

MAY 2022

# SeaCliff

## LIVING



### Meet The Boardwalk's Gal Pals

Cover Photo by Carol Larsen Photography



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*An exclusive publication bringing people together in the SeaCliff and surrounding communities*



# Meet The Boardwalk's Gal Pals



By Kelli M. Larson

Photos provided by Carol Larsen Photography, Marie Monet, Maria Kutscher, and Sue B Warner

Family isn't just the people you're born to. Sometimes, it's the people you choose. That's definitely been the case for Marie Monet, Maria Kutscher, and Sue B Warner, residents of The Boardwalk community who've become far more to each other than just neighbors. They have different backgrounds, different experiences, and are at different places in their lives. However, they all like to laugh and have fun!

The fast friends, who describe each other as "crazy smart," "talented," and "powerful," came to know each other through both good times and bad. They love each other and the sisterhood that they've built dearly! "I'm older than the two of them," Sue B confides. "but I guess as time goes on, age doesn't matter... I've always been young at heart."

Ironically, one of the things this trio enjoys doing together most is going out to celebrate their respective birthdays. "From live dinner shows to comedy clubs," Maria shares, "We're on a mission to find great, new experiences in Huntington Beach and the OC."

They love a good time, a good glass of wine, and great conversation. But the key to their connection is knowing that they make each other better. "True friendships inspire, don't judge or compare, and support one another's strengths," Marie suggests. "It's about empowering one another." They took years to become so familiar, but we're hoping you'll get to know them all now.



"A few years back, Maria and Gary joined us for New Year's Eve, and it was an absolute blast. We danced all night! It was such a memorable evening and a great way to bring in the New Year with such a dear friend," Marie shares. "Sue B, Maria, and I have plans on the books for celebrating together next year. It makes me smile when I think of them."

"I'll never forget celebrating Marie's birthday at Café Sevilla in Costa Mesa," Maria confides. "We had such a great time over dinner. Afterward, we experienced a wonderful show featuring Spanish Flamenco and belly dancers. There have been lots of amazing 'wow' moments shared together in our sisterhood!"





Meet Marie Monet

**Family description:** "I'm married to George, a funny, kind-hearted man with three wonderful sons: Zach, Adam, and Evan."

**Career:** "I've been an aesthetician for over 25 years and currently own Monet's European Skin Care Med Spa & Boutique in Seacliff Village. Previously, I worked as a body double in the film industry, as well as behind the scenes as a celebrity makeup artist."

**Where did you grow up?** "I'm originally from France. My godfather was the fencing champion of Europe. My grandfather was in the French resistance helping the Jews to escape. Unfortunately, he was caught and sent to [the concentration camp at] Dachau. I'm very proud of him but sad to have lost him at such a young age. We moved to the East Coast briefly, then to Washington State where I went to school. Shortly after college, I left for Los Angeles."

**Year you moved to Huntington Beach:** 2014.

**Fun Fact:** "I was a competitive swimmer, did water ballet, and was a dancer. I'm high energy and very competitive. Growing up with two brothers, I was quite a tomboy... I had to be to keep up!"

**Hobby or talent:** "I love being creative. I enjoy encaustic painting and have taken classes in watercolor painting, lathe wood shop, and wood carving. At Christmas, I host gingerbread house decorating parties – girls just want to have fun!"

**Volunteer work or charity that you support?** "I'm involved with a Bible study with a group of gals whom I adore. We meet weekly for study, but also go to the cinema together, enjoy taco Tuesdays, and pack backpacks for children and the homeless."



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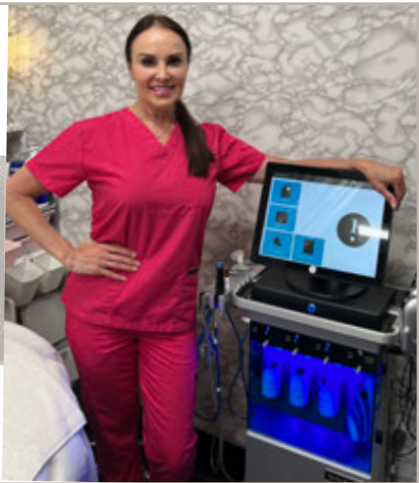
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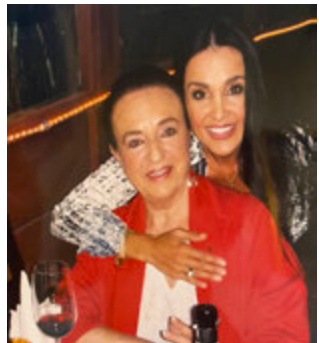


## Meet Marie Monet, cont'd



**What was your mother's best piece of advice?** "She would tell me to enjoy life and don't be in a hurry to grow up. What I think she was trying to express was to be present in the moment and embrace each day."

**What are you most proud of in life?** "I strive to do my best in my work, as a wife, and as a human being... living my life with integrity and as a Christian. I try to be grateful for what I have and never take it for granted."



Meet Maria Kutscher

**Family description:** "I've been married over 26 years to Gary Kutscher, the race director of the Orange County Marathon and a professional artist at Kutscher Fine Art. We have two boys in college: Nick and Nathan."

**Career:** "I have more than 30 years of wealth management and investment strategy experience. Currently, I work with UBS Financial Services in Newport Beach."

**Where did you grow up?** "I grew up in Northridge. I'm one of the true "valley girls" of the 80s."

**Year moved to Huntington Beach:** 2002.

**Fun Fact:** "I'm a former NFL cheerleader for both the Los Angeles Raiders and the Los Angeles Rams."



**Hobby or talent:** "I love to dance and sing."

**Volunteer work or charity that you support?** "I volunteer for Children's Hospital of Orange County by performing in their annual fundraiser, the *CHOC Follies*."

**What was your mother's best piece of advice?** "My dad raised my five sisters, one brother, and myself since I was 12. His advice to the girls was to stay in school. He'd say, 'I don't want you girls leaving home one-by-one and coming home two-by-two!' What he meant was that he didn't want us being dependent on others, and that we should always have a backup plan. So that's what I did. I stayed in school through graduate school and obtained six financial designations."

**What are you most proud of in life?** "I'm most proud of the wonderful young men that our boys have become. There is nothing more important in life for my husband and I





## Meet Maria Kutscher, cont'd

than instilling our family values and beliefs in our children. As Christians, we are blessed and grateful to know that our children will be carrying our family legacy forward to future generations."

**What lesson or advice about friendship would you share with today's young women?** "Just as you invest in your career or invest your money, you also need to invest the time to stay in touch with your friends, especially when life starts taking you in different directions. Drop a quick note to let them know you're thinking about them. Also put a future date down on the calendar to lock in some time together. You'll be so happy you did! Through the decades that pass, it'll matter even more that you're still connected with childhood, high school, or college friends. Friendships really do matter!"



Meet Sue B Warner

**Family description:** "I've been widowed since last June when Wendell, my husband of 46 years, passed. He was the love of my life. His daughter, Wendy, lived with us when she was young. There were only 10 years between us, so I certainly didn't try to be her mother; Wendell called me her role model. She passed in 2010 at the age of 57 from early onset Alzheimer's, leaving behind her three grown children and our six great-grandchildren. The kids live in town, so I see them often."

**Career:** "I worked for Disney for 34 years, beginning at the Burbank studios (where I met Wendell) in 1968. In 1971, I transferred to Disneyland to fill a position in data control, and from 1972 until my retirement in 2002, I enjoyed working in the Merchandise Division."

**Where did you grow up?** "I was born in Hope, Arkansas. My dad was in construction, and we followed the jobs wherever they took us, including to South Carolina when I was 11. I was in and out of schools until we settled in Ann Arbor, Michigan."

**Year Moved to Huntington Beach:** "In 1975, we moved from Newport Beach to Huntington's Beachwalk neighborhood. In 1979, we returned to Newport Beach, only to decide after three years that our hearts remained in HB. We moved to The Boardwalk community when it was built in 2002."

**Fun Fact:** "My husband and I were crowned 'King and Queen of Boardwalk' – I think there were partial voters! Also, my birthday is on Halloween and no one forgets



it. I hand out about 100 bags of cookies and candy to the neighborhood kids. They know the house to come to!"

**Hobby or talent:** "We had four different power boats over the years – I even went to Power Squadron class and got my certificate. I guess my hobby now is caring for my three cats: Rosie, Artie, and Sally."

**Volunteer work or charity that you support?** "When my mother was in a nursing facility, I was sad to see other patients that nobody visited. So, I spent five rewarding years volunteering with VITAS Healthcare (hospice). After Wendy died, I spent another eight years facilitating a support group for caregivers through with Alzheimer's OC. I plan to volunteer again now."



**What are you most proud of in life?** "I'm most proud that I met my husband and we were right for each other. There was a 14-year age difference between us, but that never mattered. He was the best person that I could have met, and I have no regrets."

Sue B shares that when her husband passed, the whole neighborhood offered support, but none more so than her two gal pals. "Maria and Gary did so much for me, and Marie was constantly offering her support and wanting to care for my every need," she recalls. "I don't know what I would have done without these gracious loving people. I will forever be grateful, thankful, and blessed."

All three ladies feel that there is power to be found in close friendships and want to encourage others to both seek them out and maintain them. It's especially important in our adult lives and into the senior years to keep expanding social circles and building that friend network. "I feel that women can inspire and support one another," Marie



maintains. "We're wonderful allies and can share compassion for those in need through the strong bonds that we've built."

If you need gal pals, consider joining a group of people with shared interests or activities, or get out meet your wonderful neighbors like these ladies from The Boardwalk did.