

# VALLEY LAND ALLIANCE

Our Mission is to Educate and Build Alliances to protect our uniquely productive California Central Valley farmland.



WINTER 2017-18

## Valley Land Alliance in Action

Our nonprofit with a mission to educate to save farmland continues to be at the table in Merced County and the Central Valley to discuss the importance of saving our natural resources including water, air and soil. Building coalitions and partnerships enables us to reach more people and exchange ideas to build a quality place to live and work.

VLA has partnered with Merced County Farm Bureau and East Merced Resource Conservation District to teach 3rd Graders the importance of healthy soils necessary to grow our food. VLA is represented at the Merced County Association of Governments Regional Transportation Advisory Board and the Oversight Committee for Measure V Half Cent Sales Tax approved by the voters this past year.

We last year celebrated our 10th anniversary with a catered dinner following our annual Green Tour at which time we awarded our annual Peter and Rochelle Koch scholarship and acknowledged three individuals for their outstanding work to benefit our community: Cindy Lashbrook and Richard Jantz for their work in saving the State Parks along the Merced River when they were threatened for closure and Cindy and Glenn Anderson for the education on biological efforts to create healthy soils.

VLA has also provided comments to support the 2017 Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Application for the Merced Groundwater Basin, for support of Alternative Manure Management Program assistance of non-digester manure

management practices in “California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions managed through California Department of Food and Agriculture and for support of protecting farmland as the highspeed rail and Altamont Commuter trains have been approved to come to Merced. VLA continues to be at the table when there are discussions by policy makers of new corridors which may threaten farmland. We continue to meet with local elected officials including county supervisors.

We encourage you to join us getting involved to protect our quality of life especially in this mid-term election year.

—Jean Okuye

### HIGHLIGHTS

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## Valley Land Alliance Awards 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Peter & Rochelle Koch Scholarship to UC Merced Student



**Mariam Beg**

Last spring, Valley Land Alliance awarded its 2017 Peter & Rochelle Koch Scholarship to Mariam Beg, a UC Merced student majoring in environmental engineering. Beg's current passions are in sustainability and environmental justice, areas she has been able to explore and be active in while studying at UC Merced. While enrolled in course taught by Professor Joshua Viers, a watershed scientist, she learned about water contamination, specifically how nitrates affect Merced County and the Central Valley.

She is involved with sus-

tainable and green efforts on campus, including Engineers for Sustainable World (ESW) whose mission is to address the sustainability challenges of the modern world and Vanguard, the University's engineering student council. She ultimately would like to receive



a PhD in civil and environmental engineering with an eye towards opening a water treatment clinic in her native Lucknow, India.

The Peter and Rochelle Koch Scholarship was established to award a UC Merced student whose interests align closely with that of Valley Land Alliance.

VLA would like to congratulate this year's recipient and wish her the best on her educational and social justice journey.

Thanks to the VLA Scholarship Committee for helping read the applications. Additionally, thanks to Linda Zubke, Assistant Dean for Student Support at UC Merced's School of Engineering, for helping get the word out to the University community. Next year's scholarship cycle will be available on UC Merced Common Application for scholarships in mid-spring. This will help streamline the process and make this opportunity available to more interested students. For more information, contact any VLA member.

—Luis Enrique Flores

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## New Faces: Matt Qualls, Sally Magneson and Kimberly Rodriguez

### Message from Matthew Qualls:

Hi, my name is Matthew Qualls. I am a Nurse Practitioner in the Emergency Department at Mercy Medical Center, Merced. I am a new Central Valley transplant all the way from West Virginia. I have been involved with the VLA only for a few months. I decided to join the VLA because I believe we must protect our farm lands and water sources. As the population increases in the coming generations, land and water will become scarce resources. We must responsibly develop land while consciously remembering the importance of land conservation. We were given this beautiful planet with its many resources. We are only stewards and must do everything we can to protect those resources for future generations and to ensure the survival of our species.

### Meet Sally Magneson and Kimberly Rodriguez

Sally Magneson is originally from Philadelphia. She has worked with the VLA since it began in 2006 and became a board member after her husband, Charlie, a charter member of VLA, became ill. Coming from a farmer family she is concerned about farmland being paved over. She believes that we have some of the most valuable agricultural land and that we should do all that we can to protect it.

Kimberly Rodriguez is a recent graduate of UC Merced. She graduated with a Bachelors degree in Earth System Science. She is originally from Oakley. She is the new web designer for VLA. In the future she would like to become an environmental lawyer. She is enthusiastic to work for VLA.

### Having trouble breathing?

For patients with asthma, that has been a difficult task recently. With the wildfires in California coupled with the already poor air quality in the Central Valley, many asthmatics have had to turn to their local urgent cares or emergency departments for assistance. Local emergency departments and urgent cares have seen an increase in patients coming in for asthma exacerbations. An asthma exacerbation, or asthma attack, is when the airway becomes inflamed and swollen, resulting in difficulty breathing and wheezing. Many triggers exist in the Central Valley, such as pollen, mold, dust mites, pets, poor air quality, and cold dry air during the Winter months. So, if you know someone who suffers from asthma, or suffer from asthma yourself, make sure you have a rescue inhaler available if needed. Also check to make sure the inhaler is not expired.

—Matthew Qualls

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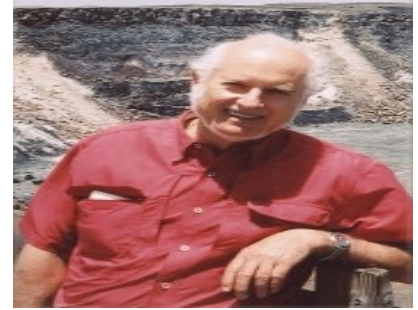
## Friends We Lost in 2017



**Charlie Magneson, 1923-2017**, a founding member of the Valley Land Alliance, married Sally seventy years ago, moved to the family farm along Merced River where they raised their seven children. Charlie was also a founding member of the Community Alliance of Family farmers and a board member of the Merced County Farmland Open Space Trust which later became part of the Central Valley Farmland Trust. He will be remembered for his kind, loving and peaceful manner, his curiosity and activism on behalf of his community and the larger world, his love of nature, the Sierra and his cherished family. Charlie and his family have been very supportive of Valley Land Alliance's efforts in educating to save farmland.



**John Mitchell, 1947-2017**, a long time teacher in Livingston and Palo Alto was an advocate for preserving farmland in our Central Valley and educating youth. Working closely with Valley Land Alliance for 10 years he was responsible for bringing ~ 100 Palo Alto high school students to visit the Magneson dairy on the Merced River where they had fun and learned about water and saving farmland issues, organic dairy farming and the family farmers who are stewards of the land. For several years with the help of Valley Land Alliance, John organized Livingston and Palo Alto high school students to glean 6000 lbs of sweet potatoes on Nathan Minger's fields which were then taken to the Merced Food Bank.



**Rudy Platzek, 1930-2017**, received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley in landscape architecture and a master's degree in regional planning from the University of Michigan. Among his professional accomplishments are 11 general plans for cities and counties, more than 100 environmental impact reports and numerous other local planning projects. He has assisted in the preparation of proposed State of California legislation titled "The Central Valley Farmlands Security Act of 2006" to establish mandated regional planning and regional growth management throughout the Central Valley. This proposed State legislation has been submitted to State legislative counsel.

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## Thank to our supporters!!

We would like to first give a special thanks to Robby Avilla. For years Robby Avilla, past president, has updated the website with the help of her son, Dr. Ross Avilla. We are grateful for all they have done to help get our message out. The VLA would not be where it is without the hard work and dedication Robby Avilla has put in.

Valley Land Alliance is grateful for the John and Nancy Cassidy Family Foundation, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation for their grant. VLA also wishes to thank all who have supported us with memberships and contributions which make it possible to educate many people and policy makers in our community of the importance to protect our farmland.

**Thank you.**

## Sally's Secret Special Cranberry Delight

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup butter

### Instructions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 325 degrees
- 2) Grease 9 inch pie pan, spread 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries over bottom of pie pan
- 3) Sprinkle 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts on top
- 4) In bowl beat 2 eggs, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup flour and 1/2 cup melted butter
- 5) Mix well, pour over berries
- 6) Bake at 325 degrees for 50-55 minutes



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# Photo from Farm2U Day



Kimberly Rodriguez teaching 3rd graders about healthy soils.

**Congratulations to Daniel and Sarah Toews, VLA board member, for welcoming two healthy baby boys John and Charles into the world!**



**Feel Free to Cut Out**

*Become a member of Valley Land Alliance today!*

*Membership donations are:*

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Student

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Family

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Individual

\$\_\_\_\_\_ (other)

*Checks can be mailed to:*

*Valley Land Alliance*

*P.O. Box 102*

*Cressey, CA 95312*

*Or at [www.valleylandalliance.org](http://www.valleylandalliance.org)*

Save the date for  
April 08, 2018 for the  
11th annual meeting

Check out our newly de-  
signed website at  
[Valleylandalliance.org](http://Valleylandalliance.org)