



# The BUNG STARTER

Volume 2014

The Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of St. Helena

August 13, 2014

## Building Bins

### 11 – 4 - 2



*Last Saturday eight club members began building ten trash can holders for Bale Grist Mill. The rustic bins are intended to fit into the historic theme of the mill. Saturday's job was cutting the framing pieces and starting assembly work. **Bill, Don and Jeff**, above, roll out the first completed bin.*

Eleven club members were busy the past four Saturdays working on two separate volunteer projects. Last Saturday **Don, Bill, BobB, Jan, Jeff, Lowell, Steve and TomB** showed up at the Bothe Park shop to construct trash bins for Bale Grist Mill.

"We got a great start on the project," said **Don**. "but we'll need one more day to finish the job. Most of the cutting is done. We just need to drill, glue and screw. It's amazing how much we get done with so much help."

The previous three Saturdays some Kiwanis volunteers took on another project to provide access to a home's backyard for the owner's daughter, who has limited mobility.

The project was organized by **George**, who reports: "The Kiwanis ramp project on Pratt Avenue was completed on 8/2 after three Saturday mornings of work. When Kiwanis showed up on the second Saturday, we were requested to change the design from a ramp to a platform-stairs design. A real-time redesign was accomplished and construction was completed at the third session by adding the required hand rails. Thanks to **BobB, Howard, Steve, Bill, Lowell and JohnP** for pitching in."



***Steve, Lowell, TomB, Don, Bill and Jeff** hang out in the Bothe Park shop, our new Kiwanis clubhouse. Steve takes care of the pizza order.*



*The young lady is able to navigate the new steps on her own, using a walker.*

*The Kiwanis Club of  
St. Helena, a chapter in good  
standing of  
Kiwanis International  
since 1950,  
is dedicated to serving the  
Community of St. Helena.*

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### **The Powers That Be Club Officers 2013-2014**

President Lester Hardy  
President Elect Bob Matheny  
Vice President Tom Davis  
Secretary Bob Beckstrom  
Treasurer Jeff Farmer  
Past President Lester Hardy  
Directors  
Tom Belt  
Jan Darter  
Donalee Shackelford  
Lowell Smith

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### **Kiwanis Foundation**

President George Watson  
Officers and Directors Jan Darter  
Tom Davis  
Jeff Farmer  
Bob Matheny  
Bill Savidge  
Lowell Smith

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### **Committee Chairs**

Fundraising Jay Lewis  
Membership Jeff Farmer  
Projects Don Richardson  
Publicity Lowell Smith  
Youth Donalee Shackelford

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### **The Bung Starter**

An almost regular publication of  
the Kiwanis Club of St. Helena.  
“We don’t print retractions.”

Editor Bob Beckstrom  
bbeckstrom@pacunion.com  
Reporters Bill Savidge  
Ryterz Block

# **Last Week at the Club**

## **The Heights... and the Depths**

(August 6) No meeting recap this week because your reporter, Mr. Magoo, set his notes down to help clear tables, then forgot them. A few days later he returned to the hall expecting to find them just where he left them: on the back desk. But there was no desk. The room had been cleared and a Zumba class was in progress. So for those who find our Kiwanis meetings dull, I suggest you show up Tuesday mornings and join a dozen or so ladies dancing and stretching and exercising to lively music.

So... in lieu of Happy & Sad \$\$, birthdays, bells and announcements, here is a brief history of Kiwanis taken from the organization’s website:

### **History of Kiwanis**

The first clubs were organized to promote the exchange of business among the members. However, the members were distributing Christmas baskets to the poor. A lively debate ensued between those who supported community service as the Kiwanis mission and those who supported the exchange of business. By 1919, the service advocates won the debate.

- Kiwanis was founded in Detroit, Michigan, on January 21, 1915.
- In the early years, Kiwanis clubs focused on business networking, but even then, members were serving the needs of the poor.
- By 1919, the organization had changed its focus from business to service.
- Kiwanis became an international organization in 1916 with the organization of the Kiwanis Club of Hamilton, Ontario.
- Kiwanis limited its membership to the United States and Canada until 1962 when worldwide expansion was approved.
- Until 1987, Kiwanis was a male-only organization. But after years of debate and growing support, women’s membership was received overwhelmingly.
- Kiwanis celebrates [100 years in 2015](#).

## Leaders Attend Training

Last Saturday Kiwanis Division 8 conducted leadership training for the presidents, presidents-elect, secretaries and treasurers of the 12 clubs in our district. Clubs from St. Helena, Yountville, Napa, Greater Napa, Dixon, Solano, Fairfield and Benicia were represented by at least one their officers. The St. Helena Kiwanis delegation was **BobM**, **BobB** and Lt. Governor **Jay**. The session was held at the Wine Business Center right here in St. Helena.

**Dan Connolly**, an active member of the San Jose club and Past Governor of the CalNevHa District, went over the expectations and opportunities for each club office. He drew on his experience as a business executive as well as club member.

This year will be unique for Kiwanis. It is the organization's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which provides opportunities for clubs to raise their visibility in the community through celebrations and advertising. "Kiwanis is the best kept secret out there," said Dan. "We can have a lot of fun with the anniversary theme."

Dan also touched on membership. "We are at a critical juncture. Each club loses an average of 1.5 members per year. Clubs need to turn that around and set a goal of net +2 members per year."

Although the training was not intended to explore specific ideas as much as orient officers to their duties, attendees shared many ideas. One was teaching all members of a club a simple, effective 1-minute "elevator speech" about the club and what it means to them. Another club sponsors a "Thirsty Third Thursday" for social get-togethers at a local restaurant/bar, with proceeds from the tab going to a fundraiser.

In the housekeeping department, Bob raised a question about conducting board votes by email. The international organization doesn't have a position on this issue. Each club should check their own bylaws.

## Member Profile

*By Bill Savidge*



### John Ponte

"At 12 years old, my first job—dollar a day—was sitting on an Oakdale fence during pheasant season telling hunters, 'This field is closed.' Now, they'd probably shoot me; then, they went somewhere else."

John has always lived in California. Born in Oakland in 1952, he had two brothers and a sister. When John was six the family moved to Castro Valley, then to Oakdale, near Modesto, where his father rented agricultural equipment to local ranchers. John's family was Catholic. "I was the only one who didn't serve as an altar boy," John says. But now as a Universal Life minister he can conduct weddings and does occasionally. Asked for a principal church tenet, John said, "The lack of money is the root of all evil."

John graduated from Oakdale High where he played on the chess team and was a school paper columnist. A chemistry degree from Stanislaus State University in 1975 led to synthetic organic chemistry research with Shell Oil's agricultural chemical research department, where John developed a patented herbicide that acts by removing a plant's chlorophyll. After DuPont bought his division John decided against moving to Delaware or Houston, so he went back to Stanislaus State, earning his MPA in 1986. He served Solano, Stanislaus and Napa Co. transportation agencies, the latter from 1994 until he retired in 2008.

John met Bonnie Long, his spouse, in 1986 at a Modesto Halloween party given by a mutual friend, a woman who owned an art gallery. When John arrived he found only four women in the room. The other guests were male, some 50-75 "designers," many wearing chains or tutus. Bonnie's first question to John was, "Are you a designer?" John answered, "No, I'm a chemist." The chemistry worked; their 28<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary is this month. Bonnie's girl has two sons, 11 and 14, who call John "Avo," Portuguese for "grandfather."

John and Bonnie have lived in St. Helena since 1996, when she became city manager. Still new in town, at a Rotary fundraiser John outbid Roger Trinchero for the Harley-Davidson motorcycle he rides. They are frequent adventure travelers who've seen Australia, Europe, Asia and the US, including two weeks on the Grand Canyon's Colorado River. "Most fun was 2 ½ weeks on a freighter supplying the South Pacific's Marquesan Islands."

"I enjoy mechanical things, community service and club projects," he says, "but I'm only an ersatz building contractor." We know John as a key contributor to any club project. And as a Kiwanian and St. Helena Star editorial board member who never sits on the fence.

# Kiwanis Club of St. Helena

*Guinness World Record Holder*

*Longest continuous wine toast 10/7/12*

## CLUB CALENDAR

Every Wednesday – Club Meeting at American Legion Hall, 7:30 a.m.

**August 13** – Guest speaker, Jean Moroli from Bothe Park

**August 20** – Guest speaker, TBD

**August ?** – Work Project: Complete Bale Mill project. Date TBD

**September 8** – Board Meeting, 5:00 p.m.

**September 20** – Club Installation Dinner. Bob Matheny's home.

### Worthy Causes

**August 12** – Kiwanis Happy Hour, Pacific Blues in Yountville, 6-7 p.m.

**August 16** – *The Big Night* fundraiser for SH B&G Club, Trichero Estates

# Kiwanis Club of St. Helena

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## Special Notices

1. Membership Committee seeks names for potential club members. Contact Jeff, George, BobB or BobM.
2. Fundraising Committee seeks dollars. Contact Jay, Lester or TomD.
4. Publicity and Outreach Committee needs your help lining up weekly speakers. Contact Lowell, Lester, Steve or Jay.