

A publication of Palm Village Retirement Community

# PALM VILLAGER

June 2021 | [palmvillage.com](http://palmvillage.com)

## SPECIAL FEATURES

Palm Village Receives Community Service Award

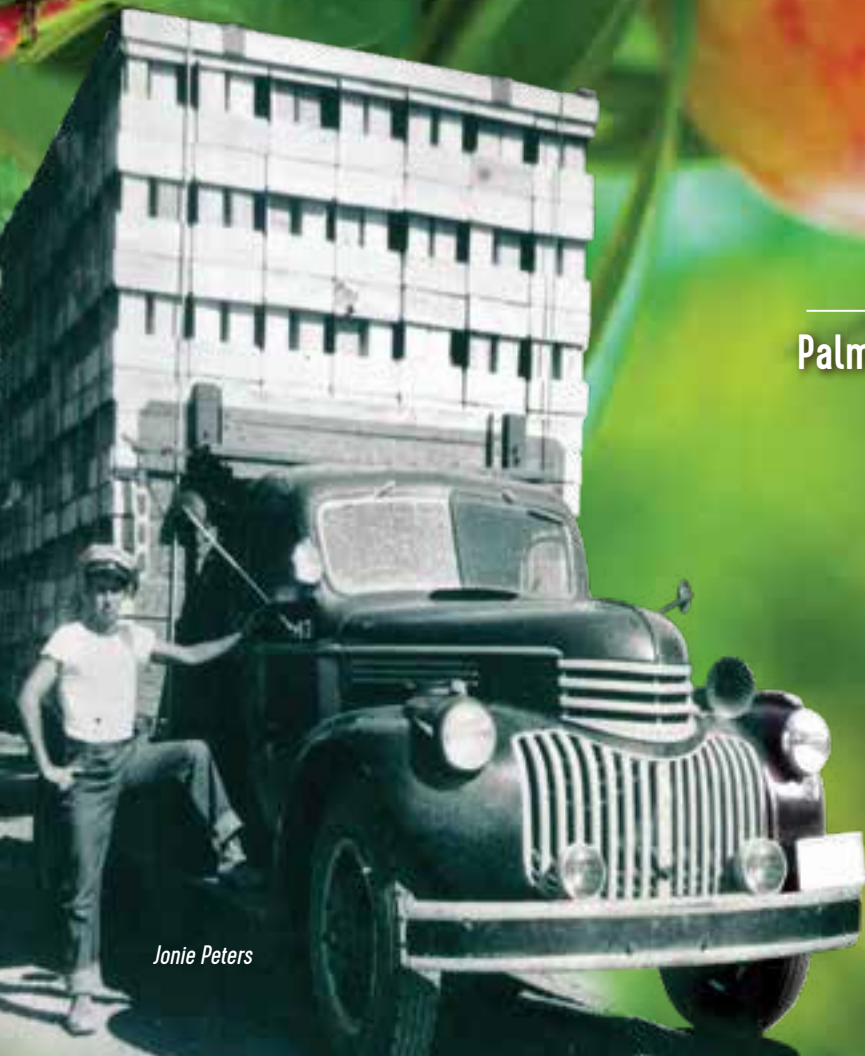
Resident Spotlight - Aldene Vogt

Five Generations - Peters Farms

Director of Marketing - Jim Dueck



**PALM VILLAGE**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY



*Jonie Peters*



## PALM VILLAGE

RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

703 W. Herbert Avenue  
Reedley, CA 93654

Please call for more information  
or to schedule a tour

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## Palm Village Chapel Services



**Enjoy Chapel every Thursday night.**

Service begins at 6:30 pm with Old-Fashioned Hymns  
with our speaker beginning at 7:00 pm.

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### Living Legacy Fund



Many of our residents outlive their resources. To  
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# A Letter from our Executive Director



**PALM VILLAGE**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

**Family Connections**  
At Palm Village, it is not unexpected to find out that you're related to someone on campus. Often, you'll find in our small community a shared history to the area, possible Mennonite connection, or close friends from way back, school, neighborhood, church, or work. The stories inside this edition of the magazine show those connections and the beauty of community.

Palm Village resident Aldene Vogt, lives in the same section of the campus with three first cousins. Our Director of Marketing, Jim Dueck is uncle to Dustin Pauls in the Peter's Farms story. It's a beautiful reminder that our world is connected in many ways, and that those connections are meaningful and far-reaching.

While we'd hoped to be long past the constraints of Covid-19, we still follow the guidelines of Fresno County Public Health, California Department of Public Health, CDC, and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare when it comes to visiting our campus and residents. While it has opened substantially for Independent Living visits, there are still some specific requirements for visiting with a resident in Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing. And these regulations change frequently, so what we print today might be changed by publication time. So please contact our office for visitation requirements.

Our employees are still being tested weekly for Covid-19, but we have not had a positive test since early April, for which we are grateful. Our residents' health is our priority; for we hold most precious the care of those entrusted to us.

Our main fundraising event, Soup Supper was sadly cancelled this year. We missed seeing our community of friends and supporters. We are hoping that next year we'll be back on track to opening our doors and back to raising the necessary funds to take care of the seniors that have outlived their resources and for the continuing ministry of Palm Village Retirement Community.

We continue to pray, seek God's wisdom, and provide for those in our care.

Respectfully yours,

Jim Higbee  
Executive Director

## Palm Village Accepts Community Service Award from Fresno Pacific Seminary

For nearly a decade, Fresno Pacific University Seminary has included a community service award in their year-end celebrations. On May 7th, during the Seminary virtual-event gala, Palm Village was awarded \$1000 and a plaque of appreciation.

Last year (spring 2020), the Seminary chose to honor Palm Village Retirement Community. They were especially mindful of the way Palm Village had welcomed scholars as they sought to practice their listening skills through engagement with our residents. Due to Covid-19, the event was extended to this Spring.



### *Biblical Seminary*

We are grateful to the Seminary for the award and gift that will be used in our continued ministry to seniors. We send our blessings to the leadership, staff, and scholars as they continue in their mission field to train leaders for the church and world.





by Laurie Diamant

# Aldene Vogt

Palm Village resident Aldene Vogt was born in Corn, Oklahoma, to Dan and Eva (Reimer) Friesen. During a revival service at church, her father felt called to follow God into the ministry. Part of this process was the usual "shoulder tapping" where senior brothers would suggest to a young man or couple that they believed God was calling into the ministry and then ultimately resulted in a public "laying on of hands" to ordain their service. These memories were all part of the Friesen heritage that Aldene grew up hearing about and later witnessing as her father became a well-known and well-traveled Mennonite Brethren preacher. Aldene remembers her father recounting these experiences by saying, "there may come a time in your life when God taps you on the shoulder, and how you respond will change your life forever."





Her father's career as a pastor required the family to move frequently. One of their stops was Bethany Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno, which allowed Aldene to begin her junior year of high school at Immanuel Academy. Part of her experience there was to participate in athletics. She played basketball and softball on the dirt fields. This was the beginning of a life-long love of sports that would play itself out in the lives of each of her children, several of her grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren.

Her love of sports would only grow upon meeting the man who would become her husband, Jim Vogt, while attending Pacific Bible Institute in Fresno, CA (now Fresno Pacific University). The two were married in 1954 in the 110-degree heat of Fresno. They moved to Weatherford, OK, where Jim completed his degree in education at Southwestern Oklahoma College. Shortly after that, Jim was called to teach at Immanuel Academy in Reedley, CA. After three years, he moved to Kings Canyon Unified, where he taught for the rest of his career, finally ending up as Principal at Grant Junior High School until his retirement.

Jim and Aldene were very active in the lives of their children Randy, Mike, and Cheri. They were a sports family. Football, basketball, baseball, and volleyball kept the Vogt's moving from one practice and game to another. The love of baseball runs deep in this family. Their oldest son, Randy, played at Fresno State, and Mike played at UC Davis. One of the proud joys of their lives is the professional baseball career of their grandson Stephen Vogt, who currently plays catcher for the Arizona Diamondbacks. Aldene laments that her late husband Jim cannot continue to enjoy the many endeavors of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Aldene also enjoyed a professional life. She was hired as the bookkeeper for Golden Valley travel and later became a partner in this business with her friend Mary Ann Wall. As a result, she and Jim enjoyed many wonderful trips to places in Europe, Germany, New Zealand, and Australia. She believes that travel opens our eyes and hearts to people from different cultures and perspectives. The most enlightening and challenging trip the Vogt's took was to China before they improved infrastructure, including hotels. She says they stayed in a "dump" in Beijing, but the trip was educational and enlightening.



Jim and Aldene moved to Palm Village in 2014, and Jim passed away shortly after that. When Jim's health began to decline, there was no doubt in Aldene's mind that they had made the right choice. They enjoyed their independent living unit where Aldene still lives. As Jim needed higher levels of care, they appreciated the proximity and health care this afforded them. Aldene feels at peace about her children not having to make difficult decisions about her future care. Over the years, many friends and relatives have enjoyed the ministry of Palm Village as residents, including parents Dan and Eva Friesen, uncles and aunts Ed and Helen Hinz and J.P. and Margaret Kliever.

Now, in her apartment in independent living, three first cousins live within steps of her apartment. Eldon Schmidt, Joella Reimer, and Abner Penner who are siblings. Aldene has many friends on campus, and she appreciates the wonderful meals they receive each day, the maintenance workers, and the timely responses from Palm Village Administration.



*Jim and Aldene Vogt*



# Five Generations - Peters Farms



As **"the world's fruit basket,"** Reedley, California, has been home to family farming ventures since the early 1900s. And, like any generation, rural farmers in the early 1900s faced many challenges. Life was remote, and families depended on each other and their neighbors for survival. Many families struggled during these times, and armed with tenacity, grit, and faith; they persevered together. This story is about family elders who worked tirelessly and were able to leave successful farming ventures to the care of future generations.

Henry K. Peters, his wife Elizabeth (Boldt), and their eight children were farmers here in the Central Valley. In 1934, during the Great Depression, they were farming a 20-acre parcel outside of Dinuba, California. Henry learned of another farmer in the region who was struggling to keep his 50 acres. So Henry and Elizabeth offered him a trade. The Peters family swapped acreage and paid an additional \$2,000 for the larger property. Today we would call that trade a win-win. A farmer propped up with an infusion of cash during the Depression, and the Peters family gained acreage with better soil. Today, nearly 90 years later, that property is home to the corporate office of Peters Farms and their 100,000 square foot fruit packing facility, equally divided into cold storage and a production area operating year-round.

In its 5th generation, the family and farm have grown significantly since Henry and Elizabeth moved their family to Reedley. In the rich Mennonite farming tradition, family members were trained in farming skills by elders and lots of hands-on practice. Their son Jonie was working on the farm and driving the tractor at a young age. He had a driver's license by age 14 and would hire out and work at area farms to make a little extra money. As the story goes, some of the farmers who knew Henry would pay him directly for son Jonie's work. However, Jonie wanted some of his own money and sought work when he could with farmers who did not know his father. Jonie was a determined and industrious young man.

Determination served Jonie well in his relationships, including with his future wife, Sarah Doerksen, from Kansas. Jonie met Sarah when she came to California with her sister to visit cousins. For two years, they corresponded in the only way possible in those times, courtship by U.S. Post. Jonie had an opportunity to stop in Kansas during a trip and made a detour to visit Sarah. After that trip, he proposed, and they were married in Kansas, thereafter, driving to their new home in Reedley, California. They started their new life working together farming. Sarah Peters, now a resident of Palm Village, described what life





Peters Farms - 2021

on the farm was like and helped us understand the nature of their farming business.

"Unlike today, fruit used to be picked then packed in the field. Since it had to go to market quickly, it had to be trucked immediately to Oakland and Los Angeles on the same day," says Sarah. They were long, hard days. Jonie was working from sunup to sundown, often into the evening hours. And this process was the same for decades. Sarah worked in the fields during the season packing fruit, took care of their three children (Ron, Dotty, and Ed), and handled the farm's accounting in the evenings after dinner.

The 1970s saw new innovations, which created the need for a 60 X 125-foot open-air packing shed to replace the barn at the back of the property. In the 1990s, the current facility was constructed, adding loading docks, space for a growing staff, storage, employee parking, and most importantly, cold storage for packed fruit. In 2001, the family added 36,000 square feet, which created a more extensive packing line to accommodate citrus and pomegranates. That doubled the size of the packing facility and made it a year-round operation.

Sarah gratefully says the family has always relied on their very dependable employees who have helped them create a renowned packing facility and farm. Spring growing and packing include apricots, peaches, nectarines, and plums, followed by pomegranates, table grapes, and in the winter months, oranges, mandarins, and lemons. Peters Farms ships fruit worldwide, exporting produce to China, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Honduras, Panama, South Korea, Canada, and Mexico.

The family also shares its experience via crop consulting, fruit maturity management, and custom harvesting and packing for other farmers. Jonie retired in 1973, and their sons, Ron and Ed, took over the operation. Peters Farms is now managed by Ron's son-in-law,

Dustin Pauls (General Manager). Along with Dustin, there are five additional family members involved in daily operations: Scott (Grower Manager), Laura (Human Resources), Julie (Chief Financial Officer), Preston (Food Safety Manager), and Jason (Field Management Assistant). Along with 125 to 175 employees at the packinghouse and an additional 125 employees during harvest, the team processes about 200,000 tons (nearly 400 million pounds) per year. Of that amount, 50,000 tons are exported.

In the early 80's Jonie was one of the board members of Mennonite Brethren Homes, Inc. He was an integral part of the board that created the current Palm Village Retirement Community with planning, design, and acquiring the support necessary to create our current campus. We posthumously pay tribute to Jonie Peters for his dedication to Palm Village and the Peter's family for their rich heritage of faith, family, and farming.

**Note:** According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, Reedley leads the nation in the shipping of fresh fruit with thirty fruit and vegetable packing and cold storage facilities, including the world's largest plant, along with nearby wineries, supply tree, and vine fruit products of consistently high quality. Related manufacturing industries in Reedley include boxes and packing machinery and automatic packing equipment.



Sarah Peters at Palm Village



# Jim Dueck

## Palm Village Director of Marketing



How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

*-Psalm 133:1*

**He's the friendly, first encounter that people meet when looking at Palm Village Retirement Community.** Since 1995, Jim Dueck, has worked for Palm Village first as Director of Fund Development and then as Director of Marketing after working in the computer industry in San Jose. For more than 26 years, Jim has been working to help create a thriving senior community with the help of other

Palm Village employees, leadership, and governing Board. "There have been many positive changes through the years," says Jim. During his tenure he has been present for a new Health Care Center, Memory Care unit, twelve 3-bedroom patio homes, and sixteen 3-bedroom Cottage Commons Homes. The Palm Village team has been busy caring for older adults by tailoring services to fit their needs.





*Jim and wife Benti*

Jim shares that there are several staff members who have worked more than 30 years at Palm Village. For many, this is a second family. In fact, Jim's parents Henry and Erica Dick, were residents, as well as his wife's grandmother. Jim's wife Benti's parents Don and Ruth Pauls are current residents at Palm Village. Jim explains "it has been a good place to work and a good place for our families to live."

During each new employee orientation, Jim enjoys sharing the history of Palm Village, noting that "we started caring for seniors in June of 1942, just six months after the United States entered WWII. Back then, the village served 7 seniors; and today (78 years later) now providing 5 levels of care to more than 300 residents on a 17-acre campus." The Mennonite tradition of caring for seniors started in the Mennonite villages in Southern Russia. Caring for seniors has been a Mennonite tradition for hundreds of years.

Jim's family has roots beyond the Central Valley. In fact, his parents, were both born in a Mennonite village in Southern Russia. When they were preschoolers, their families moved to Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, long known for its thriving Mennonite settlement. They grew up there and attended the Mennonite Brethren Church in Kitchener. After serving in World War II, Jim's father, Henry attended

seminary to prepare for the ministry. His parents were married at this time.

Over the years, the family moved from Orillia, Canada, where Jim was born, to Hillsboro, Kansas, on to Lodi, CA, then to Shafter, CA. Jim explains that "most of my growing up years – Kindergarten through my junior year of high school – were spent in Shafter." Then, his father moved the family to Fresno where he worked for the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

Jim continued his education at Fresno Pacific University, where he met his future bride, Benti Pauls. They were married at the Butler MB Church in Fresno. Jim and Benti are proud parents of two adult children, Simon, and Kim. They are a close family that spends much of their time outdoors. Jim loves long motorcycle rides with his friends throughout the western states.

One of Jim's favorite things is sharing a meal with residents of Palm Village. Mealtime usually involves lots of laughter and vibrant conversation among residents with a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. Jim enjoys learning about their life – their families, their travels, and their work. He says, "it's like Forrest Gump's example of a 'box of chocolates.' You never know what you are going to get and that makes it something to look forward to."

We honor Jim's service to this community and his kind-hearted example of putting your best foot forward with a smile and unrivaled sincerity.



*Jim on a desert ride*

November 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021

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