

“Three Quarter Of a Century” Celebrates Access to the Outdoors for All

By Sophie Bracinni

On June 21st, “Three Quarter of a Century” celebrated life and the great outdoors during its annual luncheon at the Orinda Community Church. Every year, on the third Thursday of June, Orindans 75 years old and better are invited to a luncheon and to hear a speaker on a topic of interest. The group was formed 8 years ago by Orinda resident John Fazel. According to John, “the purpose is to honor our seniors and offer them a fun event where they’ll meet good friends and have a great time.” Last Thursday, the group invited Michael Muir, the great grandson of the legendary John Muir, to speak about his the organization he founded, Access Adventure.

This non-profit is unique in the world. As Muir presents it, “Our mission is to provide wilderness and open space access for people with disabilities using innovative, solar powered, wheelchair accessible horsedrawn carriages.” The programs of Access Adventure are provided without charge to anyone with a condition that limits their ability to get around. The carriages are built by Thomlea Carriages in Wabash, Indiana.

Access Adventure provides wilderness trips from March to October in Humboldt County, the Yosemite area, the Los Padres National Forest and other wild places around the world. The association is run by a diverse group of volunteers linked by their love of nature, horses and a passion to serve. A professional horse trainer, Muir was struck by multiple sclerosis at age 15. On Thursday, the 55 year old man fired up his audience with his passion and energy. He told them how, in 2001, he led an international team



Helen Vurek luncheon queen crowned by Keith Miller Prudential
Photos by David Dickson, Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary



Celebrating the passage of time: Joyce Mann, Helen Vurek, Thomas and Aileen Deah of people with disabilities driving wheelchair accessible horse-drawn carriages on a three thousand mile, ten month journey across America. By the end of the luncheon, all the programs describing upcoming Access Adventures had been snapped up by the crowd.

The meeting ended with the crowning of the Queen, King and longest married couple of the assembly. Helen Vurek, 97 years old was the queen for the second year in a row. Thomas Dehl, 92 years old, was crown the king and also received the longest married couple award with his wife

Aileen, celebrating their 67 years together.

Fazel promises that this very successful event will go on for many more years. He can count on the support of the Orinda Prudential Office managed by Keith Miller, a main sponsor of the event, along with the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Our 75+ year old citizens represent about 6% of the total population (and growing), but fun activities are rarely organized for them. For more information email Fazel at runmntns@prodigy.net.



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