

# Nordic walking gains popularity in Lamorinda

By Elaine Borden Chandler

A new type of exercise has recently arrived in the Bay Area. At the Lafayette Reservoir, in Briones Regional Park, on the Iron Horse Trail, and in the suburbs of Moraga and Danville, there are people energetically walking with what looks like ski poles in their hands. "The thing about this sport is that not many people know about it," said an amused Surat Perez. "Whenever I go out for a walk with the poles people ask me, 'Are you okay? Are you injured?'" This new sport is Nordic walking, where specialized poles and move-

ments are used to exercise the whole body, with greater emphasis on the arms and core than regular walking.

Nordic walking came into vogue in Finland in the 1990s. It started to spread to other countries and now has 10 million participants. Recently it has come to Lamorinda, with one person in particular responsible for its introduction. "This is a perfect place for Nordic Walking, a lot of outdoors, nice weather. When I arrived, I realized that it was not known, there were no instructors, nothing. I could not believe it," said

Helene Le Guinec.

Before moving to Danville in 2018, Le Guinec had lived in Brussels, spending much of her time in the local birch forest where she saw people walking with poles. Intrigued, she enrolled in a class and eventually became a certified instructor. When her husband's job brought the family to the Bay Area, she decided to start teaching here. While she is flexible, most of her group sessions are at the Lafayette Reservoir.

"I work here because it's very central for people coming from differ-

ent areas," she said, waiting for a group of six clients to arrive. "The lower path is not too long for some people, it's not a shock, but with a people with a good fitness here we can do the rim."

Because of Nordic Walking's relatively new status in the area, the group who came to the reservoir that day discovered it in different ways than the usual methods of cultural osmosis or television programs. Regine Jarett, who lives in Lafayette, has been friends with Le Guinec for a few years through the French community. After a shoulder injury stopped her from running, Jarett decided to take some classes and became an avid Nordic walker, not only walking at home but also taking poles with her on vacation in New Zealand.

Parto Vossough of San Ramon first heard of Nordic walking from her family in France. "Over there it's pretty popular," she explained. "My sister, my mother-in-law, and my sister-in-law all walk in the green areas."

Others discovered Nordic walking through research or news articles. Patty Rippon recently encountered it after searching for low impact exercise on the internet. "I looked into it and found Helen," she said, as the orange and black poles that all of them had rose up and down steadily in her hands. "It's harder than it looks. You have to get one thing down at a time, but I do overthink it."

Nordic walking being harder than it looks was generally agreed upon by the group. However, the gratifications were also widely agreed upon. During a photo stop under a rustling live



Photo Elaine Borden Chandler

**Parto Vossough, Regine Jarett, Patty Rippon, Helene Le Guinec, and Stephanie Schlegel, Surat Perez, and Mary Ann Walsh take a quick break from Nordic Walking at Lafayette Reservoir on May 28.**

oak, the group chatted about how much they liked that Nordic walking is a gentle full body exercise that doesn't push its participants to their limits, unlike so many other fitness trends.

A general sound of disgust rose from the group when Perez sarcastically quoted, "No pain, no gain." Several people also mentioned how it could help with sickness and recovery. Mary Ann Walsh, who always walked swiftly at the front of the group, talked about how she had seen Le Guinec help a client with Parkinson's and was impressed by her patience and skill.

The beauty of the nature in the Lafayette Reservoir, as well as other local natural spaces, was a compelling

and eternal attraction for the whole group. "You have everything here, the greenery and the fact you can choose between the concrete path or the rim trail. It's part of my family tradition here," said Schlegel. Le Guinec noted that in Lamorinda families stay for generations and are protective of it and its open spaces, which has contributed to her belief that Nordic walking is tailor made for this area. She is hopeful that more people will join Nordic walking and pass it on to future generations. Those interested in Nordic Walking can find more information from the American Nordic Walking Association at <https://americannordicwalking.com>.

## Orinda fifth graders participate in Odyssey of the Mind competition

Submitted by Teresa Yu and Julie Atkinson



Del Rey team

Photo provided

In May over 600 teams from across the United States and over a dozen countries, competed in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, making it the world's largest youth competition that is not sports-related.

A Del Rey team placed first at regional and state competitions, and then at Worlds, in front of an audience of more than 10,000 spectators from around the world, Del Rey Elementary was announced as the third-place winner for their problem/division.

Their long-term project required them to write a short play for which they would design a robot that encounters three works of art, signals that they are not beautiful, then dismantles and recreates one into something it finds beautiful. The team chose to defend

books as works of art, and made their costumes and entire set out of old book pages. Their robot looks like a dictionary, and as it moves across the stage its pages actually turn; the robot's pages define poetry as "incorrect," libraries as "useless," and novels as "wasteful." But the team adamantly defends the importance and beauty of books. In the end, the robot-dictionary inadvertently discovers that the

pages of one book are made of mirrors, and it comes to see itself in the mirror-pages, realizing that both robots and books are works of art created by human creativity. The play is poignant, humorous, and most of all a huge celebration of books!

A team from Glorietta Elementary School, who have been working since September on a problem that required them to build a vehicle that could move forward and backward on its own and perform different tasks within the context of a drive-in movie, also traveled to Iowa for the Worlds Finals.

"This team has been working together since they were third graders and their track record is amazing," said team coach Julie Atkinson. "They qualified for World Finals as third graders, but we decided not to go. Then as fourth graders they made it to the State Finals. I'm so happy they had the opportunity to go to Worlds this year!"

Other teams from Lamorinda also competed at the regional, state, and world competitions.



Glorietta team

Photo Taksina Eammano

## In Memory

### John Charles Kunzman M.D.

May 1, 1938 - May 3, 2024



John was born in Denver, Colorado, on May 1, 1938, to John Arthur and Sylva Shaklee Kunzman. John grew up on the family farm near Fort Lupton, Colorado, with his two sisters Joycelaine Kunzman Muhs (Harvey), Joan Kunzman Brunelle (Robert), and his brother James Ross Kunzman.

His education began in a two-room schoolhouse in Ione, Colorado, with two teachers for eight grades. He went on to graduate from Fort Lupton High School at the age of 16 and attend the University of Colorado at Boulder where he began his undergraduate studies in Nuclear Engineering before transitioning to Pre-Medicine and the School of Medicine for his graduate degree.

His medical internship at the Santa Clara County Hospital in San Jose, California, began on the same day in 1961 as his future wife, Rebecca Ruff, started her Medical Technology training. He was her first patient, and their journey began. They married in 1963 while Jack (as he is affectionately known to family and friends) was completing his surgery residency at Presbyterian Hospital (Stanford) in San Francisco.

Immediately after completing his surgical residency, Jack entered the US Air Force to serve in the Vietnam War and spent two years treating wounded soldiers at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

He returned to California after his tour of duty to become a surgeon at Kaiser Hospital in Walnut Creek, where he practiced for over 37 years, including multiple decades as the Chief of Surgery. He passed down his professional skills to young, aspiring, surgeons as a Professor of Surgery at UC Davis School of Medicine.

Jack had many passions in addition to surgery. He loved outdoor activities including sailing, skiing, and fishing.

As a Scout Leader for Boy Scout Troop 233 for many years, he took his sons on numerous outdoor adventures. They went camping, backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing, horseback riding, scuba diving, snorkeling, portaging, and much more. He also loved to play bridge, and attend theater and opera. Jack enjoyed traveling the world with family and friends, meeting new people and seeing new places.

Jack died on May 3, 2024. He is predeceased by his parents, his brother James, and his son Ted. He is survived by his loving family including his wife Beccie, his sons Daniel and Charles and his four beautiful grandchildren, Kennedy, Jonathan, Aidan and Charlotte.

He was a long-time member of the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church where his memorial celebration will be held on Saturday, July 20, 2024 at 11 a.m., 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette CA 94549.

Memorial gifts should be directed to the Parkinson Network of Mt. Diablo, PO Box 3127 Walnut Creek CA 94598 or the Michael J Fox Foundation.

## In Memory

### Patricia Anne Moran Pribyl

July 17, 1931 - April 10, 2024  
Resident of Moraga



Patricia was born in Chicago, IL to Frances Adlaf Moran and Mark Edward Moran. Donald Francis Moran and Rosemarie Catherine (Bunny) Moran Reinertson were her older siblings.

Patricia graduated from Farragut High School in 1948.

In November 1948, Patricia married Richard Joseph Pribyl. Patricia and Richard made happy, loving homes in Cicero and Naperville, IL. In 1976, they moved to Moraga, CA - their happily, forever after home. Patricia and Richard had 5 children: Richard J. Pribyl, Jr. (dec.), Margaret Mary (Sybil) Pribyl Miller (dec.), Patricia Frances Pribyl, Thomas Mark Pribyl and Mathew Michael Pribyl.

Patricia firmly believed in volunteerism and service. She volunteered and served in leadership roles in multiple organizations throughout her entire life. She was a faithful supporter of the Roman Catholic Religion, Girls Scouts USA, Boy Scouts of America, all the school organizations her children attended and even in local politics.

When Patricia wasn't working for outside organizations, she focused her attention on family and friends. The joy they brought to her was evident in her unwavering love for them. Patricia is survived by three children: Patricia F., Thomas and Matthew; her daughters-in-law, Rita Jane Borow Pribyl, Eileen Beck and Laura Marie Esposito Pribyl. She is also survived by five grandchildren: Richard J. Pribyl, III; Rory S. Miller; Kyle D. Miller; Selena Pribyl Reif; Kelli Miller Lanzi; and Analia Pribyl Driscoll; and seven great-grandchildren.

Patricia died, at 92 years young, after being diagnosed with lung cancer. A memorial service will be held at St. Monica Catholic Church in Moraga, CA on June 21, 2024 at 10:15 am. Donations may be made to St. Monica Church, Catholic Charities of the East Bay or the charity of your choice.

## Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 200 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.