

# Palisadian-Post

Serving the Community Since 1928

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THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2018 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

\$1.50

## A New Way to Explore Aging

By TRILBY BERESFORD  
*Reporter*

“There are many joys of aging,” family therapist Kane Phelps shared over a coffee with the *Palisadian-Post*. “But in our culture, aging is not embraced or accepted ... it’s seen as a mistake, sometimes even a failure.”

His aim with the Positive Aging Group is not for members to receive advice about how to age appropriately, but rather for friends to come together in comfortable chairs by the fireplace and share stories about their lives, ambitions, well-being, health, what they love, what they have lost, what their legacy might be.

During our meeting, Phelps shared a quote from Elie Wiesel, founder of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: “Whoever survives a test, whatever that might be, must tell the story.”

Indeed, we all have a story. There’s an unfortunate assumption that the elderly have lived through all theirs, however they are absolutely still experiencing the stories that will shape their characters.

Their contributions to society are not only relevant, but critical. It’s full steam ahead.

Former high school teacher Wendell Whitmore knew Phelps prior to signing up to the group, and while he thought it might be something special, he wasn’t expecting such emotionally rich and profound contributions from every participant.

“When you’ve lived a lifetime, you have a hunger to express what you’ve

learned,” Whitmore shared with the *Post*. “It gives me a chance to socialize and express myself readily, which is something I need more of in my life.”

He noted that the younger generation don’t flock to older people for lively chats. Another downfall.

Then there are the surprising discoveries. “Sharing is like going into an abandoned mine and extrapolating new things,” Whitmore said.

He recalled that during a group session, he remembered a backpacking trip in his 20s that left him in an altered state of consciousness—a result of being out in nature for an extreme period.

He concluded that a frequent visit with nature is necessary for a healthy existence, and many other participants in the group talk about how nature affects their lives.

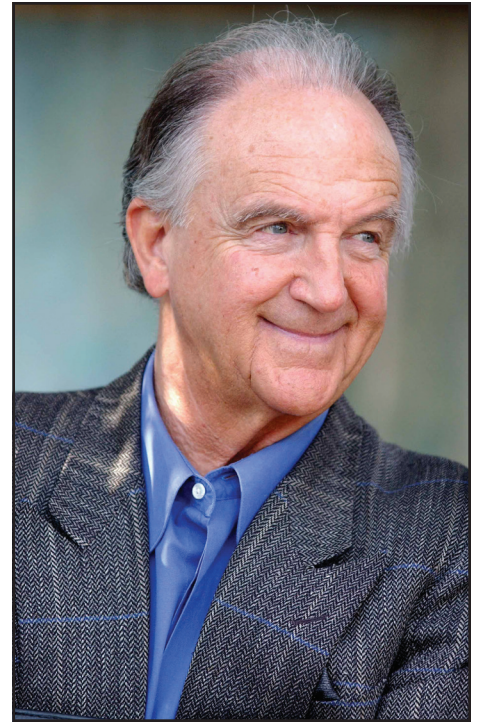
Whitmore described the group as “really quite unique” and said he loves being a member.

“We’re all of an age where we’ve had something tragic happen, but also a lot of happy and funny and fun moments,” participant Ginny Winn shared with the *Post*. She’s a family therapist who doubled as a rock and roll photographer in the 1970s. Admittedly she has a lot of good stories.

“The group encourages the best in people to come forward,” Winn said.

There is no official senior center in the Palisades, however there are several offerings for those looking to meet new people and get involved in activities.

The Palisades Alliance for Seniors runs programs on a regular basis. Phelps



**Kane Phelps** Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

is a member of the Optimist Club of Pacific Palisades, an organization that does a lot for youth as well as senior citizens. They host regular breakfast meetings.

There are also scores of book clubs, hiking troupes and other events that are visible to residents on Nextdoor.

Now for a personal note: Phelps has been married to his wife Dee Dee for 43 years and said their lives get better every day. There’s a mantra in their marriage: “We aim to please.”

He explained that everything they do is performed with love and attention to details big and small. Far from settling into a rut, they seek meaningful adventures, as we all must continue to do throughout our positive aging.

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THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

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## 90 Years Young: A Palisadian Birthday to Remember

By TRILBY BERESFORD  
*Reporter*

The Pacific Palisades Woman's Club was full of life on Saturday, June 2, when they hosted a celebratory luncheon for Palisadians who recently turned 90 or older.

"I love this event because it brings the community together," Fay Vahdani of Luxe Homecare announced to the distinguished party guests.

Among the 90 year olds were June Pynn, who chose a dazzling pink ensemble for this big day, and Thomas Weese who turns 90 in June and arrived suited up.

"It's a very close knit group," Weese said, referring

to the Palisadian community.

Among the crowd were several seniors who have surpassed the centenary mark: John Danley, who moved to the Palisades in 1954; June Capp, who has lived in the same house for 64 years; Beulah Curry who lives at Atria Senior Center; longtime residents Alice Brown and Betty Frick; and Phyllis Genovese, who ran a leather shop, worked with the Santa Monica Police Department, pumped gas during the war and was the first female president of the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce.

Even Billy and Janine Crystal, co-mayors of the Palisades, dropped in to say hi and crack a few jokes.



Photos by Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

