

The Last Show

**Sunshine
Lutey**

January, 2018

Prologue

Miserable, sniffing, coughing with four weeks of show preparation work that needed to be finished in less than two weeks, I held my aching head in my hands and tried to review the instructions to the technical team.

David interrupted from the den, “Baby Girl, we need to leave in 15 minutes; do you have the directions.”

“Of course I have the directions on my iPhone” I crossly thought and answered with a sigh, “Yes, David, they are on my phone.”

David repeated his question; he hadn’t heard my response.

This time I shouted, “The directions are on my phone!” Immediately I regretted yelling, closed my laptop and walked into the den. “Honey, I didn’t mean to be cross; I have the directions right here on my phone. Let’s go.”

David opened his arms and I happily stepped close as he said, “I’ve never heard you say anything but loving words.”

Our trip was short as we traveled less than 10 miles to the St Regis Hotel in Monarch Beach where Roger, David’s son would treat us to a Thanksgiving brunch.

The wonderful aroma of prepared foods permeated the lobby which had a beautifully decorated holiday tree. Roger, a Kaiser Permanente physician, greeted his dad and me warmly although I warded off a hug just in case I was contagious.

We were soon seated; although I still felt ill, I did my best to be “Sunshiny” for this special family occasion as we reviewed the humongous array of seafood, traditional Thanksgiving offerings with salad and veggies to select, with cheeses and desserts galore.

I was nibbling dessert as David left the table to get more seafood. Roger asked, “How you doing, Sunshine?”

Probably because I was sick I said more than intended. “Well I’m trying to get better, but I’m tired; I’m tired of doing these shows.”

Roger quickly answered, “Then, stop!”

I paused and thought for a minute and then responded “But it’s not that easy; David doesn’t want to stop.”

Roger looked at me incredulously, “I thought it was you who wanted to keep doing the shows.”

“No, Roger, I’ve been ready to stop for a while, but David keeps saying that this is what we do.”

Soon David returned, and Roger began immediately, “Dad, Sunshine is tired and needs to stop doing the big shows.”

Predictably David responded, “But that’s what we do!”

“No, Dad; this is what Sunshine does. I don’t want to see her depressed.”

I was totally surprised and a little apprehensive; the last thing I wanted was to cause dissention between David and his son. When Roger left the table to refill his plate I looked at David; he looked sad, but we didn’t speak.

As soon as Roger returned, I apologized, “David honey, we weren’t trying to beat up on you;”

Roger cut in, “yes we are, Dad.” But then he smiled and patted David’s shoulder.

I continued “But it’s true, I am completely spent; I have no energy left.”

When David left the table one final time, I thanked Roger, “Roger, thank you, but please don’t say anymore; I know we’ve upset your Dad.”

That was all that was said about the shows that Thanksgiving Day. We finished a splendid feast together.

Part 1

Music Starts,

Stops,

Restarts

Chapter

1

I have always been a passionate performer starting from when I sang with gusto from my crib. As an adult I visited my home town; people would tell me “Oh I remember you – you used to toss your long pipe curls back and forth when you sang with your sister.” While I didn’t remember that part, I remembered well how much I loved to sing with my sister within and around the community.



Waverly-Age Seven; Me-AgeTwo

After I married at age 19, there was very little music for the next 17 years. My late husband Lloyd and I were extremely busy, first with work and college classes; then we experienced the joy of parenthood with two children, Darrell and Denise, which tripled our workload.

Chapter 2

On my 36th birthday in 1979, Lloyd purchased a tremendous gift for me, something we really couldn't afford.

It's was dark when I arrived home from work and walked into our mobile home – there it was, a beautiful upright piano. My heart nearly stopped and I began to sob with joy. I sat down on the wooden bench and found three music books from Lloyd and the children. Lloyd's book was covered with beautiful pink roses. It was titled "All My Love" and was filled with a variety of love songs. Darrell's book was titled "You Light Up My Life and Star Wars" and Denise's book, titled "Annie" had songs from the Broadway show.



I spent my spare hours at the piano and learned most of the songs in the new books; I also began to write my own melodies, most of them with lyrics. I expanded my musical efforts to nighttime activities and participated in musical contests and singing groups. The joy of music re-entered my life.

Chapter

3

When Lloyd retired in 1995 we moved to Leisure World, a magical place where he golfed every day and I surrounded myself with vocalists and musicians who shared my passion for music. We purchased the needed equipment, portable keyboard, sound systems, etc., rehearsed in the living room where I played the piano while others filled in with saxophone, clarinet and drum and began to plan our shows. During the next ten years we booked shows with various community clubs, with hospitals and with retirement and nursing homes. For each event, I created a program with 17-20 songs for the performers. We loaded my car with equipment, set it up on location and performed for 45 minutes. We charged a small fee and split it between the entertainers.

Lloyd began to record the mini shows and even though he didn't love to rehearse with the group, he decided he would like to participate. Soon he became the emcee; I taught him two of the songs I'd written and we sang them together.

In 2005, I lost him to fatal liver failure; he was only 66.

Chapter 4

After several months the musical group, called the Sunshine Company, decided to restart the mini-shows. Soon the shows were enhanced with the addition of David Hartman.

David moved to the community in 1994 with his wife, Phyllis, but lost her to illness the same year I lost Lloyd. Like Lloyd, David was a golfer and they often played together. David and I discovered joy, love and happiness. But much to my surprise, I found much more – I discovered he had a beautifully resonant baritone voice and immediately invited him to sing with the group. After the first few shows, I also asked him to be the emcee. David began to load/unload, transport, setup and breakdown the equipment for each show. For the next two years, it was definitely love in motion.

In addition to the group's planned performances, David said "Honey, let's go to some retirement homes and sing a few songs for the people in the lobby. I'd done this many times by myself and had approval at various facilities. Management welcomed, "Please sing and play whenever you can."

I smiled, "That's a great idea, David; let's practice a few songs together first though. Then off we went; whether there were 10 or 25 people in the lobbies where we performed, we enjoyed the smiling faces as we shared the joy of music.

In 2007, David had a suggestion, "Honey, we've been lugging all this equipment to hospitals, nursing and retirement homes. In our own village, we have a beautiful theater that already has the equipment we need. We could produce musical shows for the community and for charity with friends and village performers and perform for much larger audiences."

Later that year we formed a village club – the Sunshine Performance Club. The mission of the club was to provide free or low cost,

wholesome entertainment for the community, to provide a platform for village performers to develop and display their talents and to raise money for charity. One of the club's governing principles was that the performers would donate their time and skills so all proceeds, after expenses for the shows, could be donated to charity.

We talked to the events coordinator at Saddleback Memorial Medical Center and began planning for the first major show to be held February, 2008. It would prove to be a huge success.

Part 2

Ten

Years

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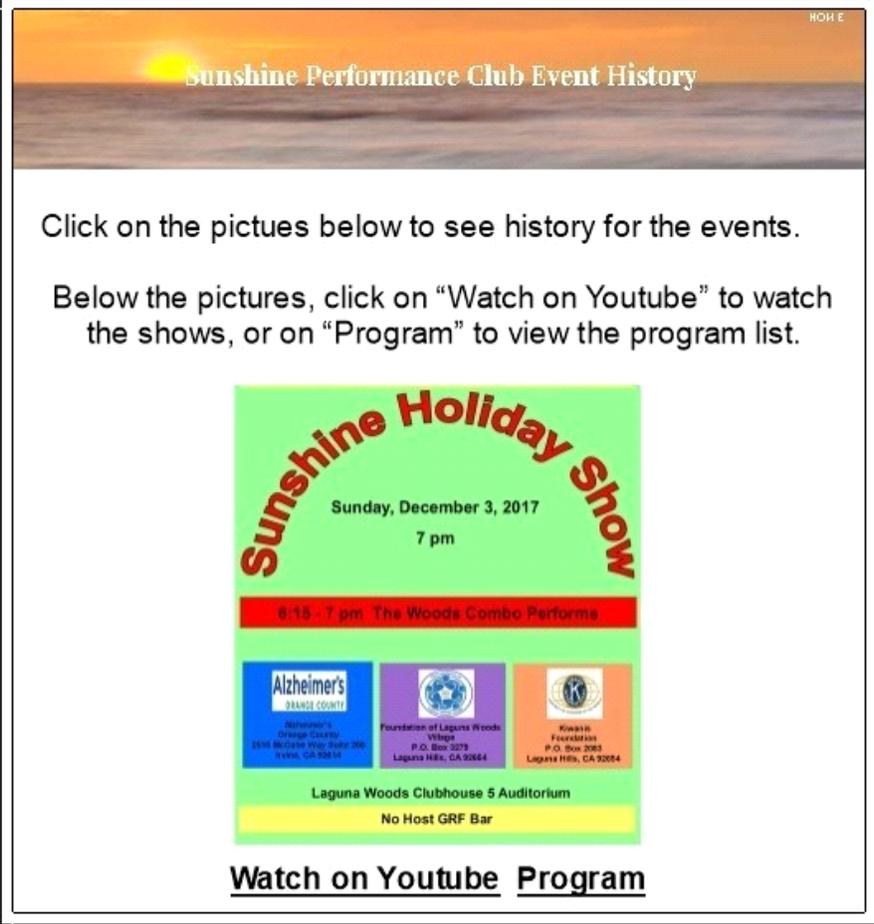
Twenty

Shows

Chapter 5

During the ten years from 2008-2017 the Sunshine Performance Club produced 20 major shows. We also produced many mini-shows and provided three hours of continuous music for five “Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast” events.

The history of the 20 major shows is well documented within the Sunshine Charities website. The start of the history page is shown below. The history section can be reached at SunshineCharities.com via option 1 “About Sunshine Performance Club, by clicking “Event History” at the bottom of the page. Detail about the event is displayed when the picture is clicked, a video of the show can be watched when “Watch on Youtube” is clicked and a program list is displayed when “Program” is clicked.



The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Sunshine Performance Club Event History" with a sunset background. Below the title, there is a paragraph: "Click on the pictures below to see history for the events. Below the pictures, click on “Watch on Youtube” to watch the shows, or on “Program” to view the program list." The main content is a promotional poster for the "Sunshine Holiday Show" on Sunday, December 3, 2017, at 7 pm. The poster includes a red banner stating "6:15 - 7 pm The Woods Combo Performs" and three logos: Alzheimer's Orange County, Foundation of Laguna Woods Village, and Kiwanis Foundation. The venue is "Laguna Woods Clubhouse 5 Auditorium" and there is a note "No Host GRF Bar". At the bottom of the poster are two buttons: "Watch on Youtube" and "Program".

Sunshine Performance Club Event History

Click on the pictures below to see history for the events.

Below the pictures, click on “Watch on Youtube” to watch the shows, or on “Program” to view the program list.

Sunshine Holiday Show
Sunday, December 3, 2017
7 pm

6:15 - 7 pm The Woods Combo Performs

Alzheimer's
ORANGE COUNTY
Alzheimer's
Orange County
9555 Westlake Way, Suite 300
Irvine, CA 92618

Foundation of Laguna Woods
Village
P.O. Box 2279
Laguna Hills, CA 92654

Kiwanis
Foundation
P.O. Box 2053
Laguna Hills, CA 92654

Laguna Woods Clubhouse 5 Auditorium
No Host GRF Bar

[Watch on Youtube](#) [Program](#)

Chapter 6

Overview of Twenty Shows

The Sunshine Performance Club provided free tickets or \$1 tickets to the community for the first eight shows from 2008 through 2011 and once again for the June, 2016 event. Audiences were asked to donate to the designated charity which alternated between Saddleback Memorial Medical Center, Alzheimer's Association and Foundation of Laguna Woods Village. Although the audience donations were not substantial, still after expenses the club was able to give gifts to the charities averaging \$2,500.

Afternoon Shows

The club began Afternoon Shows in 2010 for the benefit of the villagers who couldn't travel at night; it also seemed like a great idea because performers who worked so hard to prepare had the opportunity to entertain twice.

But on June, 2016, David opened the curtain from the side of the stage and looked out over the sparse audience. In despair he whispered "I really don't want to perform; I can't sing to empty seats." Yet he summoned the heart and the baritone to fulfill the performer's creed, "The show must go on." He sang with heart, soul and beautiful resonance as if every seat was filled. The response from the small audience was thunderous as if it had been a full theater. David graciously bowed and accepted the tribute to his performance but his heart was saddened — in a village of 18,000 to have 200 people in attendance for the 2 pm show, created especially for villagers who weren't nighttime travelers, seemed a pathetic waste of effort. Our plan to perform the show twice, once in the afternoon and once in the evening, ended with this show.

Addition of Sponsors

David and I wanted to make a greater impact for the charities so we began to search for sponsors to donate funds to the charities, beginning with shows in 2012 through 2017, and increased the ticket price for the events to \$10. To encourage increased attendance we offered free refreshments with both shows in 2012 and for the first show in 2013, but discovered that the offer of refreshments affected attendance minimally and the work to provide food and drink was burdensome even with help from volunteers and sponsors; so refreshments halted after the three tries.

With sponsors the club increased donations to the charities substantially -- from 2012-2017 averaging \$5,350.

Beginning with the July, 2016, show due to GRF's change in rules that allowed audience patrons to bring food and drink into the theater, the Sunshine Shows included a no-host GRF bar.

Chapter 7

When the curtain fell on the 20th show on December 3, 2017, audience members expressed their appreciation for the club's productions. Every shows' audience said "This is the best show ever." So not only did the performers please the audience but the club gave substantial donations to charity as a result of each show.

Production of every show had been a major undertaking. After the 17th show I began to tell others, "This is probably our last show" because I felt exhausted. But the emotional rewards of a pleased audience and appreciative charities were great. So I would begin to plan again.

After the 20th show David and I announced with sadness that is was time to bring the big shows to an end. But still, to us it seemed like a wonderful legacy – "Ten Years; Twenty Shows;" a time to step down with pride. Not surprisingly, few people believed us. But this time, the decision stood. It was a very difficult decision and it was based on many contributing factors.

Chapter 8

The following factors contributed to the decision to discontinue the big shows.

The Planning and Effort Required to Produce a Major Show

One major factor was the sheer number of required tasks to produce the shows.

The first shows were difficult because David and I had never produced a major show before. However, many things fell easily into place because of all the mini-shows produced in the eleven years from 1996-2007, such as the need for pictures of the performers, program plan, variety of music, stage plan, plan for promotion and videotaping, etc. What we didn't know, we learned along the way.

The more we learned the more tasks were identified and added to the needs list. Several times I shared the list of tasks with the performers, looking for assistance; however, although I always received lots of offers to perform, I didn't receive offers to assist in the preparatory work. By the 20th show, I had 56 tasks documented and probably left out much of the work I automatically did. Included were planning for promotion – flyers, posters, event programs, scheduling and preparing for interviews on TV Channel 6, scheduling and writing the articles for the Laguna Woods Globe, updating the available information to the website, designing of the content of the program, defining job details for volunteers, providing instructions to everyone (performers, volunteers, sponsors and technicians), juggling dozens of artistic personalities, supervising countless rehearsals and much more required work.

Three charities, first Alzheimer's Association and then Alzheimer's Orange County, Saddleback Kiwanis Foundation and Saddleback Memorial Medical Center helped with the major effort of obtaining volunteers for the shows.

In 2012 when I began our search for sponsors, I added an enormously time consuming project. I contacted many businesses and prepared a 20 page list in small type of sponsors who I attempted to contact with notes regarding my progress. Then I placed the document in my dropbox and shared it with all the performers and charities and requested assistance.

The results were:

- One of the charities provided a couple of sponsors
- Another charity provided sponsors that would donate to itself alone
- One performer provided three clubs/individuals who sponsored three of our events
- One performer made the initial contact with a bank who became a sponsor for one show

Dwindling Audiences

Early in our history the club enjoyed near capacity audiences; however, over time David and I recognized diminishing audience size. Some of the reasons are discussed below:

Working Within GRF Rules of the Village and Staff Members

There has been a multitude of changing rules within the village's governance that made producing the shows fraught with difficulty.

The governing body often felt the need to implement new regulations that placed obstacles in our production path, for example raising room rental rates and disallowing sponsors at events. Much of our time was consumed as we attended and protested the planned changes.

We were required to complete a multistep process to request exception if the scope of our needs did not fit into the existing

rules. For example, we had to obtain special permission to allow our charities to have tables in the lobby of the theater.

First we completed and submitted the proper forms to the recreation department. A director can immediately disallow the request; however, if allowed, the request is placed on the Agenda for first level approval by the Community Activities Committee (CAC) directors. If the first level request is approved, it is placed on the Agenda for second level approval by the Golden Rain Foundation (GRF) directors. Throughout the process David or I had to attend each of the meetings to uphold the club's need for approvals.

Some of the stories about working with management are, in retrospect, quite funny.

Fight for First Show

Late in 2007 David and I discussed our plans to hold our first musical variety show for charity (Saddleback Memorial Medical Center) in the beautiful theater in Clubhouse 3 on February 14, 2008 with the Clubhouse 3 manager.

Throughout the conversation, waves of negativity rolled toward us.

The clubhouse manager brought the conversation to a close, frowning, shaking her head, "You can't possibly do this; I won't allow it!"

That didn't sit well with David who had become weary of the negativity and threatened, "I'll see that you lose your fucking job!"

Soon after this, the manager became very friendly and willingly began to work with us. She did leave her job not long afterward; but not because of our differences.

Fight for Sponsors

In 2014 and 2015 after the implementation of a rule banning sponsors, we requested an exception to the rules to allow sponsors and to have sponsor tables in the lobby; the directors rejected our requests. As a result we cancelled the September 27, 2014 benefit for the Foundation of Laguna Woods Village and the June 20, 2015 benefit for Alzheimer's Association. But we didn't give up.

I went all the way to the top to fight for the right to have a combined musical show in the summer of 2016 for the community which would also be a benefit for charity with sponsor contributions.

The new CEO instructed, "Start with the initial request again – this time it will be approved."

We completed the initial paperwork, only to receive a rejection letter from a CAC director to even place our request on the first level agenda; we knew we were in for a fight.

I immediately scheduled an appointment with the CEO; he assured me my request would move forward and it did, until it reached the second level where it was rejected. I stood up to register my disappointment.

A director ordered, "Sit down; we've made our decision."

Shaking my head, I began to walk out.

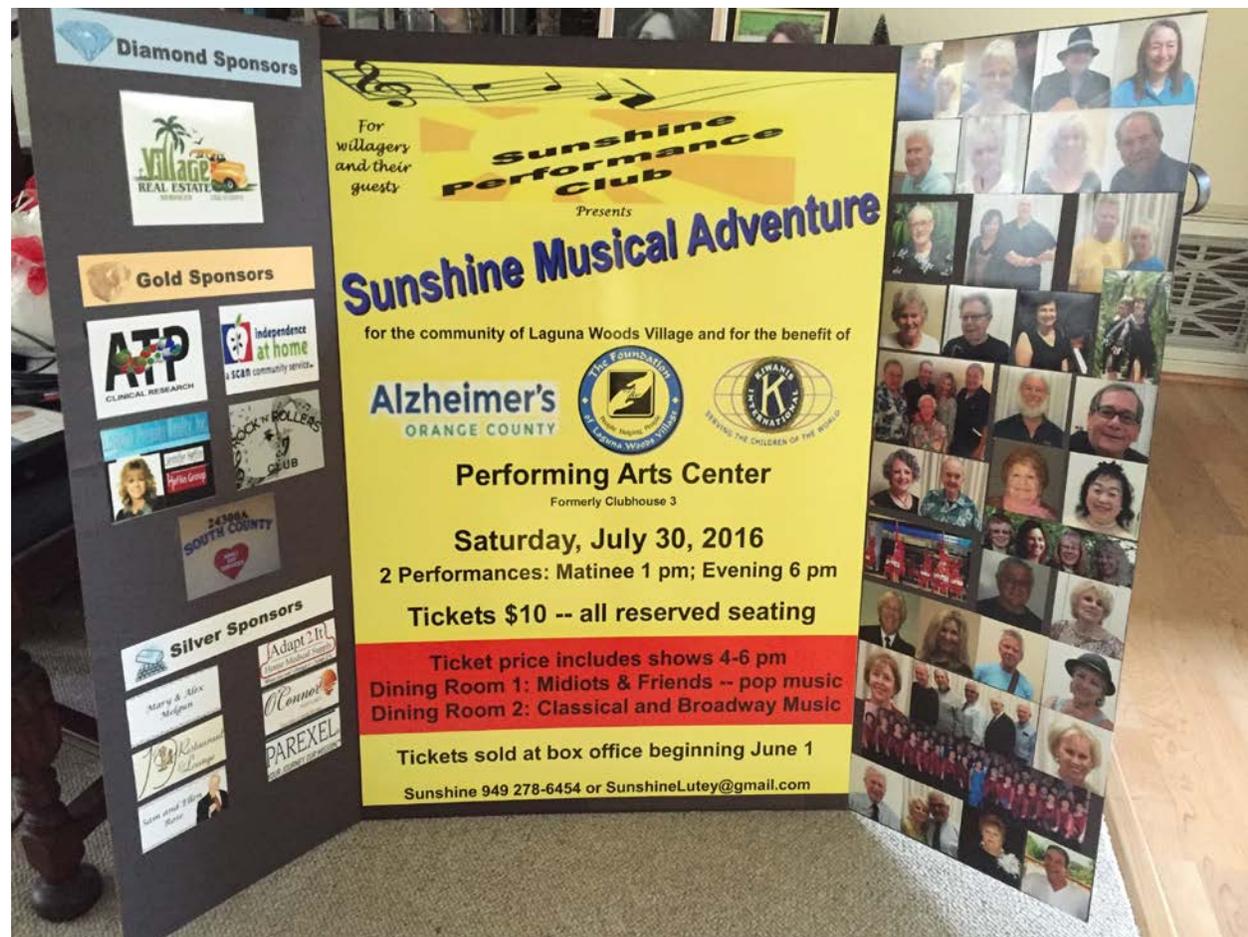
The Community Manager met me at the door and quietly assured, "Don't worry; you'll have your event with sponsors in the lobby."

So we proceeded with the 2016 Sunshine Musical Adventure.

The “Too Big” Poster Story

David and I wanted an attention-grabbing poster for the 2016 Sunshine Musical Adventure. The rules for posters in the Performing Arts Center at that time were simple “the poster can be no larger than 33 x 40 inches.” Together we planned a unique creation. We bought poster board that was 40 x 40 inches and then folded the sides inward until the 33x 40 inch measurement was met. David attached metal brackets on the back to maintain the correct measurement permanently. We were pretty proud of it; we delivered it to the club house staff and requested an easel.

We set our poster on the easel and stood and enjoyed our handiwork.



The next day I walked through the clubhouse – the poster wasn't there. I checked the office; our poster sat on the office floor.

“Why is our poster in here?” I inquired with puzzlement.

“Our manager said we had to take it down; it doesn't meet the requirements.”

“But its' the correct dimensions,” I countered.

“You'll have to talk to the manager.”

I went to the manager's office “Why isn't our poster in the lobby? It's the correct dimensions.”

“It's too big!”

“Where's a tape measure? I'll show you it's the exact correct dimensions.”

We got the tape measure and I showed him it was precisely the correct measurement.

He wasn't satisfied, “But your poster is deeper than a normal poster.”

“The rules say nothing about depth.”

The manager frowned and shook his head, but as he replaced the poster on the easel, mumbled, “You are always bending the rules.”

Since I've always tried to work with the clubhouse staff as a team I didn't like the comment, but I didn't say anything; I was happy to have the poster in place again.

Later he warned, “I won't accept this kind of poster in the future.”

“But why? It's a very good poster.”

“It’s not fair – it has more real estate than the other posters.”

The “Lighted” Poster Story

The next show was the 2016 Sunshine Holiday Show. We wanted a poster, very original, very unique -- we had a new idea. We sent away for some tiny multicolored battery-operated string lights. We created the poster and when we received the lights, we taped the tiny lights around the edges with the battery pack on the back. The result was quite lovely; I proudly showed the staff the beautiful poster. They, too, thought it very pretty and the poster was mounted on an easel.

After the traffic in the lobby of the theater enjoyed the poster with the flickering lights for about three weeks, I received a strange e-mail from upper management.

“Sunshine, this poster needs to be reworked a little; it’s very busy and we are afraid no one in the lobby will stop and look at it. Our team can help you rework the poster.”

I replied, “I like the poster and I notice that traffic in the lobby seems to stop and enjoy the poster.”

Two days later, my phone rang; it was the recreation director. “Sunshine, you need to remove the lights from the poster.”

I was quiet for a moment before I asked, “But why? It’s very pretty and I’ve seen people enjoying it.”

“Well, the poster is hazardous; someone could trip over the wires.”

I began to laugh, “Sir, there nothing to trip over; the lights are battery operated.”

He had no response; he suddenly was aware I knew he'd never even seen the poster. But another voice spoke; it was the Community Manager.

“Sunshine you need to remove the lights or we will remove the poster.”

I couldn't debate with the Community Manager, the one who allowed us to have sponsors in the lobby at our events, but I did go one step further – “But there is no rule against lights on posters.”

She answered quickly, “There will be!”

So I acquiesced, “Ok; we'll remove the lights.”

That evening David and I ripped the lights off the poster; it was painful and the poster looked terrible. At Walmart, I purchased some red sequin-covered ribbon and taped the ribbon to the edges of the poster.



It looked better and there were no further complaints.

Final Poster Story – Vertical verses Horizontal

The poster for the 2017 Sunshine Musical Gala was similar to our 2016 Holiday Show poster – 33 x 40 inches. The middle contained the program information with sponsor information on the left and entertainer pictures on the right. A clubhouse staff member placed it on an easel in the lobby.

Title Sponsors

Mrs. Liang Xu
Member of the Chinese American Club

Dr. Henry Lee
President Emeritus
Chinese American Club

Diamond Sponsors

Mr. & Mrs. Allen and Susan Hsu
Member of the Chinese American Club

COLOR DIGIT

Sen. Maw (Woody) & Theresa Fang

VITAS Healthcare
Vitas Hospice Services

FIRST FOUNDATION

Gold Sponsors

ATP

scan

Silver Sponsors

Adapt It!

Orlando

The Toll Roads

Friends Sponsors

Sunshine Performance Club Presents

A Sunshine Musical Gala

for the community of Laguna Woods Village and for the benefit of

Alzheimer's ORANGE COUNTY

SUNSHINE FOUNDATION
SERVING THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

**Sunday, July 30, 2017
7 pm**

Performing Arts Center
Formerly Clubhouse 3

Tickets at Box Office: \$10 All Reserved Seats No-Host GRF Bar

**Ticket price includes pre-shows
4:30-6:30 pm**

**Dining Room 1: Village Idiots Pop, Rock n Roll,
and Dancing**

Dining Room 2: Classical, Broadway Plus

Entertainers

Sunshine 949 278-6454 or SunshineLutey@gmail.com

Several days later, when I returned to the clubhouse, both the poster and the easel were gone. The clubhouse staff initiated an unsuccessful search.

I was upset; I wondered, “Who could have taken the poster? Every day it’s not in place, is another day of lost promotion of the event.”

Within the day, the mystery was solved; the poster was in the clubhouse manager’s office.

I entered the office, “What’s going on?”

“Your poster is the wrong size.”

“It was cut to order, sir; I guarantee you it is 33 x 40 inches.”

The manager picked up the poster, walked into the lobby and held it up against the bulletin board. “Well, it is the correct dimensions, but it’s 40 inches horizontal; it needs to be 33 inches horizontal.”

I argued, “There is no mention of horizontal versus vertical in the rules, sir.”

He responded, “Well it’s assumed that the poster will be taller than it is wide. All posters must be approved by the Recreation Department. Do you get approval?”

He had me there; I’d missed that rule and I apologized, “I’m sorry; I wasn’t aware of that rule. But the poster is already created and paid for and the horizontal verses vertical is immaterial when the poster is on an easel. Can you let it be displayed, please?”

He put the poster back on the easel, so we were able to promote the 2017 summer show without further incident.

New Poster Rules

In 2017 the recreation department published new rules for posters:

- Posters must be approved in advance by the recreation department
- Posters cannot be lighted

I laughingly referred to the new rules as “The Sunshine Injunctions.”

I never saw mention of a horizontal versus vertical rule, but I suppose that’s covered in the “must be approved” rule.

Reduced Means of Promotion

- **Posters:** The Sunshine Performance Club requests to have posters to promote the community events at all the clubhouses, was approved for the first five years, but in 2013 GRF rejected our requests and all future requests which resulted in a major reduction in promotion of the shows, as only a single poster would be allowed at the show site.
- **Flyers:** There has been discussion by the governing boards to eliminate flyers in the clubhouses; flyers have already been eliminated in Clubhouse 2. Elimination of flyers would be another major reduction in promotion if this plan is ever implemented.
- **Laguna Woods Globe:** From 2008-2012 the Laguna Woods Globe graciously published seven stories about each event. This promotion slowly diminished over time: 2013- five per show; 2014- four per show; 2015 and 2016-three per show. The rules for 2018 state that two articles are allowed per show.
- **TV Channel 6:** prior to 2017 multiple interviews about an event were allowed; the current rule is a single interview per event.

Appeal of Show Content

The Sunshine Performance Club shows have always included a variety of music with old favorites, Classical, Broadway, Rock and Roll and music from the fifties through seventies, so that there would be something that everyone could enjoy. A core group in the Village greatly appreciated the shows; however, over the years the audiences grew younger. The new audiences seemed to prefer shows dedicated exclusively to the music of their teen years and were bored by other types of music, however well presented.

To put it in David's words, "We are producing wonderful buggy whips -- in an automotive age."

Unwieldy Number of Performers

The first Sunshine Performance Club show in 2008 started with eight performers; by the eighth show it expanded to 24 with many more in subsequent shows. When there were so many performers, getting everyone's participation in the final rehearsal with the technicians became difficult. Since the event programs for audience distribution are already in print before the final rehearsal, canceling acts for any number of reasons was virtually impossible. David and I invited members of other large performance groups to be in our shows, but often they didn't appear for the final rehearsal – a recipe for failure. In 2016, an orchestral group was scheduled to perform but didn't show up for the final rehearsal with the technicians. As a result, there was a five minute delay in the program while the technicians had to "on the spot" set them up. I told David, much to his dismay as he really appreciated their contribution to the show, "I will never invite them back!"

Reduced Audience Donations

Perhaps it's a sign of the times but the audience donations steadily decreased. In the final show with an audience of approximately 500, the audience donations were:

\$25 to Alzheimer's Orange County

\$20 to the Foundation of Laguna Woods Village

\$13 to Saddleback Kiwanis Foundation.

We were depressed by the lack of audience donations notwithstanding a large distribution of complimentary tickets.

Keeping Healthy

I discovered I have some talent for managing major events, but as I worked diligently to accomplish all the tasks for the various shows, I became sleep deprived. Since most of the tasks were completed at my laptop computer, I also became exercise deprived and I had almost no time for activities I truly enjoy, such as learning new songs, writing songs, improving my vocal, piano and horn skills, writing stories and exercising daily. Both lack of sleep and exercise contributed to ill health.

In May, 2017 I nearly totaled my car and then I wrecked David's car. Was it sleep deprivation or depression that caused the accidents?

Epilog

Starting with the eighth show in 2011, my family began twice annual trips from Colorado and Wisconsin to perform in the Sunshine Musical Variety shows; then my daughter Denise began to travel from Nevada to join us. Denise lamented “Why did I take so long to join in the laughing and singing fun?”



Beach Day, July 2017: The Sugarbabes after 19th Show
Sunshine Lutey, Denise Lutey, Beth Cornelius, Waverly Hanson

It was less than a week before the 2017 December Holiday Show. I hadn't yet made the decision to end the big shows. I found it extremely difficult to think about not performing with my family, with David and with our friends.

I began to consider alternate plans. Just before my family was scheduled to arrive, I texted them. "This may be our last big show; but since we all need a goal for the future, let's plan on having a small family and friends show in 2018."

My family usually helped with the final organizational requirements of the shows so they knew well the toll the commitment to produce these shows had taken. Not surprisingly, they fully and strongly supported the decision.

It was show time – even during the show, I kept thinking, "Do I really want to stop? This is so exciting, so rewarding."

But one thing made the answer easy; I was exhausted; so much so that immediately after the show I had a stomach virus attack. The family had exciting plans for that final day, including a trip to the beach, but I was so ill they took care of me instead.

Since the completion of the 20th major show, I've been recuperating, getting lots of sleep. The exercise hasn't happened yet because I'm still fighting colds and stomach problems – but I see good health just around the corner.

My plan for 2018 includes a daily schedule with time for piano, horn and vocal practice, as well as exercise and writing time. Of course I will continue to plan and perform in the small weekly shows at South County Adult Day Care which will be so easy when compared to my past schedule. One more thing – there will be a free family and friends party and show on Tuesday, October 30, 2018 in Clubhouse 7.

So, while it's goodbye to our major shows, the music will still go on as long as family and friends are able; all of us will continue to share the joy of music and –

Thanks for the memory!



Final moments of “The Last Show” December 3, 2017



Mingling with the audience after “The Last Show” December 3, 2017