

# With her 'trademark enthusiasm,' Kari Martell kept Avenidas in the community spotlight

By Linda Taaffe

Whether advocating for awareness of issues around aging, writing television promos for a food bank or sending pithy press releases about tech events for seniors to local newspapers, Kari Martell spent the bulk of her career funneling her creative energy into helping nonprofits get noticed.

In Palo Alto, she was known as a passionate promoter of the nonprofit Avenidas senior services agency, where she worked for the past 16 years, most recently as vice president of marketing and communications.

On Nov. 21, Martell unexpectedly died in her sleep. She was 58. "Kari loved being creative and thinking of campaigns," said her oldest sister Colleen Martell. "One of her best skills was writing all those clever headlines and stories and pulling things together. She thought of incredible things all the time and was always jotting down new ideas."

Martell's various campaigns, she noted, even attracted national attention from Oprah Winfrey, the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, NPR and USA Today.

She brought enthusiasm to everything she did, Colleen Martell said.

As the youngest of the three girls in their family, Martell was always the star and trying to make people laugh, according to her sister.

"Kari was the 'firecracker' and being born on the Fourth of July ... she always felt special having that holiday as her birthday," she said.

John Sink, vice president of enrichment services at Avenidas, said Martell was instrumental in formulating the agency's messaging for its various services, including the Avenidas Village program, membership programs and activities at the nonprofit's three community centers, which serve all segments of the older adult population.

"Of all the people who have worked at Avenidas in marketing and communications during my 40 years with the organization, Kari was the best, most professional of them all ... and it wasn't even close," Sink said. "Kari was smart and perceptive, good with people and a person of high integrity. She always did what she said she would do. I'll miss her personally and professionally, and Avenidas will feel her loss keenly."

Before joining Avenidas, Martell

served as marketing manager at Alameda County Food Bank in Oakland and held the position of communications manager at CPP, Consulting Psychologists Press. She was a certified trainer for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test and served as an adviser for Constant Contact's Small Biz Council.

Her sister said Martell switched from the tech industry to the nonprofit sector because she felt her work at agencies like Avenidas was more life-affirming. Avenidas provided her the opportunity to

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Kari Martell

Courtesy: the Martell family

Kozy Brothers

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Navigating the Holidays with Your Loved One with Dementia • Wednesday, Dec. 14th at 3pm via Zoom • In Partnership with the Institute on Aging

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# Senior Focus

**CELEBRATIONS ...** The senior center Avenidas will open its doors Friday, Dec. 9, 2-4 p.m. for a **Holiday Open House**. Cookie decorating, ornament making, tree-trimming, hot cocoa, cider, coffee and tea will be available. Handmade hats, scarves, gloves, sweaters, baby gifts and more also will be on sale by **Club Aveneedles**. The knitting club will hold additional sale hours Thursday, Dec. 8, 1:30-4 p.m.; and Wednesday, Dec. 14, and Tuesday, Dec. 20, from noon to 3 p.m. In addition, the **Avenidas and Oak Avenue Ukulele orchestras** will present a free holiday concert of classic and singalong favorites, plus refreshments, on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2-3:30 p.m. To register for the concert event, email [register@avenidas.org](mailto:register@avenidas.org).

**TAKING CARE ...** "Coffee, caregiving and compassionate conversations" will be offered at a monthly **Caregiver Support Group** at Avenidas Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1-2 p.m. The group is for primary family caregivers or care coordinators, including spouses, partners, adult children and siblings. Participants are

encouraged to share concerns, sources of inspiration, resources, strategies and affirmations. First Wednesday of every month. Limited to the first 12 participants who RSVP. To register, call 650 289-5400 or email [registration@avenidas.org](mailto:registration@avenidas.org).

**POSTURE FOR AGING ...** Esther Gokhale, an acupuncturist and Ivy League graduate dubbed by the New York Times as "the posture guru of Silicon Valley," will present "**Sturdy, Upright and Tall**," a workshop with techniques to help participants stabilize, unhunch and strengthen their spines on Friday, Dec. 9, 10-11 a.m. Cost is \$25 for Avenidas members; \$30 for nonmembers. To register, go to [avenidas.org](http://avenidas.org), click on "Classes" and search for "Sturdy, Upright and Tall."

**LIFE STORIES ...** Participants in Avenidas's memoir-writing workshop will present "**Our Voices, Our Stories**," on Monday, Dec. 12, 2-3 p.m. Free. To register, email [register@avenidas.org](mailto:register@avenidas.org). ■

*Items for Senior Focus may be emailed to Palo Alto Weekly Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at [ckenrick@pawebly.com](mailto:ckenrick@pawebly.com).*

## Kari Martell

(continued from page 27)

use her storytelling skills to help a good cause, she said.

Martell's family wrote that she understood people and what they needed and practiced the art of gathering folks together long before it became a fad. Whether via her role as emcee of the neighborhood talent show, as a disco dance teacher at the community center or as the presenter of a Tech for Seniors event at Avenidas, she brought her trademark energy and

enthusiasm to everything.

Martell was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where she received multiple academic awards and was engaged in many social activities. She graduated from the University of Texas with a bachelor's degree in advertising and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to work in the marketing communications field.

Martell is survived by her daughter, Devon, 26, and son Derek, 20; ex-husband, John; siblings, Colleen, Michele and Patrick; her father, Calvin; and numerous nieces and nephews. ■



## Your REALTOR® and You

Silicon Valley REALTORS® Applaud Increase in Conforming Loan Limits

The Silicon Valley Association of REALTORS® joined the California Association of REALTORS® in applauding the Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) announcement to increase the 2023 conforming loan limits for mortgages acquired by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to \$726,200 on one-unit properties and \$1,089,300 in high-cost areas like San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and most counties in the Bay Area. The previous loan limits were \$647,200 and \$970,800, respectively.

The cap for high-cost areas crosses the \$1 million mark for the first time and is \$118,500 above the current limit. Conforming loan limits with two units will be capped at \$1,394,775 in high-cost areas, three units at \$1,685,850, and four units at \$2,095,200.

"We welcome the FHFA's decision to increase the conforming limits for 2023. The median home prices in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties are way above the national median home price," said Brett Caviness, president of the Silicon Valley Association of REALTORS®. "Raising the conforming loan limits will greatly help homebuyers in Silicon Valley who are already challenged by rising home prices that have reached over a million dollars."

The conforming loan limit determines the maximum size of a mortgage that government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs) Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac can buy or "guarantee." Non-conforming or "jumbo loans" typically have tighter underwriting standards and sometimes carry higher

mortgage interest rates than conforming loans, increasing monthly payments and hampering the ability of families in California to purchase homes by making them less affordable.

"C.A.R. applauds the FHFA for its continued commitment to homeownership by increasing the conforming loan limits. The higher limits will help make homeownership more accessible to Californians across the state and provide homebuyers with more financing opportunities," said C.A.R. President Jennifer Blanchini in a statement. She noted that in California this year, nearly one out of every four homes sold between \$1.25 million and \$2 million were purchased by first-time homebuyers.

C.A.R. and the National Association of REALTORS® have long advocated for loan limits to reflect an area's cost of housing. As a result of their efforts, areas with high median home prices have benefited from a loan limit above the national conforming loan limit. These mortgages are guaranteed by the government, and homebuyers in California and other high-cost areas should have the same equal access as any other state to safe and affordable capital that Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and FHA loans provide.

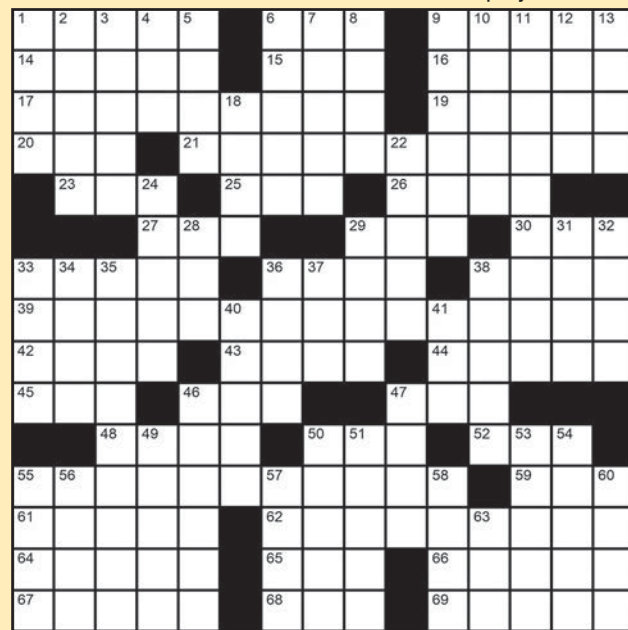
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Information provided in this column is presented by the Silicon Valley Association of REALTORS®. Send questions to Rose Meily at [rmeily@silvar.org](mailto:rmeily@silvar.org).

### Across

1. Rubbed out, gangster-style
6. Feasted
9. Laundry issue
14. Island near 11-Down
15. Bit of a beverage
16. "Why am \_\_\_?"
17. Tiny solution for cleaning up (like an understaffed moderation team)
19. Original "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" host
20. Lyrical poem
21. Symbol of clumsiness (like announcing, then canceling, an \$8/month verification system)
23. Royal sphere
25. Mine contents
26. EGOT winner Moreno
27. Wood for wine barrels
29. Wanna-\_\_\_ (imitators)
30. Packers' org.
33. Official imprint
36. Shipping units?
38. "Gotcha"
39. Use unfair tactics (like suspending accounts from just one side of the political spectrum)
42. Paleozoic, et al.
43. "A Death in the Family" Pulitzer winner
44. Centrifuge inserts
45. Place to study
46. Turn purple, perhaps
47. Shriner's cap
48. Days long past
50. Fla. NBA team, on a scoreboard
52. Baryshnikov's former co.
55. Evoking both happy and sad feelings (like a social network that's provided both joy and frustration)
59. Wonderment sounds
61. Skips
62. U.K. "Love Is All Around" band which lost 40% of its members in 2022 (like a certain website that's apparently hemorrhaging users)
64. Handles
65. Acting instructor Hagen

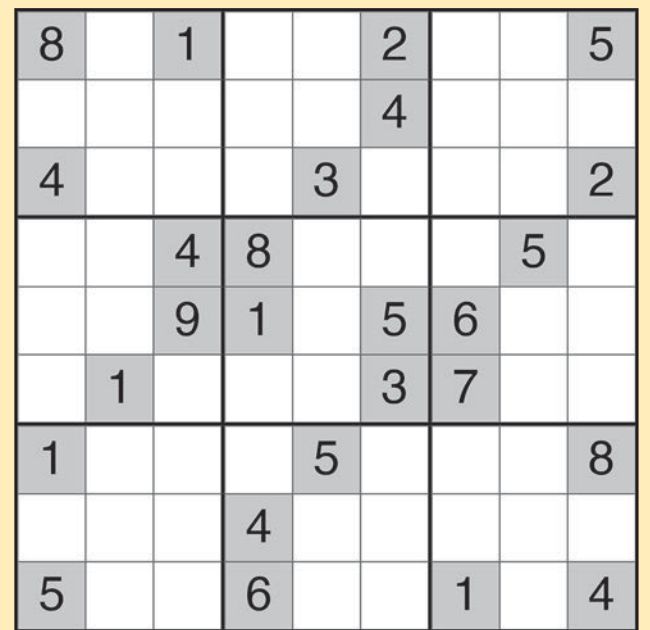
### "Bird is the Word" — who knows where it'll end up. by Matt Jones



Answers on page 16.

66. Background distraction
  67. Nail file stuff
  68. Spill cleaner
  69. Message that can be seen hidden in order in the five longest answers (which might not be seen anymore if its platform implodes)
- Down**
1. Eight, for starters
  2. "Lord of the Rings" ringbearer
  3. Less in number
  4. Summer, in Paris
  5. Bench press muscle, briefly
  6. Fur-trading tycoon John Jacob
  7. Spine feature
  8. Fencing sword
  9. Marina of "Star Trek: The Next Generation"

### This week's SUDOKU



Answers on page 16.

[www.sudoku.name](http://www.sudoku.name)

40. Jacket over a shirt, e.g.
41. Mother of Abel
46. Elegantly clad
47. Got off the ground
49. Weasel's aquatic relative
50. Give credit for
51. Draw upon again
53. Stardust alter ego
54. The ones nearby
55. Femur, for one
56. Mosque figure
57. Done laps in the pool
58. Sidewalk sale pop-up
60. Don't delete
63. Part of a car rescue

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