



THE HONEY BEE

NEWS AT HERITAGE HOUSE

FEBRUARY 2026 WWW.HERITAGEHOUSES.COM

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

happenings



Hello family and friends,

Traditionally, we have welcomed new residents by sharing their photo along with a warm message. Over time, I've noticed that many residents are interested in learning more about our community members and their backgrounds in order to better connect with them and help them feel at home. **This highlighted an opportunity to make our introductions more intentional and meaningful.**

Moving forward, we will introduce new residents not only by sharing their pictures but also by sharing their individual stories.

Please join me in welcoming our four newest residents who have just joined our community. Esther Gordon, Dolores Becerra, Susan Conner, and Bonnie Hetrick.



Esther Gordon was born E Weidenbaum Texas. She lost her father to pneumonia at age 11 and moved with her family to grandfather's home city immediately after. Esther married spouse Pete in 1949, has two children and worked as an aid in the school's computer lab. Following Peters retirement, they traveled in a camper spending two summers in Alaska, and across the US. They also enjoyed cruises.

Pete died in 2013 after 64 years of marriage. Esther enjoyed participating in synagogue activities. Her hobbies include square dancing, sewing, reading, games and walking.

Dolores Becerra is a second-generation Santa Barbara resident who married shortly after high school and raised two children, Henry and Maryanne. She spent over 30 years building a career in bank services, though her greatest priority has always been her family. In her free time, Dolores enjoys spending time with friends, working on puzzles, and diving into a never-ending rotation of arts and crafts projects. Her creativity and talent know no bounds. She is also a proud grandmother to five grandchildren.



(cont. on page 2)

happenings

(cont. from front cover)



Susan Conner was the first child born to her parents, Robert and Eliza Miller, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She had one younger sister, another sister who died at the age of two, and two younger brothers. Susan enjoyed a fun and active childhood in Milwaukee and Sheboygan, along

the shores of Lake Michigan. She loved sewing and often created her own designs. Athletic by nature, she enjoyed playing tennis and water skiing.

Susan completed one year of college before marrying her first husband. They moved from Wisconsin to Pasadena, California, where they had seven children together—four boys and three girls. Their second son died at two months old, and their youngest son died at the age of 34. Susan currently has five living children: Bud/Susie, who live outside Seattle, Washington; Chris/Joanne in New Mexico; Mary/John in Nevada City, California; Katy/Kim in Santa Barbara; and Susie, who also lives in Santa Barbara. She has 12 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Susan was a homemaker for many years before becoming a successful real estate agent in Kirkwood, California. She loves the sun and enjoys sailing, skiing, and playing tennis. She and her second husband owned a sailboat and spent many summers sailing to Catalina. Later, she and her third partner also owned a sailboat and lived aboard it for a time in the Santa Barbara Harbor before moving to Kirkwood to ski and work. She lived in Kirkwood for many years.

A world traveler, Susan visited many European countries, particularly enjoying her time in France. She also traveled to India, Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, and Mexico. She lived for many years with her partner in Bucerías, Mexico, and cherished her time there.

Bonnie Hetrick grew up in Duanesburg, New York, and moved to California after marrying her husband, Bob. They were married for over 50 years before

Bob passed away in 2020. Together, they raised three children in Santa Monica, where Bonnie also worked as an interior designer. Most recently, she lived in Tarzana and is now relocating to Santa Barbara to be closer to her daughter, Melissa. Bonnie cherishes spending time with her children and grandchildren.



happenings

(cont. from page 2)



Reaching a 10-year milestone in any profession is a remarkable achievement, but doing so in caregiving speaks volumes about commitment, compassion, and resilience. Today, we celebrate a caregiver who has dedicated a decade of service to supporting others with empathy, patience, and unwavering dedication.

Iliana Medina:

For the past ten years, Iliana has been a steady presence in the lives of those they serve—providing not only essential care, but also comfort, dignity, and emotional support. Caregiving is more than a job; it requires heart, adaptability, and the ability to meet people where they are, often during the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

Throughout their journey, Iliana has built meaningful relationships based on trust and respect. Whether assisting with daily activities, offering a listening ear, or simply being there when it matters most, their impact extends far beyond routine responsibilities. **Families and individuals alike have benefited from her reliability, kindness, and professionalism.**

When I reached out to Iliana and shared with her that I wanted to be recognized by her publicly for her incredible 10-year journey and commitment to Heritage House and its residents, I could tell she was a little shy to be in the spotlight. But I also knew that she felt truly and genuinely appreciated for all her hard work and dedication to this incredible passionate profession.

Thank you, Iliana, for all you do and for always giving your all to all our residents.

Employee Highlights

A Message from Iliana:

I am truly grateful to be here and for the opportunity to work for the McGeever family. It has been 10 years since I joined the company, and it honestly feels like just yesterday.

I have been a caregiver for approximately 30 years—more than half of my lifetime. I find this profession incredibly rewarding and fulfilling, as it gives me both the opportunity and the privilege to care for those in need, especially our residents. Of those 30 years in the caregiving field, 10 have been dedicated to Heritage House and its residents, which has truly become my second home.

I came to the United States when I was only 19 years old, when my family immigrated in search of better opportunities. This move allowed my siblings and me the chance to pursue an education and build a better life. My very first job was as a caregiver, and I quickly discovered that this work was my passion—a passion that has guided and sustained me throughout my career.

I am also the proud mother of three children and feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to provide for them through the work I love. I am deeply blessed to be part of this community, and I sincerely thank all families and friends for their trust in allowing me, and the Heritage House family, to care for their loved ones.

I look forward to continuing to provide the same level of care, compassion, and dedication for many years to come. Once again, thank you to Heritage House for this opportunity to serve our community, and thank you to all families and friends for your continued trust and support.

*With love and appreciation,
Iliana Medina*

Best,
Alejandra Nunez, Executive Director

(cont. on page 4)

happenings

(cont. from page 3)

A warm Heritage House welcome to our new Caregiver, Alejandro Hernandez

Alejandro was born and raised in Mexico City and relocated to the United States 18 years ago. He is a proud father of three children: Ameera, age five; Manuel, age eighteen; and his stepdaughter, Alina,

also age eighteen. He describes himself as nice, friendly, positive, organized, and a food lover.



Alejandro first learned about Heritage House while providing companionship services to one of our existing residents. When asked what initially interested him in working

at Heritage House, he shared that he was drawn to the welcoming atmosphere, as well as how clean and organized the community is, and how kind the staff are to everyone, not only to our residents.

His favorite restaurants include Cody's, Jeannine's, and Brophy's. Alejandro enjoys collecting LEGO® sets and special-edition drum kits. His favorite hobbies are playing the drums and building LEGO® creations with his daughters. He also loves to travel; so far, he has explored destinations within the country such as Nevada, Oregon, and Utah. His favorite place to visit is Disneyland.



In loving memory of Merlin Call



February Announcements

Bill's Grill:



Join Bill's Grill this month on
February 20th at 5:00 PM
Please call Sara to RSVP.



Upcoming Vaccine Clinics

RSV, Pneumonia, & Shingles Vaccine
Monday, February 9th 10:00AM – 12:00PM

COVID-19 Booster
Monday, March 9th 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Safeway Pavilion Southern California will be here to administer vaccines for our residents.

Please return the completed form to us at your earliest convenience, but no later than **Monday, February 2nd**.



resident article jean mcneil



Born in May of 1936 and raised in the small, rural town of Monches, Wisconsin, Jean relocated to Santa Barbara in 1966. She moved to Heritage House in October 2025.

She raised six children and is now the proud grandparent of seven adults and an even prouder great-grandparent to five young children. When her own children were grown, Jean worked full-time, first at Sears as a Sales Associate, then at a large local clinic where she maintained medical records.

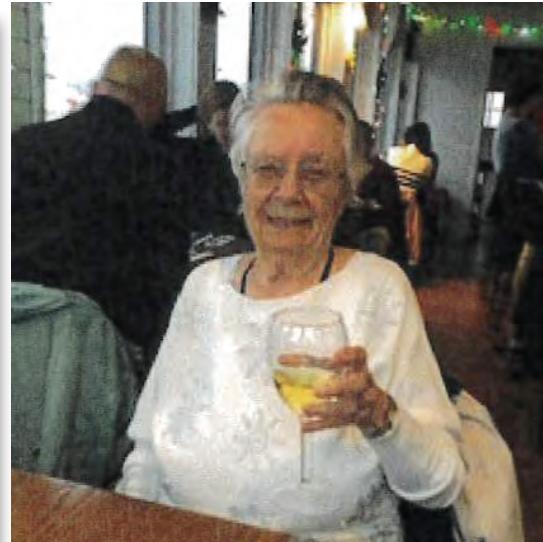
Jean always planted a vegetable garden while her large family was growing. She also canned and preserved most of what she grew, teaching her children to be resourceful and frugal. She instilled in them a strong work ethic and the need to balance that with fun.

Jean is an avid Scrabble player and enjoys watching football and baseball, the Green Bay Packers and Los Angeles Dodgers specifically. One grandson will be playing Major League baseball for the Athletics this season, so she'll proudly be watching them as well.



resident article jean mcneil

(cont. from page 5)



activity alley bella garfias, activities manager interim + michael jimenez, activities coordinator

Hello Everyone!

Michael here again. It's such a joy to be able to share these updates with all of you and stay connected with our residents' families. A brand new year always brings fresh energy, and I'm excited for all the activities, outings, and surprises we're hoping to bring to Heritage House in the months ahead.



Something fun you may not know: the activity directors from all the other senior care communities in our city meet about eleven times a year. We get together to swap ideas, share performers we love, talk about events that worked well, and even lend each other equipment when someone needs it. I was lucky enough to attend the meeting yesterday morning and meet everyone from the other care communities in town.

A few things really stood out! **One was Nature Tracks:** a special wheelchair with tracks and a joystick that lets residents explore outdoor areas like Los Carneros, Elings Park, and even the beach. We've actually done this in past years, and it was always a



huge hit with our residents. We're hoping to bring this exciting experience back to our community once the weather warms up.

We also talked about sound bowl therapy, and a beautiful spot in Summerland called the Bird Sanctuary, which we're hoping to include in one of our scenic drives. Speaking of scenic drives, last Friday we took a trip to the art museum for a special exhibition. Tickets were sold out that day, but we made it happen on Wednesday the 21st, and the residents had a wonderful time.



(Cont. on page 8)

activity alley bella garfias, activities manager interim + michael jimenez, activities coordinator

(cont. from page 7)

There was a lot more shared at the meeting, and I'm excited to roll out new ideas over the next few weeks to keep things fun, engaging, and fresh for your loved ones.

And now for something big – our Valentine's Bash on February 13th! 

Rod and his band will be here to get the party going. We're turning it into a full-on dance vibe with glow stick bracelets, a photo booth, and plenty of music and laughter. I hope you've been enjoying the new activities we've been trying out. Some are still in the "test run" phase as we adjust things to fit our residents' abilities and comfort, but we're always aiming to bring in creative, meaningful, and joyful experiences — just like our VR sessions with Dr. Stephen Jones, where residents can "travel" the world from the comfort of their chairs.

Wishing all of you a Happy New Year and an early Happy Valentine's Day. I'm looking forward to seeing you again in March. Thank you, as always, for being part of our Heritage House family.

And of course, feel free to reach out anytime, or just stop by and chat with me in person.

Warmly,

Michael Jimenez, Activities Coordinator



activity alley bella garfias, activities manager interim + michael jimenez, activities coordinator

(cont. from page 8)



february health news

sofia vasquez, cna, clinical director + tony warn, clinical care coordinator

The new year is underway, bringing opportunities for meaningful experiences. **Football playoffs are progressing, with the Rams competing for a potential Super Bowl appearance.** This year is also notable as the **United States hosts the World Cup**, bringing a major global sporting event to our country.



January has been particularly busy both professionally and personally. I've stayed active, recently got my first tattoo, spent more time out on my days off, and maintained a demanding workload.

I'm looking forward to a productive, healthy year ahead and the memorable moments it may bring.

Thank you,

Tony Warn, Clinical Care Coordinator

business blog

sara hernandez, staff development & business manager



Happy Valentine's Day!

As Valentine's Day approaches, I want to wish everyone a lovely holiday spent with the people you hold close to your heart. In our community, we are fortunate to have a few couples who have been together for what seems like a lifetime. They are a beautiful reminder of how strong and enduring love can be—standing through life's ups and downs.

We'll be celebrating Valentine's Day this month with lots of fun, music, and dancing, and I hope to see you around The House sharing the love with your loved ones.

On a personal note, I am stepping into new management roles, and I truly appreciate all the support and encouragement I've received along the way—especially from my peers who continue to guide and inspire me. You may start seeing me in different areas of The House beyond the front

desk, but please know that the front desk will always be my first "home."

Here's a picture to enjoy of me with my two Valentines this year - one stole my heart first, the other steals my snacks. Sometimes the best love comes with a little bit of chaos.

Cheers to the love surrounding us.

Thank you,

Sara Hernandez,
Staff Development & Business Manager



facility facts

ernesto guerrero, facilities and transp. manager



January has seemed to be moving more slowly than in the last couple of months. After all the running around and the holidays wrapped up, everything gets a little quieter.

Now that it's February, things already feel a bit lighter. The days are stretching out, the cold seems to be fading away, and it feels like outdoor plans might be back on the table soon.

February also means Super Bowl season. I'm putting it out there now and hoping the Rams make it this year. I think we have the potential. If they do, great! If they don't, I'm still looking forward to a good game and the Halftime Show. The Super Bowl is always worth it—good food, hopefully a competitive game, a few hours to unplug, and an excuse to get together.

I wanted to recommend a restaurant I recently visited, Pozoleria Doña Anna in LA. The food was amazing and familiar, the kind that reminds you of home without trying to be fancy. Food that's fresh, homemade, and tastes like grandma made it. If you're ever in the LA area, I recommend you stop by. It will not disappoint.

Thank you,

Ernesto Guerrero, Facilities & Transportation Manager



operations news

morgan e. randall, operations director



LOVE, THE WINTER OLYMPICS, AND THE SUPER BOWL!

February brings several notable events, including the **Winter Olympics** (Feb. 6–22), **Super Bowl LX** (Feb. 8), **Valentine's Day** (Feb. 14), and the **Santa Barbara International Film Festival** (Feb. 4–14).

The 2026 Winter Olympics return to Italy for the third time, featuring 116 medal events across 16 sports, including the debut of ski mountaineering. Competitions will take place across northern Italy, with the closing ceremony in Verona.

Super Bowl LX kicks off at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, with the Patriots, Broncos, Rams, and Seahawks still in the running. I know a few Rams fans here at the House—Ernie and Tony!



Celebrate love all month long—spend time with those who matter most. Time is the one thing we cannot buy.



The Santa Barbara International Film Festival opens on February 4 at the Arlington Theatre and is recognized as one of the top ten film festivals in the United States.

February is going to be FANTASTIC!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the House this February.

Warmly,

Morgan E. Randall,
Operations Director



bill's grill

bill mcgeever



The rental that we stayed in was pretty much perfect in layout, setting and view. **We enjoyed being up there and we needed the break to reset ourselves.** Mission accomplished.....

Julie, the pups and I spent New Years up north. We hiked, hit the beach, relaxed and picked wild mushrooms.

We found winter chanterelles, black trumpet chanterelles and hedgehog mushrooms. It's a lot of fun looking for mushrooms, kind of like hunting for Easter eggs. **The mushrooms were all over the place and there were all sorts of different kinds.** We had gone out with locals last year, so we were comfortable with identifying the 3 types of mushrooms listed above. There were others that we were thinking to be edible, but there is a saying that folks looking for mushrooms use: **"When in doubt, throw it out!"**



We are going to have Carol Marter's favorite BBQ this time around:

Dry Rub & Grilled TriTip
Twice Baked Potatoes
Romanesco Broccoli
Grilled Sourdough Bread
Raspberry Crisp



**4:05 Cocktail Hour and Bills Grill will be
on Friday, February 20th @ 5:00pm**

Take care and I'll see you around the house,

Bill

dining delights

odin macias, dining services manager

Cooking Class Highlights

As we welcome 2026, we're excited for the opportunities and experiences the new year will bring.

Before a recent trip to Mexico City, I considered rescheduling our January cooking class with the residents of Heritage House. That plan quickly changed when **Carol Marter cheerfully approached me**



and said, "I'm ready for the cooking class!" Her enthusiasm made it clear just how important these sessions are to our residents.

This month, we prepared chocolate mousse—a treat that everyone enjoyed. Seeing the residents' happiness and engagement was a wonderful reminder of the meaningful community we've built together.

Thank you for your continued participation and support. We look forward to many more enjoyable classes ahead.

Thank you,

Odin Macias, Dining Services Manager



important dates

405 Cocktail Hour- Every Friday

Bill's Grill **Feb. 20**

February Birthdays

Residents

Lori Ann Maertens	Feb. 01
Ann Kwarcinski	Feb. 07
Al Whitcomb	Feb. 16

Employees

Araceli Vásquez	Feb. 14
Álvaro Zavaleta	Feb. 19
Miguel Parda	Feb. 19
Bella Garfias	Feb. 23
Modesta Castro	Feb. 24

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