



Photo from "A Pictorial History of the Pine Orchard Association" 2003.

The estate and grounds of The Anchorage, built in 1903 and torn down in 1947, is the site for a party to celebrate the launch of Shoreline Village for Seniors.

In Gatsby style



The Gatsby-like home and grounds at The Anchorage will be an attraction for the party for the Shoreline Village for Seniors.

SHORELINE VILLAGE FOR SENIORS CELEBRATES APPROACHING LAUNCH WITH GALA

By Lisa Reisman

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No plans this Sunday afternoon? How about breathing in the air of sophistication and opulence on the grounds of a storied waterfront property in the Pine Orchard area of Branford?

Naturally, that shouldn't be the sole reason for attending the long-awaited party to both mark the launch of Shoreline Village CT (SVC), a program designed to help seniors stay in their homes through a combination of volunteer and paid services and, more essentially, to introduce potential members to its services.

Nor should the grand history of the party's site necessarily constitute sufficient inducement. Completed in 1901 by electricity pioneer Alden M. Young, the magnificent grounds and lush gardens of The Anchorage — the original structure was torn down in 1947 — played host to visiting luminaries, fundraisers and, as on Sunday afternoon, Gatsby-like parties.



There is plenty of opulence in this home in Pine Orchard. Photos Lisa Reisman.

Still, consider this. In 1903, Young served as the first president of the Pine Orchard Association. Its mission: to provide for the health and comfort of those living in that area — in other words, to encourage citizens to look out for each other.

Over a century later, the same impulse animates SVC — and it's an urgent one, organizers say. The oldest of 79 million baby boomers turned 65 in

2011, a turning point already putting pressure on social services, retirement homes and assisted-living facilities.

Given that by 2032, there will be more people over 65 than under 15, said Executive Director Sue Wharfe, "We have no time to lose."

According to Wharfe, SVC can fill in

the gap where some traditional services can't, particularly in non-hospital, community settings.

"It's one number to call for your needs, and it brings that vital peace of not being left on your own to do things on your own."

Just ask Mary Dib of Madison. The 78-year-old widow became a member for the security it affords.

"It's good to know

that a stranger coming into your home has been screened," she said, referring to SVC's database of trusted service providers for everything from nursing services to lawn care, health clubs, household help and drivers.

Or Bert Stiller, 84, of Branford. Through a program offered by SVC, the 30-year Navy veteran and mechanical engineer was paired with Julia Watsky, a Branford High School junior. With her help, he's unlocked the mysteries of email and Facebook, allowing him to communicate with his four grandchildren.

This Sunday, all of the above will be tapping their toes to Cole Porter standards performed by the popular Branford High School Music Makers and sampling hors d'oeuvres under the vaulted ceilings of the majestic estate on The Anchorage grounds.

As will North Guilford's Donald Johnson, 81. A woodworker who can build anything from a rocking horse to a "horseless" engine, the Army

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veteran and retired saw sharpener is splitting the membership fee with his daughter, Pam Matocha, a not uncommon occurrence among adult children of seniors.

Matocha, a CPA in Hamden who lives in Meriden, sees the village concept as a godsend for both her and her father: as a ticket for him to revitalize his social life and for her own peace of mind in knowing that people are looking out for him.

Like Stiller and Dib, Johnson has no intention of moving anywhere. In this, he's not alone. AARP surveys consistently show that nearly 90 percent of people 65 and older want to stay in their homes as long as possible. It also explains why SVC membership has more than doubled since Wharfe came on board in September.

Still, they're looking for a few more members. In order to survive and flourish, according to Wharfe, a village needs a

minimum number of 125. "We're close," she said. "And we're excited to meet anyone who's interested in learning more about what we can do for them."

Even if it takes a lavish party on a historic property to accomplish that end.

The party takes place from 3 to 5:30 p.m. at 265 Pine Orchard Ave. Branford. For more info, call 203-214-6361 or visit www.shorelinevillagect.org