

# STELLAR CARE

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Postage  
Information

# The Stellar Care Chronicle

August 2015

Stellar Care \* 4518 54th Street \* San Diego, CA 92115 \* p 619-287-2920 \* f 619-286-8534\*



## Celebrating August

**Read a Romance  
Novel Month**

**What Will Be Your  
Legacy Month**

**Coast Guard Day**  
August 4

**Homemade Pie Day**  
August 7

**Bowling Day**  
August 8

**Vinyl Record Day**  
August 12

**Massage Therapy Week**  
August 19-23

**Linda Cho**  
*Executive Director*

**Barbara Moore**  
*Business Director*

**Annelie Damasco**  
*Assisted Living Director*

**Susan O'Shaughnessy**  
*Marketing Director*

**Rachel Robinson**  
*Activities Director*

**Chris Cho**  
*Building & Maintenance Director*

**Chris Moore**  
*Culinary Services &  
Laundry Director*

## Miscellaneous Announcements

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\*\* Family Support Group meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of every month. Families are invited to join us in the Library on the first floor.

\*\* When dropping off new clothes for your loved one, please check for fit prior to Stellar Care labeling the new item. Items can be left at the front desk after ensuring proper fit.

\*\* When possible, please give the front desk a couple of hours notice when you plan to take your loved one out of the facility. This will give staff time to have medication and resident ready to go out.

## August Birthdays

In astrology, those born between August 1 and August 22 take on the lion star sign of Leo. Leos are dignified, strong, and powerful, making good leaders and honorable friends. They're also ambitious—reaching for the stars, working hard, and accomplishing their goals. Those born between August 23 and August 31 are virginal Virgos. Virgos are industrious and efficient. They pay close attention to details and are known for getting the job done right on the first try.

Joy I. ....	Aug. 12 <sup>th</sup>
Lois B. ....	Aug. 13 <sup>th</sup>
Carl David F. ....	Aug. 17 <sup>th</sup>
Margaret W. ....	Aug. 20 <sup>th</sup>
Beverly M. ....	Aug. 28 <sup>th</sup>
Adalene K. ....	Aug. 29 <sup>th</sup>



## WE ARE GRATEFUL...

for Gordon and Linda Aase for their kind and generous contribution to Stellar Care's employee fund on behalf of James Ramelow

Thank you

## "Our Life as We See it."

**Don & Lois Swanson**

To say that family is important to Don and Lois Swanson would be an understatement. Their walls tell a story of close family bonds throughout the years with pictures of their three children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Some photos are even carefully labeled with the subjects name written on sticky notes; making it easier for curious newcomers like myself to keep track of who is who in the growing Swanson clan. Out of all the photos displayed on the Swanson's wall of memories, it's one black and white picture in particular that quietly takes center stage. It's a picture of two 18 year old kids sharing a root beer from a couple of straws, locked in a Rockwell-esque moment captured in time over 70 years ago. It's the photo that, you could say, started them all.

"That was the very moment we met." Lois tells me. "That is my all-time favorite picture. That was at an event put on by the Wesley Club."

Having both grown up in a small town in South Dakota, Don and Lois met while both were attending South Dakota State College where they were both active in the 4-H club. And it was by fate that the two would get together.

Don met Lois through a mutual friend when one day she decided to bring him along to one of many social events hosted by the college's Student Union. "He sat across from me and we just meshed. We just knew..." Lois says. "I'm so glad she brought Don that night. We would never have met otherwise."

"I asked her to dance...and she was a good dancer." Don recalls. "So we started going steady. And soon after we were engaged...We got married when I was working for the Navy. I was working on a destroyer as a radio technician at the time. And when the destroyer stopped in Boston, that's when we decided to get married."

"It was a different time back then." Lois informs me. "We went wherever our boyfriends or husbands were. That's how things were done. So when his ship was stopped in Boston my sister drove me to the east coast so we could get married. And while we were there my sister met a man who she would end up marrying."

Continued inside...



Since I last shared my words and thoughts here, a dear friend of mine has passed away. Pat's transition has made a profound impact on me. She is the first of my friends to die. Although she was ill, those of us in her circle weren't expecting this. It came at us sideways, unexpected, no plans in order, and fast. Pat was taken to the Emergency Room on Friday and her earth journey ended on Saturday afternoon.

From the hospital her adult children extended their private, intimate, and personal time with me and I was able to say goodbye. But I miss her, every day. She was my friend. Annelie and I first met Pat almost twenty years ago at the assisted living community where we worked in Chula Vista. Pat was the Activities Director. We quickly came to realize she was one of the funniest ladies we would ever know. She was widowed early, she adored her three children, was a talented entertainer, sang internationally with Sweet Adelines and loved baseball. Pat and I became Padres season ticket partners and shared hundreds of happy hours at Petco. She was a hot dog snob and had her franks "imported" from New York once a year. She was Irish and we attended the St. Patrick's Day Parade together every March. She drank Irish tea and made soda bread from scratch. She always remembered our birthdays and sent real cards in the mail. She was loyal and supportive and listened but never criticized.

Why am I sharing this with you? Because I am reminded that life is so wonderful and we are so blessed to have loving people all around us. Pat's gifts to me were genuine, real and simple. I miss her but am so grateful she was in my life. Please cherish the moments you have now with the special people in your life. I remember my last phone call to Pat because she ended it with, "I love you, Susan." I am joy filled to know that those were her last words to me. I now believe we should end all conversations with terms of endearment or kindness. That should be our legacies. It is so easy in our busy days to be distracted with all the tasks, appointments and chores. Sometimes we don't get that moment back.

The San Diego Sweet Adelines sang one song at Pat's Memorial, "I'll Be Seeing You." I'm sure you know the lyrics and will understand what a perfect choice that was.



I'll be seeing you,  
Susan O'Shaughnessy

Fun in Stellar Care's Santa Barbara



Gardening Club



Out on the Town



...Continued from front page - Swansons

Growing up on a cattle ranch in South Dakota, Don spent most of his youth on horseback, herding the 400 plus head of cattle his family owned. While the wide open space of the ranch might seem freeing to some, Don felt he wanted something bigger in his life and it was during a trip back home while still in college that Don made his decision to leave the ranch to pursue his interest in physics – a decision that not only took him around the world but also into the world of top secret military projects and into the company of historical figures.

“When I worked for General Dynamics that's when I met Wernher Von Braun. He called me 'Donnie' and I called him 'Professor'. I knew enough German from a few courses I took that I was able to act as the go-between for General Dynamics and Von Braun. We were pretty close.”

“Everyone at General Dynamics were nice people. I enjoyed hosting dinners and get-togethers at our house. We had a great time playing ping-pong....I beat everybody” Lois shared with a smile.

While Don spent most of his professional life steeped in secrecy, Lois happily worked out of the home, raising children and entertaining, while still managing time to practice her ping-pong serve. For a brief period in her life she worked as a High School home economics teacher where she worked with teens, educating them on the complicated details of running a home.

“I loved working with the kids. There's no better way to influence children than by just being a good example. Nothing replaces that.”

Don and Lois have spent over 70 years of their lives together. The depth of their experiences runs deeper than an afternoon chat can reach. But you can tell by watching them interact that their journey together in this life has only tempered a bond they shared years ago that night at the Wesley Club.

“Lois is the best blessing in my life...She expresses her love so well.”

“We've had a lot of good years together. No complaints...I know I married the right person.”

Lois looks over to Don. Between them on the wall is the photo taken that night 70 plus years ago, a photo of two 18 year old kids, unaware that they are about to embark on an adventure together. What started as a shared root beer would evolve into a life, shared together.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Mai Truong

A recent graduate from SDSU's gerontology program, Mai officially joined our activities staff this past spring. However, prior to that she had already spent a few months volunteering in our community. When she first came into Stellar Care as an intern, Mai put her education to quick use and helped develop a “Men's Club”, focusing on smaller group settings for the gentlemen in our community. She ran this until the end of her internship period. After a brief time working with the Alzheimer's Association, Mai finished up her schooling and came back to join us once again!

Growing up, Mai was always a busy-body and also a bit of a tomboy. The youngest of three, with two older brothers, Mai would tolerate the dresses her mom made her put on for family photos, but would bolt off to play with her brothers the moment the pictures were snapped. She had an abundance of energy and always found productive ways to channel it. Throughout middle school and high school, Mai kept herself busy with sports and activities ranging from gymnastics, to drama club, chess club, and even a year with the Constitution Team. In 2008, Mai became an ordained minister, and continues her duties to this day. She loves serving as a minister because for her, it is all about helping people find and create meaning in their lives. She stresses personal exploration rather than following rigid rules. In many ways, Mai has used this same concept in her development of new activities in our community. Currently, she leads a more independent style of activity within a smaller setting for our residents. She does an outstanding job weaving the individual needs of our residents into common activities that allow our residents to find meaning and enjoyment in this new stage of their lives.

When Mai is not busy creating her next weekly set of events to enliven our residents' days, she enjoys hiking, the outdoors, her knitting club (where she and her group send their creations to villages in need), and writing poetry in the cryptic style championed by E.E. Cummings. In the future, she hopes to go back to working with non-profits to help them develop hospice programs or grievance counseling. In the meantime, we are thrilled to have her on our team, and look forward to the continued excitement she brings to each day for our community.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

Join Stellar Care at Collwood as our  
**San Diego Padres** take on  
the St. Louis Cardinals



**Sunday, Aug. 23rd at 1:10pm**

**\$25.00/ticket (\$37.50 value)**