

# Villager

Masonicare  
at Ashlar Village  
A Continuing Care Retirement/Life Plan Community

## Embracing a Culture & Family Abroad

Marian Dobbs sits on a sofa within her beautifully-appointed Ashlar Village cottage, surrounded by photos and mementos from no less than 11 trips to Japan. She practically commutes from Wallingford to Far East Japan, where her son, daughter-in-law and two beloved grandchildren eagerly await her arrival.

Her response to any surprise expressed over the number of trips she's taken to visit her son, Roger, his wife, Toshimi, and grandchildren Noah, 5 and Sena, 3, is simple: "If you have grandchildren in Japan, you just have to go to Japan."

And go to Japan she has; at least 11 times over the past 8 years she's made the 27-hour round-trip journey to a culture she's come to embrace, along with the numerous friends she's made there.

"Roger was working for a financial firm in Toronto," she says. "Once having met Toshimi, he decided to move to her homeland just outside of Tokyo."

continued on next page



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# Assisted Living Insights

## A gentleman returns to Connecticut

As **George Larsson** looks out at the magnificent view from his living room window, you might have the impression he's not looking at the shimmering pond below but perhaps reflecting on 92 years of blissful memories.

Left: George keeps young with a 5 mile ride.

When he moved to his one-bedroom apartment in Pond Ridge Assisted Living almost two years ago, George's family made sure he was surrounded by photos and reminders of a wonderful life, a life that included two wives who predeceased him—one of 46 years and another of 16 years—along with a son Eric who lives in Trumbull, a daughter Ellen living in Virginia, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

**“A blue-eyed, soft-spoken man sporting a gray v-neck sweater over a tan shirt and chinos, George looks nowhere near his age.”**

Gesturing to the fresh water fishing tackle standing in the corner of his living room, George recalls a lot of fresh as well as salt water angling over the years. Although he doesn't fish much anymore, he does get his exercise! “Now I spend my days exercising and socializing. I stationary bicycle five miles each morning, six days a week,” he reports. He then walks to the dining hall “for breakfast – my big meal of

### Embracing a culture & family abroad Cont'd

I was living in Old Saybrook and I realized that if the time came that I needed lifestyle assistance, my children wouldn't be close by to help me, so it was then I decided to move to Ashlar Village.” Marian also has two stepchildren that she sees frequently; Jennifer, in Philadelphia and Brian in New York.

The decision to relocate to Ashlar was prompted by the exposure Marian had three years earlier with close friends who invited her to spend a weekend with them in their villa at Ashlar. She came to admire the Masonicare community so much that she began looking at various residence options.

Stroking her Chihuahua, Billy Boy, “my boyfriend for the past three years,” this soft-spoken, modest woman says, “Back then I wasn't ready to move, but I knew I would eventually have to make a decision. I visited several times, looking at cottages and I met a lot of people. Making the decision to move here was a good one,” she said.

Moving to Ashlar has provided Marian with a carefree lifestyle and time to focus on her interests and travels. She began taking classes at Central Connecticut State University in order to improve her Japanese. “The wonderful thing about the state universities is that courses are free for seniors.”

Marian, a former social worker and New York divorce attorney, lived in Manhattan for 20 years before moving to Connecticut to care after her ailing parents in Old Saybrook.

Marian enjoys current events, exercising at the “Y” three days a week, and, of course, Billy Boy. “Everyone told me not to get a dog because I travel too much,” she says. “But I wanted a dog anyway. I went to the pound in Old Saybrook and when this Chihuahua sat on my lap, it was love at first sight.”

Today, life for Marian is a moveable feast. Next on her agenda is a visit from a Japanese friend and then a January trip back to Japan in time for New Year's.

“It's wonderful there! On New Year's Eve people stay home and wait for midnight and the tolling of bells at many famous Shinto shrines throughout the country,” she says excitedly. “On New Year's Day everyone goes to a shrine. It's a big celebration that includes lines of families waiting to say a prayer and make a wish.”

No doubt, Marian's wish during her 12th trip to Japan will be for many more trips to follow.

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Marian (with Billy Boy) is wearing a Japanese Yukata traditionally worn during the summer months in Japan.





## A gentleman returns to Connecticut Cont'd

the day: oatmeal, blueberries, a banana, and a cupcake.” He takes Sundays off from his workout when “my granddaughter takes me to church in Fairfield where my grandchildren join me.”

As he looks back over his years as a photocopy and calculator repair man living in Bridgeport, George focuses almost exclusively on family. “My family is Swedish all the way,” he says. “My father’s parents were from Sweden, but he was born here. My mother, however, lived on her family’s farm in Calmar, Sweden, where they raised cattle and sheep.”

“I had a wonderful marriage to Ruth for 46 years,” he says. After Ruth died, George didn’t plan to remarry. However, he and Priscilla, “crossed paths.” After dating for six or seven months, one day Priscilla solemnly asked to meet with George. “I could tell that our talk was difficult for her, so I came right out and said ‘I love you and I want

to marry you. Are your concerns over with now?’” She said “yes,” to George’s question and “yes” to marrying him. She added “I could never expect a fella as nice as you.” The two moved to Florida where they spent 16 years before Priscilla died.

After Priscilla’s passing, George – a 65-year Mason and Past Grand Patron of Connecticut’s Order of the Eastern Star – moved into a senior living community in Williamsburg, Virginia near his daughter. After a year and a half there, he decided it was time to come back home to Connecticut and his Masonic roots.

And it’s apparent that he continues to be the same “nice fella” Priscilla loved. In the Pond Ridge lobby, the smiling receptionist points to beautiful flowers atop her desk and asks, “Aren’t they gorgeous? George gave them to me!”

## Finer Things in Life Sample ways to get involved at Ashlar



If you think moving to a retirement community means slowing down, think again. As Masonicare at Ashlar Village resident Frank Manfredi says, “If you can’t find something to do here, there’s something wrong!”

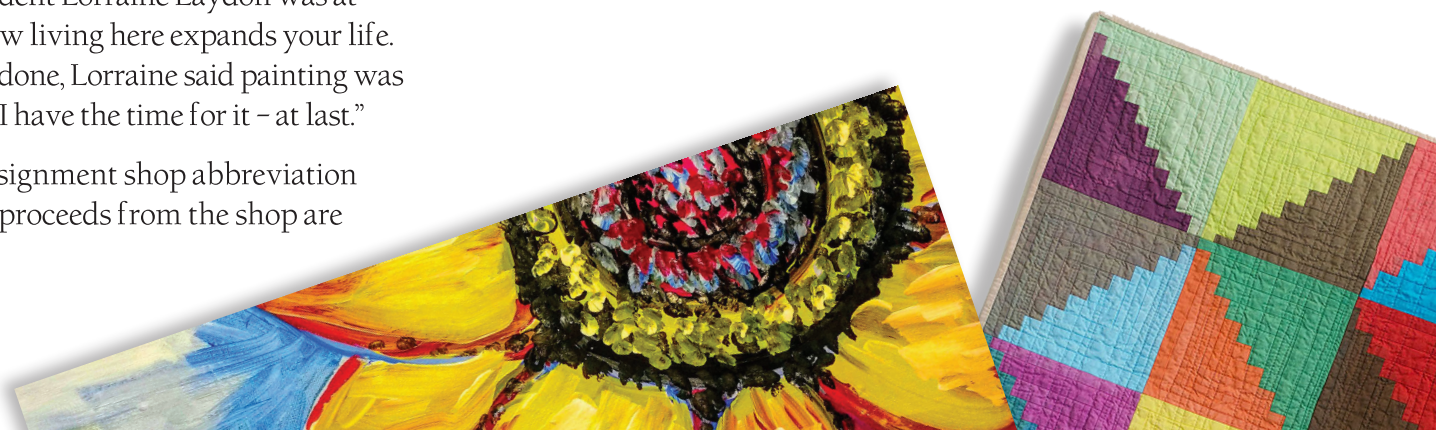
As proof, on September 26 more than 100 Ashlar Village residents and residents-in-waiting filled the Hartog Auditorium for wall-to-wall fun at “The Ashlar Sampler.” This exposition-style event showcased dozens of ways to get involved on campus.

In all, there were 38 tables devoted to resident-driven, resident-run passions such as the Trail Walkers, woodworking, the “Bookies” book club, yoga, Reiki therapy, and more. Resident Lorraine Laydon was at the Art Class table and a testament to how living here expands your life. Displaying a beautiful seascape she had done, Lorraine said painting was “something I’d always wanted to do and I have the time for it – at last.”

Items from the campus’ Op Shop (a consignment shop abbreviation for Opportunities) were on display. All proceeds from the shop are donated to charity or scholarships.

Several people watched Peg Limbacher knit the latest fashion statement—the infinity scarf—which she described as having “no beginning and no end and can be found everywhere, it’s such a popular style” adding “it’ll last forever.” She was a sight to behold as she feverishly clicked knitting needles while surrounded by other beautiful items, including handmade baby sweaters and one-of-a-kind items from the Specialty Shop, which is run by residents.

The Sampler event also included information on technology, caregiver support and an oncology support group. Take it from Frank Manfredi: “There is so much to do here . . . the people are marvelous.”







# Health & Wellness Supporting our Memory Care Community

Every Tuesday at 10:00am residents of the Argonauta welcome a special friend for a visit, Stephanie Schupp.

A native of Germany and an accomplished cellist, Stephanie volunteers her time and musical talents to provide residents with an experience that is fun, interactive and quite beneficial for anyone with memory loss.

Stephanie has a Master's Degree in music from the University of Freiburg and a second major in elementary music pedagogy. As part of her studies, Stephanie worked at a senior living community. It was during this time that she developed an affinity for working with older adults and where she first experienced how music can provide far more than just entertainment for those with Alzheimer's or other dementias. She saw how

music and movement combined can stimulate engagement and communication -even help those with advanced dementia recall lost words and language.

Upon moving to Connecticut last February with her husband, a pulmonologist who is completing a two-year research project at Yale School of Medicine, Stephanie reached out to Masonicare with a willingness to volunteer in The Argonauta.

Stephanie's program has three basic elements - movement, rhythm and relaxation. After a seated "warm up" of gentle exercises, she plays a series of dances and games with a repertoire of musical highs and lows, and selections ranging from serious to silly that encourage resident interest and participation. Next is rhythmic body percussion - the most basic

form of making music. Residents are each provided props such as colorful scarves to move and sway to the beat or clap, tap and stomp while Stephanie plays short songs or folk melodies designed to help stimulate the brain in response. And finally, residents are treated to a medley of classical cello music for their relaxation and pure enjoyment.

This cheerful and outgoing 33-year-old looks forward to her weekly visits, "Everyone was very open to this and I really love spending time here. The residents are so happy to see me and I've gotten to know each of them and see how music reaches them individually. Even if someone can no longer talk - with music they can often sing." And sing happily they do - with this amazing young woman and her cello - bridging memories with music.



## You're Invited to an Open House!

Come see for yourself what life at Ashlar Village offers. Our Open House gives you ample time to tour a variety of options - including apartments, cottages and villas - as well as the shopping, dining and more in The Hartog Activities Center. You'll also hear from our residents why they chose Ashlar Village. Meeting and socializing with current residents provides valuable insight into the Ashlar Village lifestyle. So mark your calendar for our next Open House:

**Wednesday, January 17, 2018**

11:00 a.m.	Presentation and Q&A
Noon	Lunch with residents
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Tour of residential options

For further information on attending an Open House, please contact the Ashlar Village Marketing Department at 800-382-2244.

## Our Mission



The mission of Masonicare is to enhance quality of life of seniors through an exceptional continuum of person-centered care.



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