



### Resident Profile: Maisie Olwell



Maisie (Margaret) Olwell's interest in art began in childhood;

her father was a curator in several museums and two aunts of her stepmother were artists. She made an abrupt transition to a more rustic way of life when she married; going from a small penthouse apartment in New York to a subsistence farm in Connecticut. She gave birth to three children in rapid succession, and then, tragically, was widowed in World War II. Her second marriage, to a refugee from Hitler, ended in divorce after 16 years. During those years the family moved west. Maisie volunteered with the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco and soon joined the staff as High School Secretary, arranging seminars on international relations and race relations — one of the pivotal experiences of her life.

After the divorce, Maisie found Bob Olwell, an architect and old friend, waiting in the wings. They were married in 1968. Bob was supportive of her art career and they had a wonderful marriage, lasting for twenty years, until his death.

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## Walls with Colors and Shapes

As this article meets deadline, Conrad Smeeth's 15 mixed-media paintings are coming down in the "art corridor" east of the lobby. Conrad was one of us. His apartment living-room was his atelier. These days, walking past his pictures, we at Friends House have been thinking how he lived and painted amongst us, how ill he became, how he supervised the hanging of his works so few weeks ago, and how he lately passed away.



Art shows normally stay about two months, after which the all-volunteer Art Corridor Committee brings in new ones. Between times, the walls appear grievously bare. We feel glad when the committee, coordinated by artist-resident Maisie Olwell (see *Resident Profile* at left), covers the bare spaces with new interest.

Our splendid tradition dates from when Friends House started and this building was new. The same artist who designed our logo, Margret Bowman, first adorned the corridor with her own creations. Later, for 12 years, resident Michael Kraike, assisted by Barbara Hodgkinson, took responsibility for every exhibit. He always looked for artists who had some association with Friends House.

"Nowadays," declares Maisie whimsically, "it takes eleven committee members to fill Michael's shoes! We work very much as a team — I couldn't do a thing without the rest." Eight are Friends House residents, such as Jay Johnson who scouts the local ateliers and prepares textual information for exhibitions. Another, Jack Ruppel, is an artistic staff member who prepares the graphics. Two are off-campus Santa Rosans: Linda Heiser, who serves on the "hanging committee" and benefits from being tall, and Joe Zondlo, who assists through acquaintance with the local art world.

Since it formed in March 2004, the committee has organized 23 exhibitions of notable diversity. Examples include many watercolors; prints from local prestigious Annex Gallery; textiles loaned from residents' own collections; works by Mario Uribe, whose varied oeuvre is well known in town; our talented staff's art; Gold Country photographs; oils by Maury Lapp, an art scene icon; and submissions

by Adult Day Health Services participants (who meet weekdays at Friends House).

If spectators express interest in buying art pieces on display, Friends House will put them in touch with the artists. Not infrequently this happens.

*continued on page 3...*

**Friends House  
Celebrates its  
25th Anniversary  
in 2009!**

*See details on page 4.*

*Friends House is a Continuing Care Retirement Community where simplicity and vitality are valued.*

## General Information

707-538-0152

Monday through Friday  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Jim Johnson  
Executive Director  
707-573-4501

Paddy Coreris  
Director of Development  
707-573-4508

Apartment Resident Services  
707-573-4504

Health Care Unit  
707-573-4517

Assisted Living Center  
707-573-4523

Volunteer Services  
707-538-0152

## Board of Directors

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## Newsletter Contributors

Paul Burks • Betsy Harrell  
Barbara Hodgkinson  
Jay Johnson • Harry Zollinger



## Friends Association of Services for the Elderly

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Message from the Executive Director  
Jim Johnson

## A Question of Palliative Care

Well, I'm no expert. But I have been working in Long Term Care, as we call it, for ages. This term applies to care and services, delivered mostly to elders, in skilled nursing, assisted living, intermediate care, and adult day health. Some academics include elder housing as part of Long Term Care. I also worked as a Licensed Vocational Nurse in a San Francisco hospital for much of the 1970s. My job there was to give hands-on care to the hospitalized. Our "case load" of Medical-Surgical patients **always** included elders. When working the day shift I would usually have people who needed to be fed breakfast and lunch. I spent a lot of time doing this, and also attending to the care of incontinent individuals (who lacked bowel and bladder control). As an LVN I also provided my five or six patients per day their medications, including pain, but not IV medicines. A Registered Nurse on the team would deliver that service. As nurses we got to know people and their families pretty intimately.

At Friends House, we now have increasing interest in palliative care. We had a really good lecture here recently by Dr. Brad Stuart, medical director of Sutter VNA and Hospice. Dr. Stuart displayed wonderful focus on the questions from Friends House residents, and I felt he showed a lot of heart. He administers one of the many hospices serving us in Santa Rosa, but he pointed out that hospice is only one facet of palliative care. I heard him explain that palliative care meant managing chronic illness, but not finding a cure. The types of disease conditions he mentioned were diabetes, congestive heart failure, kidney disease, Alzheimer's, and the like. He noted that a great benefit of palliative care is helping people maintain their *highest level of functioning as well as manage chronic pain, assuaging suffering.*

American health care systems also have great interest in palliative care. "According to a new study of eight hospitals by the Center to

Advance Palliative Care and the National Palliative Care Research Center, hospitals can save on average of \$279 per day on patients in palliative care programs. The study also showed that with palliative care, ICU costs per admission were lowered by \$6,613." (Source: Hospital Association of Southern California and the Archives of Internal Medicine.) With the runaway cost of medical care, especially some

end-of-life treatment, doctors and hospitals will focus on cost savings, and these are our doctors, and our hospitals.

*The goal of palliative care is to prevent and relieve suffering and to improve quality of life for people facing serious, complex illness.*

—wikipedia.org

What does this mean to us? Accessing palliative care may be a better way for us to live. Since Dr. Stuart's visit, I have been talking to residents and having discussions at meetings and Cluster lunches, about how I feel moving to Friends House can be a first step towards activating palliative care. When residents require help in their apartments, they are getting help to maintain their *highest level of functioning.* The residents also have the advantage of receiving the support of Melody Allmond and Louise Patterson, the Resident Services Coordinator and Resident Services Nurse, respectively, in managing some acute or chronic condition right here at home. There are Health Aides like Ingrid Feiertag, Bev Ford, and Alice Weaver, whom residents know and come to depend upon for help with some Instrumental Activities of Daily Living. These IADLs are things like shopping, laundering, and getting to appointments. These Friends House staff can also deliver help with bathing and grooming while a person lives in his or her apartment. Care is already available. And if a resident needs to move to Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing, these centers are right on campus. Friends remain nearby.

Friends House is well positioned with 25 years of service to provide palliative care that will nurture well-being and quality of life. The support of our community is strong.

# Nola Has Seen It All

“That’s right,” said Nola Fallis mildly. “I’m an original here; I’ve worked at Friends House since the very beginning.” She had been a Nurse’s Aide at Healdsburg Convalescent Hospital, until one day co-worker Richard Welsch (the one other “original” still on our staff) told her about this wonderful facility which was opening in Santa Rosa. She applied and had her interview right in the lobby 25 years ago.

Nola smiles at the memory of Millie Burt hiring her for the Skilled Nursing Facility. She remembers how the staff were waiting for the Department of Health Services to deliver a license so we could officially open. Reflecting on her career, she says with some spirit, “care-giving has always been my passion; I realized early that that’s where I felt comfortable.”

When Nola arrived, the Ring Road was paved and apartments were up, but “there was nothing else but dirt. Just bare. It was summertime, before the planting of flowers and shrubs.” The “Christmas tree” now dominating the green was just a baby, planted soon after her arrival.

Before 1990 Friends House had no Assisted Living facilities. It began in the grey building on Benicia Drive where apartments 68-70 are now located.

Nola became its



*Nola (right) assists resident, Denny, with her call button.*

*“Walls with Colors and Shapes” continued...*

The project of exhibiting Conrad’s paintings gave him a jolt of excitement at the end of his life. He sat up in bed and began looking fine as he helped plan details. He came alive, no longer a dying person. He supervised during the hanging in the corridor and was “fussy, fussy, fussy” over decisions as to placement of his creations.

manager, with the title of Administrator of Residential Care Facilities. There were six residents. Rules were so simple that one binder contained all of them, whereas modern regulations — Nola gestured to rafts of white binders — have grown to tremendous proportions. She says, “there’s a lot of responsibility in taking care of people’s lives.”

Assisted Living folk need help with personal care but have stable health issues. The facility’s caregivers attend to the current six residents’ medical and dental appointments, arrange transportation, prepare breakfast and supper (lunch comes from the Friends House kitchen), do housekeeping chores, and assist with medications — not only for the six here but also for a fair number of independent-living residents in their individual apartments. Nola is enthusiastic about the recent trend to help apartment residents age in-home, as long as they’re able and want to.

And she appreciates the smallness of our assisted care facility; since being small preserves a homelike atmosphere. Nola believes it’s important for the six to be involved in interesting activities, and it’s her dream that a designated activities person might come regularly. Likewise, she knows how important it is for her charges to go out and feel part of the larger community. Yet when their frailties increase, they become more sensitive about asking others to help them attend a lecture or concert and be wheeled home afterwards.

Having worked as a caregiver at Friends House since April of 1984, Nola seems the perfect person to be honored on these pages during the bright occasion of our upcoming 25th anniversary in April of 2009.

He would fume, “I want this picture here. No, not there!”

“I like organizing exhibitions because I’m an artist myself, and that makes it very interesting,” says Maisie. Jay concludes, “It’s very satisfying to see walls come alive with colors and shapes from an artist’s imagination — and not just one, but an amazing variety of artists over the years.”

*“Maisie Olwell” continued*

In the 60s, Maisie attended the San Francisco Art Institute and, at the age of 42, earned both a BFA and MFA. Her work was displayed in group shows in the East Bay and San Francisco. She calls it “good luck” that her artwork was accepted by the Museum of Modern Art’s Rental Gallery. Her pieces were often rented and, through these rentals, she sold most of her paintings. Her work has been shown at Friends House twice.

For several years after moving to Friends House, Maisie maintained a studio in Santa Rosa, until she stopped painting. At this point she was becoming more involved in the life of Friends House. She served first as Vice Chair and then Chair of the Apartment Residents’ Association and House Council for two years each; Chair of the Nominating Committee for four-to-five years; Chair of the Art and Décor Committee (ongoing); and she has been the keeper of the Memorial Book and of the archives of the minutes for both the Association and Council for many years.

In 2003, she became Chair (Coordinator) of the Corridor Art Gallery Committee and has served it extremely well ever since. She began the practice of asking each artist whose work is being shown to give a Sunday afternoon talk, followed by a reception. At first they were lightly attended but the interest has grown greatly over the years.

Maisie is a charming, gracious and creative person who has done much to make Friends House more enjoyable for all of us.

## Did You Know?

One of our residents has lived at Friends House since 1984.

A resident received a VIP invitation to attend President Obama's inauguration.

We have five trained Ham radio operators (3 staff, 2 residents) on campus to assist with communications in the event of a disaster.



# Friends House

[www.friendshouse.org](http://www.friendshouse.org)

**25th Anniversary  
1984-2009**

Friends Association of  
Services for the Elderly  
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Santa Rosa, CA 95409

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## Holiday Faire at Friends House Raises \$4,600



*Above: Ladies enjoy English Tea, Quaker style, at the Holiday Faire.*



*Left: Nancy Bailey from the Wine Country Rug Hooking Guild demonstrates.*

With deepest gratitude, we thank everyone who attended and participated in this first annual event. Over 50 volunteers donated their time and talents to make our first Holiday Faire a success. A special thank you goes to Richard Lambert and The Arm Group for supporting the event with a sponsorship and Jackie Thresh, from the Melitta Station Inn, who served as our English Tea (Quaker Style) consultant.

We had such a good time we're going to do it again! Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 21, 2009, as we continue to celebrate Friends House 25th Anniversary all year long.

## Celebrating 25 Years in 2009!

**Saturday, April 25, 1:00 – 4:00 PM  
Anniversary Celebration**

**Celebrate Friends House  
Beginning, Present and Future**  
Although this is not a fundraising event, sponsors will help offset expenses.

**Saturday, May 9 • The Human Race**  
Participate as a sponsor, donor or volunteer.  
Raise pledges for Friends House.

**Saturday, November 21  
Holiday Faire and Quaker Tea**

Held at Friends House.  
Sponsors are greatly appreciated.

Watch for details. If you would like to help with these events, please contact Paddy Coreris at 707-573-4508, or email her at [pcoreris@friendshouse.org](mailto:pcoreris@friendshouse.org).

If you wish to have your name removed from Friends House mailing list, please contact Paddy.