

THE LETTER

LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS, INC. NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

- MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR
- FROM THE OFFICE
- FYI AND MORE FYI

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Thea Robertshaw

By Lucy Van Wagner

She was 6 years old; her bright red hair was adorned with a big blue taffeta ribbon. On a warm day in July, 1940 she was ready for her first day of school at the beautiful red brick school building in her city of Eindhoven, in southern Holland. Tears welled in her eyes as she listened to her mother tell her there would be no school today. Two months ago the German Army had invaded Holland; and on this morning, the Nazi soldiers had moved into the school building, closing its doors to the Dutch people.. Germany would continue to occupy Eindhoven until the city was liberated on September

21, 1944, by the US 101st Airborne Division as part of the Allied Forces "Operation Market-Garden."

Eindhoven was an important industrial center; the home of Philips Electronics, which produced (and still does) light bulbs, shavers, radios and many other home appliances for global export. Because the electronic technology and production facilities

"It was a very sad day for me -- I will never forget it!"

located here played an important part in the success of the German plan for the conquest of Europe; the British soon began bombing raids to destroy factories producing arms and equipment that

SEE PAGE 3

FROM THE OFFICE

Online Bill Payments

By Sharon Hays, Manager

Paying the Lafayette is now easier than ever. Just go to your

bank and set up an online bill paying account. Then simply follow the steps and have the bank pay your maintenance fees automatically



every month! That'll be one less check to write out! Also don't forget the 3% increase that begins March 1st!



A Special Thank You

By Sharon Hays, Manager

If you haven't stopped by the office lately, you may not know that my best friend, the one that was always on the floor of the the office, Nikki, passed away on January 4, 2006 of complications during surgery.

I would like to thank everyone for your cards and heartfelt concern after Nikki's unexpected death. It has meant a lot to me.

FYI

The Davis-Stirling Act

Condominiums were first regulated in California in 1963 by passage of the California Condominium Act. The laws governing common interest developments were revised and expanded in 1985 by passage of the Davis-Stirling Act (Civil Code 1350-1377) which was named after the 2 assemblymen who promoted the bill, Gray Davis and Larry Stirling.

Since then, community association law has been one of the most active areas of the law in California (and the nation) with 50-100 bills introduced into the California legislature each year. For more information log onto www.davis-stirling.com, a comprehensive online resource for community association directors, managers and members.



Gray Davis



Larry Stirling

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, CONT.

supported the German Army strikes against great Britain. Thea told us the British were very good at controlling collateral damage: By 1942, 8 year old Thea was able to recognize whether incoming aircraft were British or German to distinguish bombers from fighters, solely by the sound of their engines.

“Nobody believed it at first” she told us sadly, when we asked her about Nazi internment and extermination of Jews. “Nobody had any idea what was really going on until much later; we never saw anyone taken away – we just heard stories. In late 1942, when we saw that certain people had disappeared, my parents got involved in hiding Jews.” Thea’s family took 2 men and a woman into their home. “We didn’t have a special ‘Hiding Place’ in our house, like some people did”, she said; we just had to send them down to the basement fast if someone came to the door that we didn’t know or couldn’t trust.” Now her mother sent her to school each morning with the same warning: “Don’t say anything to anyone about how many people live in our house or about anyone who lives here” she told her, and then reinforced it with: “If you do, we could all be killed!”

Unfortunately, the adjustment to living in fear was a little more difficult for Thea’s older siblings; her 23 year old brother, Joop returned home suffering from shell-shock after the horrific battle of Rotterdam. Wanting to help drive the invading German Army from his homeland, Joop volunteered to serve in the beleaguered, out-numbered and out-

classed Dutch Army, whose Queen and high-

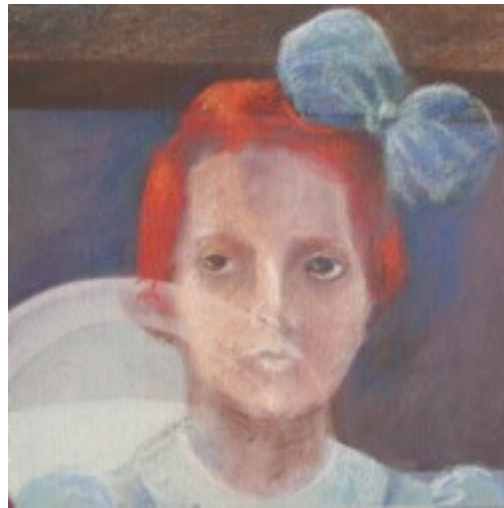
“Just run for your life” his Captain told him.

ranking military officers had been forced to flee the country and form a “Government-in Exile” in order not to leave Holland totally rudderless following this surprise attack.. “My brother was given a uniform that was much too big for him, a gun he could hardly handle and was sent into battle without any training. I remember how we put him on the train and sent

him off in the middle of the night. The Nazi’s flattened Rotterdam in one night, completely destroying the inner city!” Joop hid in a cemetery, but was discovered and taken Prisoner of War. “When he came home, at any little noise he would roll me in a blanket and run down to the basement” said Thea; “I thought it was great fun!”

Joop had been released to come home to Eindhoven and work at the Philips Company to

support the German war effort. Because of his studies and work at Philips, Joop was transferred to a special engineering division. Some of the Dutch engineers there were deliberately designing flaws into radio valves and other parts in order to sabotage the German army’s success. In an



“Self Portrait as a Child” by Thea Robertshaw

effort to stop this sabotage, the Nazi Commander in charge of the facility had the Dutch Chief Engineer executed in front of all the Dutch workers.

Thea’s 22 year old sister, Alida, suffered severe stress as a result of hiding Jews in their home; one evening at dinner her shoulder and mouth began to twitch uncontrollably; “When my father asked what was wrong, she just cried” said Thea. A trustworthy doctor was called, but after examining her and finding that the problem was psychological, he told her there was nothing he could do for her. At this time, Alida disclosed to her family that Bep, the Jewish woman living in hiding in Thea’s home, who lived in constant fear of being found and arrested by the Nazi soldiers, was unable to sleep at night and had been waking Alida several times every night, begging her to investigate each noise that Bep heard. “My parents had to put a stop to this” said Thea, “so that my sister could get some sleep - and she finally got better.”

NEXT PAGE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, CONT.

Thea developed boils all over her body due to malnutrition. The Germans diverted all food supplies for their own use first, and gave ration coupons to the Dutch allowing them to buy limited quantities of whatever was left

over. But even when her family had enough money to buy their full rations, they often found it impossible to do so; long lines formed at stores when shipments of food were received, and supplies ran out long before the lines did. One day Thea's mother sent her to the store with coupons and money for food;

while she was waiting in a long line at the store, a boy ran up shouting that the local farmer had gone into the city, leaving the farm unattended. "We ran as fast as we could" recalled Thea, "hoping we would be able to get some food from the farm. It was a very long way and when we got there some very large German guard dogs ran out to attack us, so we ran into the woods and hid in the trees. I got home after dark wet and muddy."

One of Thea's neighbors was a German woman, who was given a job working at the Nazi headquarters in Eindhoven. Although they had been friendly with this woman before, when she began wearing fur coats and expensive jewelry Thea's parents realized that this woman could not be trusted, so they were in a dilemma when she told them that she wanted to take Thea to have lunch with the Nazi officers she worked for. Deciding that it would be safer to allow this than to refuse it, Thea's parents dressed her in her finest clothes and cautioned her not to talk about her family or any of



"Ode to My Father" by Thea Robertshaw

the people in her house. The Nazi officers were very nice to this cute little girl and very impressed by her politeness. Believing that children should not speak unless spoken to, they remarked that she was so well-mannered. They did not understand that Thea was

terrified of them, and that was the reason for her silence and very brief answers to their questions.

Sometime during the last year of German occupation, Thea's mother had a dream; she called everyone together and told them the dream meant that they were in great danger and needed to find other hiding places for the Jews. "My mother's psychic abilities were known and accepted, and no one questioned her – they all went to work and found hiding places for the two men, but they were not able to find a place for the woman, Bep, whose full name was Margaretha Priester. Bep was a musical genius who had taught at the Berlin Conservatory of Music. She was my piano teacher and we were very close."

Three weeks later, the Nazi's were at Thea's house when she came home from school at lunchtime. Because Thea's family were part of an underground network and sometimes helped to distribute contraband ration coupons to feed the hidden Jews, they had received letters telling them where some other hiding places were and they had extra ration coupons.

"The Nazis searched our house very thoroughly; they even lifted up my mother's mattress and ran

"They held a gun to my head and told me to sit down."

their hands under it, but they didn't reach in quite to the middle where the letters were hidden," she said. "My mother was very shaken, but was

thinking all the time; while the Nazis were in the bedroom, she took the ration coupons that were hidden under the carpet in the living room and hid them in the bottom of the coal box, under the stove. They were waiting for my father to come home for lunch, and my sister took me aside and told me that I had to tell them I had to go back to school, and then

NEXT PAGE

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, CONT.

I should intercept my father and warn him not to come home.” So Thea started crying and told the soldiers that she had to go back to school or she would be in trouble. “When they let me go, I ran to the corner a few blocks away and when my father



“Taken Away” by Thea Robertshaw

came by on his bicycle and saw me, he knew something was wrong – I pulled on his coat and cried and begged him not to go home!” By the time Thea came home after school, the Nazi’s had taken Bep and left to catch the train. Thea’s family found out later that Bep had been taken straight to Auschwitz and sent to the gas chamber. ↵

Note: This is the first of two articles about Thea; don’t miss “Thea Today – Artist, Art Teacher, Shaman Healer and Tarot Reader” in the next Lafayette Newsletter!

MORE FYI

The Mills Act

If you purchased your unit less than three years ago, you may be eligible for property tax reduction under the city’s Mills Act program. Applications are available in the office or for more information, call Paula Matusa at (562) 435-9061. Mills Act applications are due by March 31, 2006.

The Friends of the Historical Lafayette

“The Friends of the Lafayette” has formed a small, exploratory committee to review revenue generating projects. A "Tour" in the Fall (Oct/Nov) is proposed and will showcase the interior of our buildings and select owner's units. There will be a need for Homeowner participation to make this event come together. Anyone interested in possibly showcasing their unit, or in joining a committee to promote, advertise or merchandise this Fall event, please contact: Ed Coutchie at edcouthie@cox.net.

A V O N

**FOR CATALOGUE AND
ORDERS CONTACT
CHUCK ANDERSON IN
UNIT 303 OR CALL (562)
277-7719. LAFAYETTE
RESIDENTS 10% DIS-
COUNT ON 1ST ORDER**



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Who's Who at the Lafayette

2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President: Monica Youngblood
- First Vice-President: Dan Reed
- Second Vice-President: Jean-Louis Debien
- Treasurer: Rick Blackshere
- Secretary: Marilyn Jolley

CONTACT THE BOARD

In writing: Each board member has a mailbox in the office. All written comments will be addressed in a timely manner.

In person: Come to the board meetings every first Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Solarium (11th floor Campbell Building) unless a schedule change has been posted.

OFFICE MANAGER

Sharon Hays

CONTACT THE OFFICE

- Phone: 562-436-5391 9:30am to 5:30pm weekdays
- Fax: 562-436-8762
- Email: lafayet@charterinternet.com

Calendar

Tuesday, March 7, 2006

7PM

**Board of Directors Meeting
11th floor Solarium**

Reminder: Meeting minutes may be viewed at the office.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

SHARON HAYS

PAULA MATUSA

GERONIMO QUITORIANO

THEA ROBERTSHAW

LUCY VAN WAGNER



THE LAFAYETTE LETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FROM THE OFFICE OF THE LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS.