 23. Please watch for our emails with details on all the upcoming events we have planned for 2024.

In this celebratory time of the new year, I look back upon 2023 with gratitude for our board members, supporters and friends and how we came together to make a difference.

Happy New Year!

Eden's Epistle

As we embark on a new year, it is essential to approach goal-setting with a realistic mindset. Begin by acknowledging that change takes time, and setting attainable goals increases the likelihood of your success. Instead of overwhelming yourself with a laundry list of resolutions, prioritize a few meaningful objectives that align with your values and aspirations.

Start by breaking down larger goals into smaller, manageable steps. This not only makes the journey more manageable, but also provides

a sense of accomplishment along the way. Establish a timeline for achieving each milestone and remember to allow for flexibility and life's unexpected challenges that you know will pop up. Create a support system by sharing your goals with friends, family, or even on social media. Having someone to share the journey will not only foster accountability but also provides emotional support during inevitable setbacks. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small, and be kind to yourself when you face obstacles.

Throughout the year, be sure to incorporate self-care practices into your routine, cultivate mindfulness, prioritize adequate sleep, and engage in activities that bring you joy. Remember, the journey towards self-improvement is a marathon, not a sprint. By setting realistic goals, breaking them into manageable steps, building a support network, and prioritizing self-care, you enhance the likelihood of turning those resolutions into real lifestyle changes that stick around for the long haul.



Meet a Member – Candace (Candy) Blankenship

Candy Blankenship is a Westchester native. Her mother was private secretary to realtor and Westchester developer, Fritz Burns. Her parents were the first couple to use the GI bill to purchase their first home on Stewart Ave. for \$8500 in 1943. She received her AA degree at Santa Monica College and was enrolled at UCLA for pre-law when her father passed away in 1977 where she immediately took over her mother’s business of 10 years, Delian Music. She grew the teacher roster from 5-25 teachers who taught most every instrument, grew student

enrollment from 50-350 students, greatly increased school rentals and added many franchised music brands which all added to the success of Delian Music. After 48 years of music retail, rental and education, Candy closed the business and donated all the inventory and fixtures to local schools and retired in 2019. She has served on the Board of Directors Chamber in Culver City and Inglewood specifically on the Business and Education committees. She presently continues as a faith based bereavement minister at Visitation Church and gives

many grief workshops and counsel. Her favorite mantra is “How can you best memorialize/celebrate your beloved? By living YOUR best life fully engaged!” Candy has never forgotten the help she received from AMCS when she lost her brother, Randy. She gratefully returns the support to WMHG and AMCS. In her spare time, she is an avid traveler and loves to cruise on the Cunard line. Candy loves afternoon tea, anything Jane Austen and Art Deco. Candy, thank you, for all your generous support to WMHG & AMCS.



Meet a Member – Evelyn Taplin

Evelyn Taplin was born in London, England and came to the USA when she was 15 years old. She has owned retail stores for 45 years! It all began when she worked for a high end ladies clothing boutique in Chicago. She moved on to NYC, got engaged and went to work at Bergdorf Goodman. She eventually moved to LA and lived in Playa del Rey with her 2 sons and husband. In 1978, Evelyn purchased her first store in Fisherman’s Village in Marina del Rey. She went on to have a total of 5 stores for 20 years in the Village. Evelyn continues

with just one store left in the Marina Marketplace called Petals n Wax. The store has been voted through the Argonaut ‘best gift store’ on the Westside of LA for the past 11 years and she just received a prestigious award of recognition from Traci Park and the City of Los Angeles. She considers herself lucky to have been able to do what she *did not consider work* for 45 years and participate in the community meeting people whom have shopped in her stores over the years. Johnny Herzberg introduced Evelyn to the

WMHG. She is presently on the Board and has generously supported our fundraisers by helping out on Taco Tuesday and giving gifts of lanterns from her store to the participants of our Annual Holiday Lights Tour and Contest. A favorite pastime is going to the block concerts on 81st St. conducted by Dwight Kennedy where she meets new people and they dance the night away. She also loves taking walks in Playa del Rey to enjoy the ocean views. Evelyn, thank you for all your generous support and bringing new ideas to the Guild.



Meet a Member – Dianne Landis

Dianne Landis was born in Long Beach, California and her family moved to LA in the 1950s. She attended Hamilton High where she met Michael Landis, her future husband. Dianne went to USC and graduated with a BA degree. Michael and Dianne were married in 1965. Michael went to UCLA and received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from USC. Dianne worked in the retail industry for many years starting at Jan’s Jewelers, Broadway Dept. Stores in

Human Resources and working at the family business. Emerson Pharmacy became the neighborhood pharmacy for 28 years. Dianne and Michael have 2 sons, Rod and Ryan, and 4 grandchildren. Dianne was very active at her children’s schools. She was PTA President at Cowan Avenue School and one of the founders of Westside Neighborhood School. She has been on the Guild board for many years and helped on many fundraisers. Her mother, Arline Wolf, was a longtime

Guild member. Several immediate family members suffered from mental health issues and Dianne felt it was important to volunteer at the WMHG and give support and raise funds for AMCS. Dianne enjoys spending time with family and friends. She loves art, museums, decorating, gardening, investments, movies, beaches, ocean views and especially enjoys traveling. Dianne, thank you for your years of volunteer service and generous support of the WMHG & AMCS.

Record Set in Holiday Lights Tour & Contest

A record number of brightly decorated homes participated in our **4th Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest**, which occurred December 9-26. 28 houses, all in Westchester and Playa del Rey, were included in the Tour & Contest.

Tour-goers chose the home of the Doherty family at 8807 Airplane Avenue as the **fan favorite** this year. The **first runner-up** was the Johnstone family home at 8031 Nardian Avenue, and the **second runner-up** was the Aceytuno home at 7923 Vicksburg Avenue. Although prior contest winners were included in the Tour, they did not participate in the Contest.

An added attraction in the Tour this year was a **'VIP Experience,'** with a tour bus taking 18 guests to see the homes on two separate evenings, with a guide, refreshments and a stop at the home of the **2021 fan favorite**, where the tour-goers enjoyed Christmas carolers, hot chocolate and a description of the effort taken to decorate the home. Tickets for the VIP Experience sold out almost immediately.

The Holiday Lights Tour & Contest was sponsored by VIP Experience Sponsor Jane St. John of Re/Max Realty; Gold Sponsors the Book Jewel, Stephanie Younger of Compass Realty, and Playa Venice Sunrise Rotary; and Silver Sponsors Westside Neighborhood School and the *Home Town News*.

A FEW OTHER HOMES ON THE TOUR...



2023 FAN FAVORITE



2023 FIRST RUNNER-UP



2023 SECOND RUNNER-UP



Holiday Lights Tour voted ***FAVORITE*** Best Charity Nonprofit Event in the HomeTown News 2023 Readers' Poll

2024 Annual Membership/Support Luncheon Meeting



New Year's has come and gone, and now we're well into January – off to a running start for all of our activities for 2024.

Up first in 2024 is our **Annual Membership Meeting on January 24, 2024 at Covenant Presbyterian Church**. We have a wonderful meeting planned and we will kick off our membership/support drive – our first fundraiser of the year.

Your membership is a fundamental part of supporting **Airport Marina Counseling Service** as they work to provide affordable mental health care and train mental health professionals. For **62 years** the **Westchester Mental Health Guild** has been one of their primary funders.

We need your help. It's easy to show your wonderful support by joining the WMHG. Use the attached envelope to send us a check, or scan the QR code if you would like to show your support via Paypal, credit card, Venmo or Zelle. Our **Jewel Supporter** level is only \$35, or you can be a **Diamond Supporter** (\$60) or a **Double Diamond Supporter** for \$120! Please help us make 2024 a successful year.

We strive to plan successful FUNdraising events throughout the year, but your membership support at this time gives us a wonderful head start. We hope to see you and your friends at our Annual Membership Meeting on January 24th. For additional information, go to westchestermhg.org.



Are You Ready?



Captain Rico Gross from the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) will be the featured speaker in emergency preparedness at the Westchester Mental Health Guild's Annual Membership Meeting, to be held **Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at 11 a.m.** at the Covenant Presbyterian Church, 6323 West 80th Street in Westchester.

The Guild invites you to a **complimentary lunch, catered by Cantalini's**, provided to members and guests. To make a reservation, contact info@westchestermhg.org **by January 22**. The meeting will also include a **raffle** and a sale of **handcrafted items**. So please join us to receive important information that will help you in case of a disaster, get to know other Guild members and learn more about the Westchester Mental Health Guild serving the Airport Marina Counseling Service.

Rico A. Gross is a Disaster Preparedness Officer (DPO) with 22 years of dedicated service in the Los Angeles City Fire Department. He oversees the **LAFD CERT Program** and serves as the department's liaison Emergency Manager to the City's Emergency Operations Center, collaborating seamlessly with the family of Los Angeles Departments.

The Guild welcomes Captain Gross to share invaluable information with its members and the community at large regarding emergency preparedness and the CERT Program. CERT stands for **Community Emergency Response Team**, a program educating volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may occur where we live. He is well-positioned to significantly contribute to the coordination and execution of large-scale exercises, promoting preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery for communities statewide as well as local with concerns by seniors and those of us living near LAX.



Our Creative Crafters Stay Busy

Our **Guild Crafters** group has continued to be productive, selling record amounts of their homemade products lately. The Crafters were very successful in selling their creations at the **Westchester Arts & Music Festival** in September and **St. Jerome's Craft Faire** in November. In 2023, the Crafters sold more than \$3000 in merchandise, all made from donated materials.

The Crafters pride themselves on making products that are both useful and environmentally friendly, including insulated microwave cozies, casserole caddies, microwave popcorn bags, and reusable snack bags, crocheted hanging kitchen towels, knit hats and blankets, quilted table runners and placemats, and greeting cards. All the prices customers pay include California sales tax.

The next opportunity to purchaser Crafters' items will be at the **Annual Membership Meeting January 24**, where they expect to offer some additional new items. In the meantime, if you are in need of any of the Crafters' handmade items, or wish to donate fabric, yarn, large buttons or other crafting supplies, please contact Annika Backman at dabackman@yahoo.com.

Tony P's
DOCKSIDE GRILL

4445 Admiralty Way • Marina del Rey
(310) 823-4534 Fax: (310) 822-4901

Dockside Dollars Fundraiser
0128

WESTCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH GUILD
JANUARY 28 – FEBRUARY 1, 2024

Present this coupon to your server and Tony P's will donate 20% to your organization!
Not valid with any other promotions

Wednesday	Jan 24	Annual Membership/Supporter Meeting and Luncheon
Sunday - Thursday	Jan 28 – Feb 1	Tony P's Dining FUNdraiser – Coupon above
Saturday	March 23	Casino Night FUNdraiser
Thursday	May 16	AMCS 'Spring into Well-Being' Celebration - LMU
Thursday - Saturday	July 11, 12, 13	Music West Production of <i>The Sound of Music</i>

CALENDAR



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

Thank you to our Community Partners



TOWER PIZZA
Tony and Joanne Seruto

JESUS MASTACHE (The Taco Man)
Tacos, Banquets Y Buffets Iguala Guerrero

CANTALINI'S SALERNO BEACH
Lisa Schwab

4th ANNUAL HOLIDAY LIGHTS TOUR & CONTEST

Thank you Tina and Jon Vanderjagt for hosting
a memorable evening at your home for the
supporters of the VIP Experience.



We will open the book.
Its pages are blank.
We are going to put words
on them ourselves.

The book is called *Opportunity*
and its first chapter
is New Year's Day.

Edith Lovejoy Pierce



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

