



July 2024  
Summer Issue



# The Guild Gab



Janie Guthrie  
President 2024 - 2026

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Eden Garcia-Balis, LMFT  
Chief Executive Officer  
AMCS

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## The Prez Sez

Welcome Summer!! Our Board Members continue to work hard planning FUNdraisers to meet our goal of providing \$50,000 a year to AMCS. Mental health services are in great demand these days but a lot of people cannot afford them. It is so important for us to continue raising money for AMCS to allow it to provide affordable services. So far this year we have enjoyed restaurant FUNdraisers at Tony P's, Truxton's, CPK, and The Good Pizza, as well as a shopping FUNdraiser at Petals 'N' Wax, a fashion show at J. Jill, a musical fundraiser through Music West, and a wine pairing dinner at Cantalini's. We cannot thank our local restaurant and store owners enough for all their support! Nor could we do this without you.

## Eden's Epistle

Group therapy offers a supportive environment where individuals can share experiences and gain perspectives from others facing similar challenges, reducing feelings of isolation and encouraging commitment to personal growth and therapeutic goals. Group members can offer each other feedback, encouragement, and support in a way that complements the guidance provided by the therapist. This peer support can be

The Guild has exciting news about an inaugural FUNdraiser. Please *Save the Date* for Havana Casino Nights, on September 28 in Playa del Rey. It will be a fun time for all. We hope this event will become one of our popular FUNdraisers along with our Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest in December. Please see the calendar section on page 5 for more details of our remaining 2024 events. Also, watch for additional information through our emails and on our webpage [westchestermhg.org](http://westchestermhg.org). I hope to see you at our events.

As mentioned at the beginning of the year, our Board is investigating opportunities to improve the Guild. This year, we are experiencing difficulties in filling our Board's officer positions and having

empowering and motivating. Many find that the group environment provides opportunities for interpersonal learning, practicing social skills, and receiving feedback, all of which can enhance self-awareness and empathy. That is why, in addition to our one-on-one therapy, Airport Marina Counseling Service is proud to offer a wide and ever-changing collection of group therapy options available at an affordable rate

sufficient volunteers to do our various tasks. If we do not get commitments to fill positions soon, we will have to find alternative ways to keep achieving our mission of supporting AMCS. A possible solution we are investigating is to dissolve our organization and encompass our functions within AMCS. This would eliminate the need for officer positions but would not change our goals or the need for volunteers. We also would continue our monthly meetings to plan FUNdraisers.

We will keep everyone apprised as the process progresses. Please know we are continuing to plan fun events for our supporters to attend. If you have questions or concerns or would like to do more to support the Guild and AMCS, please feel free to reach out to me.

both online and in-person. The clinic regularly reviews the needs and wants of the community, forming new groups that address the issues our clients need the most. AMCS currently offers everything from women's and men's process groups to groups for emerging adults, LGBTQ individuals and those experiencing grief in their lives. Visit our website at [www.AMCShelps.com](http://www.AMCShelps.com) to learn more about the current group offerings at AMCS.



**Meet a Member – Loris Ourieff**

**Loris Ourieff** is a true native Angeleno. After graduating from Fairfax High School, she attended UCLA where she received a BA in English. Loris had a 21-year career in local community business banking, as a Loan Officer and a Vice President Credit Administrator. She also worked for a client as a Financial Advisor, which included operating the payroll, Human Resources and Health Care and Retirement benefits. She met her partner Trevor in 1995 who owns a home in Westchester. Loris has a home in Venice so she divides her

time between two neighborhoods. Loris and Trevor share a love for animals and they care for stray feral kittens and cats which they trap, neuter, tame and adopt as their housecats. Her friend, Suzanne Simmons who was on the AMCS Board asked her to become a docent for the Holiday Home Tour. She later joined the Home Tour Planning Committee and became a Home Tour Coordinator. Loris also volunteered at The Guilded Cage. She is presently serving her second term on the Board where she has developed a

talent for raffle ticket sales at fundraising events. Loris has a deep appreciation for the importance of sound mental health and she has volunteered in a program that taught resilience skills to at-risk elementary school kids in South LA. Apart from her felines' antics, Loris enjoys many outside interests which include Blues music, PBS, hikes, driving her '55 T Bird, cooking, reading, photography and the list goes on. For her next adventure, she and Trevor will enjoy retiring one day at their Chateau in the countryside of France.



**Meet a Member –Sue Henderson**

**Sue Henderson** grew up in Ohio and graduated from DePauw University. She received a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Yale Divinity School. After Yale, she was hired as a social work assistant at Yale New Haven Hospital and became interested in a career in social work. She pursued her MSW at the University of Connecticut. During that time, she married her husband of 56 years, Mike Henderson. Sue and Mike soon moved to New Jersey, where she worked at a family service agency and had her first child.

In 1974 they moved to Playa del Rey and had their second daughter.

To continue her social work interests, she immediately volunteered at Airport Marina Counseling Center. At AMCS, she worked as a volunteer and later as a part-time therapist for the Victims of Violent Crimes grant. After getting her CA license, Sue worked at the Samaritan Counseling Center in Santa Monica and later started Ocean Psychological Services in 1988 with a colleague. She left the practice in 2018 and continues to maintain a small

private practice. Sue joined the Westchester Mental Health Guild in January, 2020 in support of her longstanding connection to AMCS. She enjoys volunteering as a way to honor Mary Ellen Cassman, who hired her as a volunteer 50 years ago and to be more involved in the community. She now serves as Membership Chairman. In her spare time, she likes to visit (and host) her kids and grandkids, who live in India and Boston, see 'old' neighborhood friends, garden, walk and take Pilates lessons.



**Meet a Member – Bill Morgan**

**Bill Morgan**, a California native and son of a 20-year career Marine, has lived in Garden Grove, Fallbrook, on Camp Pendleton, in San Pedro, San Diego, as well as a year in Sicily.

He and his wife have been together for 24 years, having met on New Year's Eve in 2000. They have three adult children, his stepson and stepdaughter who are in their 30s now, and an 18-year old son still at home. The family has lived in Pico Rivera for the last 22 years where Bill's wife and her mom grew up, and his

mother-in-law lives next-door. All their kids went to the same elementary school and high school as their mom and aunt.

Bill spent 10 years in retail banking before transitioning to nonprofits. He's worked in nonprofit development for 20 years, including with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, La Jolla Symphony Chorus, St. Anne's, Junior Blind of America, and the National Veterans Foundation doing fundraising work including grant writing, event planning, major donor

development and online fundraising. He joined AMCS as Development Director in 2019, drawn to the organization's mission. Bill is passionate about AMCS's work and values his role in supporting the team. He now also serves as First Vice President of the WMHG, leading the group's FUNdraisers. Bill and family are animal lovers and have always had a lot of cats and dogs. Currently they have three cats: Dahlia, Ash and Pickle.





### 5<sup>th</sup> Holiday Lights Tour & Contest Set

Once again, we are beginning to plan our next **Holiday Lights Tour & Contest**, which we tentatively expect to occur Dec. 7-26. This year we hope to feature approximately 25 homes in this **popular outdoor decorating contest**.

Last year's tour-goers selected as their **fan favorite** the home of the Doherty family on Airplane Avenue. This year we expect that prior first-place winners will be noted on the tour map, but will not participate in the contest.

Most tour-goers made a \$12 donation which provided **maps to the homes** and an **online ballot** to vote for their favorite home. We had a popular added attraction for the tour last year, 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.

Ticket sales and sponsors raised more than \$15,000 to support AMCS. We will again be **seeking sponsors** for the event, in the hopes of raising at least as much as we did last year.



If you have any **suggestions or comments** for the Holiday Lights Tour & Contest, or would like to **help plan** this year's event, or if you know of any **homeowners or sponsors** who would like to participate, please let us know at [info@westchestermhg.org](mailto:info@westchestermhg.org).

### Fashionable FUNdraising at J. JILL



fashion show •breakfast•prizes•shopping•fun

### The Hills Were Alive...with donations

WMHG partnered with **Music West**, for the third time, selling tickets to their summer production of the classic *The Sound of Music* at El Segundo Performing Arts Center.



We extend our sincere gratitude to Music West's **Jeff and Laura Remington**, who donated back **50%** of each ticket sold by the Guild, which totaled 67 tickets.

Music West, Inc. was founded in 2004, and after 20 years at the helm, the **Remingtons** have handed over leadership of the company to its new President, Andres Fierro. They plan to remain involved in this community theater gem in other capacities, and we wish them well.



**FUNdraising Shopping**  
at Petals 'N' Wax, Marina del Rey







Annika Backman •Heart of Gold• Janie Guthrie



## Annual Meeting 2024

The Annual Membership Meeting 2024 was held January 24th in the Covenant Presbyterian Church Hall. Guest speaker **Captain Rico Gross**, L.A. Fire Department Disaster Preparedness Officer (DPO) and overseer of the LAFD CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Program shared useful tips on disaster preparedness and safety. Lunch was provided by Cantalini's Salerno Beach, awards and recognition were presented, raffle prizes won, and WMHG was able to gift a \$20,000. donation to AMCS from all their fundraising efforts over the past year.



**Belle of the Guild**  
Christina Vanderjagt



★ **Beau of the Guild**  
Daniel Dews

## Congratulations and Thank You ★

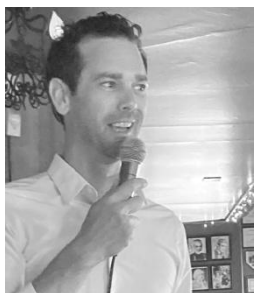
- Heart of Gold**..... Annika Backman
- Heart of Gold**..... Janie Guthrie
- Belle of the Guild** ..... Christina Vanderjagt
- Beau of the Guild** ..... Daniel Dews
- Certificates of Appreciation** Heather Ivey, Julie Porter, Evelyn Taplin, Nancy Virts ★
- Certificates of Merit** Nando De Estefano
- The Good Pizza*
- Barbara Wetzel*
- Covenant Presbyterian Church*



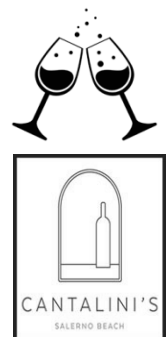
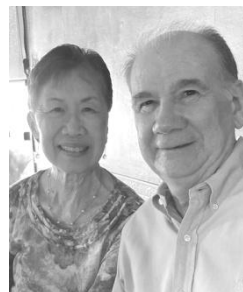
\$20,000. for AMCS



**Guest Speaker**  
Capt. Rico Gross, LAFD



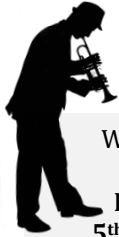
## WINE-tastic FUNdraising Feast ★



Thanks to **Lisa Schwab, Cantalini's Salerno Beach**, for hosting a culinary journey through west coast wine selections perfectly paired with the lusciousness of Italian fare. Gratitude as well to wine specialist, **Marcus Kempken**, for guiding the adventure.



Summer Socializing



Save the Dates



Westchester Mental Health Guild Presents two events before year end: **Havana Casino Nights Fundraiser and 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest**

The first event, **Havana Casino Nights**, is something new and exciting for our Guild. It will be held on Saturday, **September 28, 2024** at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Playa del Rey from 6 to 10 pm. In addition to the usual casino-type activities, there will also be a Latin jazz trio for your listening pleasure, a light buffet, prizes, a few raffle drawings, a silent auction, and other surprises. Tickets, available in late summer, will be \$100 pp and will include \$100 gaming chips, 1 drink ticket and a light buffet.

The **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest** is the second event that will take place in December, on **December 7 - 26, 2024**, in Westchester and Playa del Rey. Last year's event was a tremendous success and we hope you'll join us again this year for more holiday fun. Additional information will be on our website at the end of the year. Proceeds from both events support Airport Marina Counseling Service.

\*One other item to note is that we are looking for **sponsors** for each event and have created some limited opportunities with a promotion for sponsoring both events. For more information, please visit the Westchester Mental Health Guild website at: [www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org)



The Crafty Bunch

Our **Guild Crafters** are a creative group of dedicated people who volunteer their time and materials to make wonderful handcrafted items for sale to benefit the Guild and AMCS.

These include a variety of practical gift items, including **knit and crocheted afghans and hats**, microwave **bowl caddies** to protect your hands after heating, **insulated casserole caddies** to carry food to potluck meals, crocheted hanging **kitchen towels**, table **runners, quilts, and coasters**. In addition, they also create some unique **decorative items**. Something new this year includes **origami note cards**.

You will have two opportunities to purchase Crafters' creations this fall. First is the **Westchester Arts & Music Block Party**, on Sept. 21, from 12-6 p.m. on Emerson Avenue in Westchester. They will also sell again at **St. Jerome's Catholic Church holiday sale** on November 23-24, 5550 Thornburn Street, Los Angeles.

In the meantime, if you are in need of any of the Crafters' unique handmade items, or would like to **contribute fabric, yarn, buttons or other craft supplies**, please contact Annika Backman at [dabackman@yahoo.com](mailto:dabackman@yahoo.com).



Wed	August 21	Hacienda Playa & Hacienda del Rey Dining Fundraiser
Sat	September 21	Westchester Arts & Music Block (WAM) 12-6 pm - Emerson Ave.
Sat	September 28	Havana Casino Nights – Knights of Columbus Hall, PDR
Sat - Sun	November 23-24	St. Jerome's Catholic Church Holiday Sale – 5550 Thornburn St.
Sat -Thurs	December 7-26	5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Lights Tour & Contest

CALENDAR



Please visit our website [www.westchestermhg.org](http://www.westchestermhg.org) for ticket purchases and additional information.

\*Please note events are subject to change.\*







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](http://www.westchestermhg.org)

Contact Us  
[info@westchestermhg.org](mailto:info@westchestermhg.org)

## Community Partners

It takes a village.



**CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN**  
Teresa Wise, Manager

**CANTALINI'S SALERNO BEACH**  
Lisa Schwab, Owner

**GOOD PIZZA**  
Nando De Stefano, Owner

**J. JILL**  
Susie Ragland, Manager



**MUSIC WEST, Inc.**  
Andres Fierro, President  
The Remington Family

**PETALS 'N' WAX**  
Evelyn Taplin, Owner (Board Member)

**TRUXTON'S AMERICAN BISTRO**  
Nichole Van Court, Manager



We acknowledge and thank these  
gracious allies for their ongoing support.

## Newest Board Members



Cristina  
Hellems



Sally  
Boardman

Judy  
Delavigne



Dining for a cause. Thanks **Truxton's** and **CPK!**



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