



## Resident Profile: Clare Morris

by Barbara Hodgkinson



When you first meet Clare, you sense a quiet, calm, spiritual strength,

although her life has often been a whirlwind of activity.

Born legally blind with a rare retinal syndrome, Clare has always seen life as though she were watching a black-and-white, overexposed, out-of-focus film. Her parents were told she would never read but she learned to do so with her classmates, and reads now with the help of contacts, glasses and magnifiers. Her constant companion these days is a labrador retriever guide dog named Joy.

Although Clare's family has been Quaker for generations, when she was a sophomore at Mills College, she was introduced by a friend to the Roman Catholic Church. She was immediately drawn to its mystical life. After studying church teachings, she was baptized and four years later entered a community of Ursuline nuns, where she remained for twenty-five years.

While an Ursuline, Clare

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## A Community of Giving Hearts

by Betsy Harrell

With the Christmas season of GIVING behind us and the loving HEARTS of Valentine's Day approaching, it's fitting to highlight Friends House residents' who volunteer with other non-profits. Although not all of us do this, in general we're a lively population with a social conscience. During the Christmas season, 21 people took time to list 54 off-campus activities they are engaged in. Four people, who all mentioned their other volunteering jobs, chose just one to describe:



Charlotte Smith has a generous heart and always loved sewing. For 20 years she's made patchwork quilts for those needing warmth and comfort. Nowadays, she creates about 50 a year for foster children—the very young ones who've been pulled from their homes in crisis situations of danger. Charlotte's quilts are delivered to Sonoma County Valley of the Moon Children's Center; placed into duffelbags along with clothing like jeans, pajamas and diapers; properly labeled (e.g., 1-year-old boy, 5-year-old girl); and shelved until delivery to emergency foster homes. Each colorful, beautifully designed quilt is an original. When the child moves again the quilt goes along, providing a touch of security and caring.



Pat Herron, retired judge and farmer, has homes in Point Richmond, Sonoma Valley and Friends House. She speaks of her 30-year volunteer commitment to the board of directors for Contra Costa County's Early Childhood Mental Health Association. Twice she has served as board president. Pat is known on the board for a propensity to ask many questions and to think outside the box in ways that lead to valuable

suggestions. The association treats children between two and six for severe mental health issues. "The improvement and recovery that the youngsters experience make all the work worthwhile," says Pat. Interestingly, the association also attends to related problems the children's family members have.



Born in America and married to a Dutchman, Georgie McLean's life straddling two continents has resulted in volunteering for a Dutch organization even while living in Santa Rosa. This she accomplishes through counseling by phone and computer. The clients are women refugees in a training and therapy center—where Georgie was a staff member—in her husband's hometown. The refugees reach The Netherlands from violence-torn lands like Iraq and Somalia. They need an empathetic ear and experienced psychotherapist to listen and offer counsel. Georgie, who herself once adapted to a foreign culture, is well qualified to help. She also volunteers for the center by translating texts from Dutch to English. Presently she's translating a workshop guide entitled "The Challenge of Anger."



After a career in the California Capitol, Steve Birdle-bough now calls himself a "recovering lawyer" pursuing another interest: trains. Upon arrival in Santa Rosa he saw the tracks empty and wondered, "Why don't we enjoy some of the rail transportation we had early in the 20th century?" He was soon working to establish a citizens' group advocating for passenger service on the existing railroad right of way. As a member of the Citizens' Oversight Committee

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



Message from the Executive Director  
Jim Johnson

## Seminal Changes

### 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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Friends House provides a ready-made intentional community for Friends and fellow travelers over 60. We've been in Santa Rosa for 27 years and are proud of the community we've created. Our small size lends to the intimacy we experience but does not create economy of scale. It also makes for a smaller group over which to spread the cost of operating a three-tiered retirement community governed by a plethora of regulations and agencies that come with its three levels: independent apartment living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care.

As we have reported, for the last few years the occupancy of the skilled nursing unit (small at a capacity of 34) has been declining. The drop in census has affected our bottom line and forced us to examine our basic business model.

The board decided to turn away from the "medical model" reflected by skilled nursing to a "social model" where care is still provided yet less emphasis is placed on doctors and nurses, and more focus is on quality of life and living environment. The newest retirement community in Santa Rosa, and the lesbian-gay-bisexual and transgender community being planned in town, use only the social model for care. Few skilled nursing units have been built in California in the last two decades.

Until this year the management of Friends House has been reporting that apartment residents have been subsidizing the skilled nursing unit. But recently our research indicates a more complicated picture. Resident entry fees for a typical California Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) have the primary purpose of providing for capital growth, funding depreciation, and establishing healthy reserves. Our Quaker-inspired retirement community wanted desperately to keep fees low. So low, that a major consultant in our field suggests we're the lowest-priced, multi-level retirement community in California reflected in a ten-year span of charges (entry fees or not, and monthly fees.)

So while residents paid what they were asked to pay, an entry fee and monthly fees, the revenue

from entry fees, and donations, have been used by the board as a "corporate subsidy" for the operation of the entire community including skilled nursing and apartments. Administrative expenses and additional costs for the dietary, housekeeping, and maintenance departments have been funded from monies that the finance committee knows should have been used for establishing better reserves and for capital expenses. As our former finance officer frequently reported, skilled nursing always covered its basic operating costs, but it could not cover the administrative burden charged to its cost center. Romeo Sarte, current finance officer, observes that the high allocation of dietary, housekeeping, and maintenance costs add to the burden of the skilled nursing unit. In a typical CCRC model, resident monthly fees pay a larger proportion of these costs.

We find ourselves in an exciting but challenging seminal period where we transform our nursing facility into assisted living—or personal care, as we call it. Personal care will become the main care component of Friends House. Our cost structure and allocations are changing, and residents are being asked to shoulder more of the costs associated with maintaining the infrastructure. Residents are understandably concerned and upset about rising costs and a degree of uncertainty with our plan. But I believe the board recognizes the need to continue a level of corporate subsidy of the monthly fees for apartment residents by designating some percentage or amount of resident entry fees for this purpose. The board's personal care task force is divided into three subcommittees meeting frequently to bring transition plans to fruition.

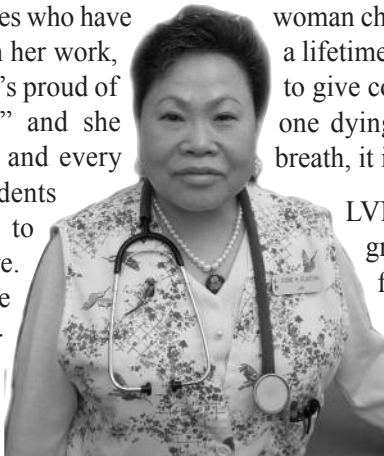
The board believes that with this transition, Friends House will be able to offer its residents a more up-to-date care model and we will ultimately attain a better financial model for long-term viability. To allow for a smoother transition, the projected date for the skilled nursing closure and the personal care inauguration as been extended for three to six months beyond the original anticipated date of March 31, 2011.

# The Nocturnal Nurse

by Betsy Harrell

Less than five feet tall, very erect, finely coiffed, with a long, jade hairpin to bind her hip-length black hair in a bun during her nightly working hours, Chong Gilardoni regularly promenades the campus road in early morning. She's just off duty and unwinding before heading home to husband and a good day's sleep.

For well over 20 years, Chong, a Korean-American, has worked in Friends House skilled nursing (aka Health Care Unit). She first came as a Certified Nursing Assistant, but left for a period to become licensed. For a long time now, she has been the charge nurse heading the Monday through Friday nighttime shifts. And why does she remain so many years here? You'll have to ask her, but the first reason involves an arresting tale of early loyalty to one certain patient and to Millie Burt, the Director of Nursing who hired and showed her trust in Chong. Also, she recalls with pleasure the many teammates who have befriended and supported her in her work, especially at the beginning. She's proud of being a "Friends House girl," and she knows each corner of campus and every tree. She recalls so many incidents over the years that happened to patient-residents under her care. And she entertains a sincere fondness for us "independent-living" residents, many of whom in return speak respectfully and affectionately of her.



Patient-residents tell Chong she eases them, because her very presence gives a sense of security: "I sleep better," they confide. Such compliments help a nurse continue! Indeed, Chong feels a special energy and power to help the healing process and has written a book on the subject, which is in our library. During nighttime, patients need special comfort which she finds she's good at delivering; she's good at palliative and end-of-life care, too.

Citing one anecdote, she describes a dying woman who repeatedly begged, "Where is Chong? Where is Chong? Help me, I want you." The upshot was that, with the patient's family's agreement, Chong stayed the weekend without pay to keep vigil with the woman. Chong had thought the death would last three days, but every single night thereafter for six weeks Chong was with her "special lady," holding her hand at the final moment. "If you give your heart, patients know," Chong believes. "Although exhausted, I felt privileged that the woman chose me over others. How often in a lifetime does a person get such a chance, to give comfort, without a word, to someone dying? When a patient takes a last breath, it is precious, the life."

LVN NOC Nurse Chong would grieve if she were to be separated from Friends House. In her odd but clear and piercing English, she expresses it thus: "Friends House has been my only Temple in my heart ever since I came."



*Friends House Celebrates Vincent Salmon's 99th Birthday.*

*"A Community of Giving Hearts" continued...*

for the Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit District, he's now the accessible, knowledgeable person that community leaders can go to for details about the project's progress.

Steve says, "Friends House provides a wonderful foundation for doing good work in the area. It has a reputation as a community of forward-thinking activists. My new neighbors provided important introductions to community leaders and helped me find a niche where I could help do something that needed doing."

*"Resident Profile: Clare" continued...*

taught in the Order's high schools for eight years before focusing on Peace Education. She worked full-time for several years in this field, and was the first Coordinator for the Ecumenical Peace Institute of Northern California.

Following these years, Clare, on sabbatical, traveled through the Far East, Middle East, Europe, and the Eastern United States, in addition to living in Rome for six months for an intense program of study and prayer. While out of the U.S., she experienced an understanding that social activists and spiritual contemplatives needed each other. People tended to live one of these life choices. Clare thought the two belonged together. She was determined to do something about it.

Coincidentally, when she returned home, the Ursulines' Santa Rosa center for training new members was nearly empty. She was asked to organize a retreat and conference program there. With help from many Sonoma County residents, she developed the Angela Center; its programs integrated social responsibility, spirituality, depth psychology and the arts.

After having lived and worked at the Center for nine years, Clare moved to San Francisco, where she intensified her leadership training with the Guild for Psychological Studies, whose seminars attempted to inspire an expanding consciousness through the study of Jesus, Jung, mythology and the arts. At the California Institute of Integral Studies she earned a Master's and Doctorate in Counseling Psychology and became a licensed Marriage and

Family Therapist. She then developed a private practice in the Jungian tradition.

In 2008 Clare moved to Friends House. Here, surrounded by a wise and caring community, she continues to see clients, though now on a pro bono and occasional basis, and focuses on her love for writing. She has published two books of poetry—*In Transit: Love Poems to the City* and *Child of the Longest Night*. Her memoir, *Falling Into Light: A Mother and Daughter Give Birth to Each Other*, will be available in the spring.

## Did You Know?

...one of our residents was a Tuskegee Airman; one organized the first freedom ride into the South in 1947; one was a Foreign Service Officer; one was a writer of books for young children; and one is a tap dancer!

Interesting folks call Friends House their home.

### Book Donations

Friends House Library needs used books. Contact Harriett Gordon at 707-576-6606 or [ffrybooks@yahoo.com](mailto:ffrybooks@yahoo.com).



Friends Association of  
Services for the Elderly  
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## Quaker Tea

It was a stormy day for our annual Holiday Faire in November but it didn't stop people from enjoying our Quaker Tea and craft sales — net proceeds exceeded \$4,300.



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Paddy Coreris, Director of Development, is a member of AFP and former member of AHP. Please contact her if you have questions about making a contribution, the Donor Bill of Rights, or would like to have your name removed from our mailing list. Phone: 707-573-4508. Email: [pcoreris@friendshouse.org](mailto:pcoreris@friendshouse.org).