



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *TWIG Oral History Project*

Title: *Interview with Starlet Zarek*

Date of Interview: *April 22, 2021*

Location of Interview: *Interview conducted via Zoom*

Interviewer: *Maryanne Beatty*

Transcriber: *Alessandra Ricci of Adept Word Management and Janet Hawkins*

Abstract: *Starlet Zarek was born in Georgia and moved to Alexandria soon after Jimmy Carter was elected president. During the interview, she recalls her involvement with The Twig, and talks about her commitment to various projects and committees of the organization. Starlet has also worked as a volunteer, helping people to heal and to better their lives.*

Also present during the interview was Janet Hawkins.

This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.

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| INTRODUCTIONS 00:01 | |
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| Maryanne Beatty: | Hi, my name is Mary Beatty. I'm a member of Twig's Historic Preservation Ad Hoc Committee. And I'm here with our chair, Janet Hawkins. And we've been doing oral histories with various members of the Twig organization. And we are so pleased this morning to be able to interview Starlet Zarek. She's a longtime Twig, and she's got a lot of history and a lot of information to share with us. So welcome, Starlet, we're happy to have you. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Thank you. |
| MB: | You're welcome. So, I know that you were born in Georgia, and you made your way up to Alexandria. Can you talk about how you got here, and what brought you here, and why you settled in Alexandria? |
| MOVING TO ALEXANDRIA 00:56 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, I certainly can. Then that all involves Jimmy Carter because I was a campaign worker, one of the Peanut Brigades. Oh, we had fun together. I just cannot tell you how much fun we had. And I went into, I guess, about fifteen states at my own expense. And so, of course, Hamilton Jordan [advisor and Chief of Staff to Jimmy Carter] and I went to high school in the same town and naturally in small towns everyone knows each other. You know, I knew a lot of the players because I supported Jimmy Carter when he ran for governor. And then he was elected president and everybody's going around trying to get a job, you know. [laughs] |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | This is funny because Hamilton's mother was so gracious, truly genteel. When I came home to visit, Mrs. Jordan would ask: "Has Hamilton helped you get a job? And does he know you're looking for one?" And I would answer, "Yes, Mrs. Jordan, don't worry about it, you know." And she said, "I'm going to talk to him next time I see him." [laughs] But anyway, it got to the point where, you know, Hamilton comes up to me at one of the gatherings when I was home and he told me he had watched me being interviewed. I did get Hamilton's attention as the Peanut Brigaders were invited to a White House barbecue and a correspondent that I had gotten to know from traveling around the country interviewed me. He was doing a piece for The Today Show and wanted me to tell my campaign story. He has asked me questions like why haven't they hired you yet? How many states did you campaign in? So, Hamilton saw me being interviewed by Today and he goes, "You don't want to be up here." And I said, "Hey, let me make that decision." And of course, because I had been in Vietnam and worked at the hospital for the American Red Cross, veterans were close to my heart. My position was called Service to Military Families. So, what I wanted to do was to get in the door to |

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| | work at the VA [Department of Veterans Affairs], and the White House helped me. |
| MB: | Oh. |
| Starlet Zarek: | I didn't really know how this worked. And then I heard officially "Starlet, you know, you just got hired," and I go, "Oh, that's great." And—with our Central Office Volunteer Services, which regulated all the VA programs in the hospitals across the country. And, you know, it was just great. I was making policy and developing programs for the field. But I wanted to work directly with veterans, so I requested a transfer to a VA hospital since I was familiar with veterans and veterans' groups. And I got the transfer. I loved working for veteran groups and found it to be enjoyable and rewarding work. Oh, my gosh. I loved working for veteran organizations. But I quit. I had my baby, my daughter at age 43 and could not imagine do anything more important than being a full-time mother. My boss, the hospital administrator was a family man, and he was happy for me. |
| MB: | There we go. That's so wonderful. Well, you know, I had an aunt, or I still have an aunt, who volunteered in the Carter, for the Carter's run for presidency. And she used to paint the little peanuts. She used to paint them, and she gave me one. I even think I still have it. But when I was working with the federal government—and it's funny how people's paths crossed—but I worked for the Office of Management and Budget, and we used to get invited to the White House for picnics. And I'm sure you did, too. You know, they just—you know—. |
| Starlet Zarek: | I attended those picnics too. |
| MB: | Yes. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Yeah. |
| MB: | And Chip Carter had his little baby there. And when Burt Lance, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget left, he had a little party for staff. And he was so gracious. It's like, "Well, if you ever find your way down to wherever he lives, look us up." You know, he was so sweet. So, it was a very collegial administration, I thought, just—you know, really, really nice. And anyway, so—that makes me—. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Everybody at that point, "Where is your token Georgian?" |
| MB: | [laughs] I know. |
| Starlet Zarek: | The Peabodys, you know, "Scottie" F. Scott Fitzgerald's daughter And I mean, I've met Orlando. I believe she was the wife of the president of Fox 20th Century [movie company]. She came up to me, and I could not believe this. She said, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" And I go, "Hey, that should be my line." [laughs] |

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| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | But it was just a fascinating time. And of course, it was a time when, you know, you enjoy it while you can because—I mean, people would come at you and say, "Who is really important?" I mean, it had that sort of—I would go up to a friend, wink and say this is the person you have to meet. You meet some truly remarkable people, but you also had contact with a lot of shallow and wannabes, so better be able to see it what for what it is. Enjoy yourself and then be prepared to move on. It was a wonderful experience but important to take a face value as one moment you are in – and next moment you could be out and return as if nothing had happened. Sometimes people acted as if they hated you. Even when I found people were accepting of Carter, I often found them always argumentative. I shared this with my Episcopalian priest. I am uncertain but it appears God is not in the area, of course, I was joking, but at times it seemed that way. And I began attending Christ Church and began making friendships that I have sustained throughout the years. |
| MB: | Yeah. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Anyway, to make a long story short, that is how I came to the Washington region. |
| MB: | Okay. And then you had your family, your daughter. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Well, I met my husband, got married, had a baby at 43, and was [unclear]. |
| MB: | That's wonderful. That's wonderful. And so—then that led you to being part of Alexandria and getting involved in Twig. And so, how did that all come about? |
| JOINING THE TWIG 05:31 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | I was in Junior League [an educational women's volunteer organization], and of course in Georgia. And I transferred that membership to Washington, DC. Well, that was rather enjoyable. You worked at the little shop in Georgetown, but you rarely saw the same person twice. And I'm thinking, I enjoyed volunteering with Cancer Society and made friends at Christ Church. I rise early to go to my job with the VA, and then I thought, "I desire to meet people in Alexandria." So, I began searching and began volunteering at the Campagna Center, Elizabeth Camp was in charge, and then I heard about Twig and was invited, like everybody is, to a coffee. And I walked away thinking, "They have something special, and I want to be a part of it." I mean, it's hard to explain. And I kept reflecting on how hard they worked, the work ethic stood out in my mind. So, I did get invited to join. And that was in 1990. And, you know, I've stayed active all these years. |

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| MB: | Uh-huh. So, your sponsor was Cindy Bartol? |
| Starlet Zarek: | Yes. |
| MB: | Yes, okay. All righty. And so, when you got there, the first thing everybody has to do—which I've just been a Twig for just a couple of years—but do the stock [stock the thrift shop]. Then what other committees did you work on? |
| WORKING IN THE TWIG COMMITTEES 07:14 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | <p>I've got a list of them here somewhere, so I wouldn't forget. But committees were a little bit different way back when. [laughs] I mean like—you know, we—gosh, let's see. Over the years, I have served in many roles. I chaired the publicity committee. I also served as corresponding secretary. I cochaired the homes tour one year and also co-chaired the entertainment and thrift shop committees. I did a bunch of things to support Twig, worked on two cookbooks. One is called, Seaport Savories. Janet can speak of that one. [laughs] I did a lot of phone calls, and the cookbook was mentioned on the Today Show.</p> <div data-bbox="781 919 1040 1304" style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The TWIG Cookbook "Seaport Savories"</i></p> |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | And then, I co-authored a cookbook with my dear friend Jocelyne "Josie" Kazanjian. I think you've already interviewed her. And it was a small book called <i>All in Good Taste</i> , and that was to commemorate our seventy-fifth anniversary. And we used some of our oldest most favorite recipes and added some new ones. And of course, I just can't talk about the cookbook without highlighting some talented people. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | Dear friend Carol Boyd illustrated the book. Kim Weiler was the graphic designer. It was delightful just to work with them. Everyone worked hard and have always felt it was one of our greatest successes. Many Twigs tested recipes. |

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| MB: | So—. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Everyone has their own ideas, but Twig is an organization. In Twig you have women that have strong opinions about things. For example, everyone knows what's best for the Thrift Shop. Sometimes to the point that it becomes difficult to make changes. You love people because they're so committed but I did realize that you have to be flexible to bring it all together. |
| MB: | Yeah, yeah. So, you were president during a period of time. What were your goals or what was your—what did you want to see when you were president? What did you want to tackle? |
| GOALS AS PRESIDENT OF THE TWIG 09:23 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Well, to be truthful, I really loved being president. It was the delight of my life. I actually cried in two meetings—Janet can attest to this—two meetings before I had to hand over the gavel crying because I didn't want my presidency to end! [laughs] |
| | [laughter] |
| Starlet Zarek: | I look back and say how ridiculous that may seem. But at that time, we were a smaller organization than we are now. And we had a tightknit community of women that cared and respected each other. And I was committed to doing something with the thrift shop because I realized it was our money maker. We made wonderful changes and improvements. And I spent my whole year going out and going to places and getting beautiful outdoor lighting to improve visibility. Kim Weiler designed a new sign for us. And we also installed new fans and an air humidifier. And we added window boxes for flowers and created the tree garden. We added shelving in the stocking area, began replacing storage bins. Also began a graffiti wall in the bathroom, when there was a stall. It was truly a lovely time. And, you know, we worked well together, and everyone seemed happy. And I took away one shift that everybody had, and we were able to maintain that. It was me; I was crying. I could cry [unclear] because it was wonderful. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | I mean, it just was. |
| MB: | So, you made a lot of connections, like Janet. Can you talk about some of your special friendships or connections that you've made through the years? |
| FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS 11:02 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, yes, but they're so many. There have been close relationships with people that connect to other people. It as if we are all connected in this community. And, it has been—I mean, boy, it's a great place |

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| | to be if, you know, you have anything happen that you need support. People are there for you and people rally around you. I belong to other organizations, and the members are very considerate people, but they don't go always go the extra mile like, Twigs do. They're there for you, and they'll be there for you as long as you need them, you know. |
| MB: | That's comforting. So, to switch gears a little bit. What are some of your memorable projects? I know that—you know, Antiques in Alexandria was one, but can you talk about some of your special projects that you've worked on? |
| MEMORABLE PROJECTS 12:09 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Well, Antiques in Alexandria. We did that for a number of years. And that was just—I was on the Antiques board for years also. And it was truly—almost overwhelming you're helping with all aspects of an event – the show, the publicity, the opening night reception. It was a big, big undertaking. And of course, the cookbooks that I worked on, and the one that I coauthored with Jocie. That took quite a while. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | I realized after a while that I learned many skills while volunteering with Twig. After you serve on the thrift shop committee, you get involved in retail and salesmanship and you learn unbelievable things. And you move on to another committee, and it's like outreach. You just become a little bit wise about a multitude of different jobs. And that's what makes it so special too, I think. |
| MB: | Hmm, that's nice. So, memorable stories and things—I think you mentioned somebody being locked in the thrift shop—? |
| MEMORABLE STORIES 13:27 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, I wish I was. [laughs] |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | I am not sure when this happened, but one year I don't know if she ever shared the story, but somehow, we closed the Thrift Shop one afternoon and locked a woman in the store. [laughs] It's not that funny, I guess, but it was to me. And of course, she had no way out because she only had access to the retail entrance. The woman called the police and well, the police called the Twig, possibly the president. I don't remember. We gave the poor woman a multitude of clothing, I might add. [laughs] |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | To keep her happy, happy. And one year, I never will forget. Somebody said, "Oh, Starlet, there's a guy down in the basement." He told me, "He's a warlock. I'm going to go downstairs and talk to him." |

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| | I responded, "You're braver than I am. I don't want to go down and talk to him." The guy just came through babbling a lot of stuff. Over the years, we've always had few interesting things happen at the thrift shop, but we've always managed to, carry on and do the best we can. And the Alexandria Police Department has been there for us when we needed support. |
| MB: | And so, why do you continue to be involved with Twig and contribute to Twig? Why do you—what's special about it? |
| WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THE TWIG 15:01 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | <p>I think what's special is the opportunity to give of yourself, to others. And Twig falls right into that. Sadly, for me, I lost all my family within a period of seven months. My mother died in a horseback riding accident. My father and husband were killed in an airplane crash. So, I was presented with like this "What am I going to do with my life?" And people in my hometown were so lovely, but I didn't want to go the rest of my life having everybody feel sorry for me or not standing on my own. So that's when I started looking around for something where I could be of service. And Twig kind of fell into that too. And, you know, going to Vietnam was something very special in my life. I was there a year. They asked me if I wanted to extend my time, and I said, "Absolutely not," because it was difficult. I witnessed death and dying while in Vietnam. In Cam Ranh Bay, the hospital was overrun by enemy and three of our patients were killed. As I ran to the bunker that night, I found myself alone, so I ran back to my barracks. And there were many times when I experienced machine gun fire.</p> <p>I worked in two different types of hospitals. The first one was for critically injured people. And I saw, you know, sadly, a lot of them die. And I would go up, and I would talk to them, and they were severely injured, and I'd say, "I talked to your family, and they send their love to you." And, you know, it was just a very tragic time. But I will tell you; it did exactly what I wanted it to do for me, take me out of the picture, think about other people, reach out as much as I could. And I was really surprised that—I was not bawling in tears every night. But somehow, God protected me and helped me take what I was there doing and turn it into a positive, enabling me to support so many of the people there.</p> |
| MB: | Hmm, that's wonderful. That's very special. So, the hospital and Twig's support for the hospital. What do you think the goals moving forward should be, or how should Twig move forward? |
| GOALS MOVING FORWARD 17:25 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, I wish I had that answer. If I had that—. [laughs] |
| MB: | [laughs] |

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| Starlet Zarek: | I would go immediately and talk to everybody. I think they just need to be careful and not remove that human element that we do so well. I'm not like—Janet has a lot more knowledge and relation to what is going on at this point. I did ask the hospital to give me some information. And I won't bore you with all of this, but—I just think this is important for people to know that in 2020, they spent—the hospital spent almost \$33 million on indigent hospital inpatient, indigent hospital outpatient, Medicaid inpatient, and Medicaid outpatient. And they have just—I mean, they sent me this list of all these services that I didn't know about. I said to Janet earlier, "Yes, we're committed to financially support the hospital. But look at what all they do for the community. I mean, it's quite fascinating what they do without us too." |
| MB: | Uh-huh. |
| Janet Hawkins: | Starlet, I think it's 33.5 million dollars, right? |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, I'm sorry. I said—no, wait a minute, let me find the—you are so right, Janet. And I did that with my glasses on. [laughs] |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | It is 33.5 million. Yeah. |
| MB: | Well—and then, you sort of answered this, but I guess really my last question is, what makes the hospital so special to our community? |
| ON THE HOSPITAL AND ALEXANDRIA'S COMMUNITY 19:34 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Well, it always has been—in the past, I can't say what they're going for in the future—that, you know, we felt a big part of it. I think—particularly where Janet lives, near the hospital, I think they—often the hospital would go in that area and see what people felt, thought, pull them in to make the community happy and for us to be a real part of the community. Like I said, I have no idea where we're going, where we're headed for now. But I certainly hope they never, ever, you know, not have us as central or people central because I think that's what we've always cared about. This hospital, they cared about us, you know, as a person. And I would hate to see that go. |
| MB: | Thank you. Well, that's all I had. Janet, did you want to add some things? |
| JH: | I do. They're just a couple of things, Starlet, that you didn't touch on that I wish you would. Tell us how Twig decided to pledge \$750,000 towards the Twig Pavilion. |
| PLEDGE TOWARDS THE TWIG PAVILION 20:49 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | I can't believe I failed to mention the Pavilion. I consider it one of my successes when I was Twig president. Ken Kozloff was the hospital |

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| | <p>administrator at the time. I had spoken to Ken several times, asking him to suggest a pledge that could be associated with Twig – where we would receive more visibility. And he had a special vision for Twig. And he said, "I would like for Twig to pledge for the first hospital pavilion. It was for 14-bed telemetry units. And we had never done a pledge this big. It was a fascinating process. Twigs had a million questions. And—yes, and we had several meetings—at the end of the day, the Board approved the pledge for \$750,000. And I went home to celebrate. The next morning, the phone began ringing and ringing. Twigs began to question the pledge. "We're scared of this," or "We can't pay for that." Na-na-na— "I don't know." You know, it just went on and on and on. I was too close to it, so I reached out and asked a past president, to prepare a presentation to the membership.</p> <div data-bbox="667 724 1154 1087" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="688 1104 1133 1136"><i>The Twig Pavilion at Alexandria Hospital</i></p> |
| <p>JH:</p> | <p>Julie Brasfield. Julie Brasfield.</p> |
| <p>Starlet Zarek:</p> | <p>Julie Brasfield is an attorney. And she said, "All right. Give me your questions." She turned that around, answered all the questions, got all the facts, and bounced it back to him the next day. And then, we had Patti Hobson—a past president, as was Julie. Patti had a public relations background. And Patti worked the crowds a little bit and tried to calm them down. And so, we got it passed. And I'm telling you, I've never been so proud of a group of women in my life. I mean, it was simply unbelievable. I wish I had Ken write in stone, you know, somewhere, because I did ask him, "Now, what if something happens in the world or in our area that we can't control, and we don't have the money to pay off this pledge?" And he said, "Don't worry about it. We will work with you. We will understand."</p> <p>And of course, here we are with the COVID[-19], you know. But I think people get a little antsy about that, but I wish we could explain to them that, you know, this was the whole reason we made a long-term pledge, to have the ability to give us some slack whenever we need it. And, of course, we've given over \$4 million to the hospital. Now, a part of me thinks this first pledge for the Twig Pavilion is a</p> |

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| | <p>wonderful accomplishment. But then, when I worry a bit as I look towards the future. “What do other presidents do? I set a standard, and now they have to reach, reach, reach to the stars,” you know. And sometimes, I think we need to back up a little bit and reevaluate our involvement. But we really felt good where we are and what we are doing, it was so much fun.</p> <p>Oh, my gosh. I was president or even vice-president, I would say, “If this job isn't fun, I don't want you to be here. I want you to find something you really love.” I think you get [to] a certain age, and I wanted to do this because I really enjoyed it. It wasn't like a chore but rather a blessing. I loved it. And I'll never forget, a friend of mine called me up and said, “Starlet, there's this girl. She's a problem with our organization. And she goes to the thrift shop and talks unfavorably about Twig.” And I went, “Oh no. We can't have that.” So, I called her up, and I said to her ever so gently, you know, I hear you're unhappy, and that makes me unhappy. I don't want you to be unhappy. Maybe, you need to look around and find a different type of organization that is important to you. And please, if you want to do that, I would understand.” She says, “Well, I'm not ready to do it now.” And I go, “Oh, okay. But could you do me a favor? Would you not go to the thrift shop and berate your fellow Twigs? Because that's not good for our organization, and it affects morale.” She was nice about it. And, about four months later, she decided to resign, and I wished her well. But Twig is kind of magical to me. And we're probably losing some of that. I am not as active as I would like to be right now, due to getting older and having a few health issues, so I am not certain if that is still true. However, I still see the same people, the eagerness and the loyalty. I hope we always have the heart too.</p> |
| <p>JH:</p> | <p>Yeah. For Maryanne, just for—on the side for the Pavilion, this was a huge deal for Twig to commit to a \$750,000 pledge. When I joined, the first large pledge was for \$250,000, and then we jumped to \$750,000. And as Starlet was saying, the hospital was very good about giving us some time to pay it off. But something did change. The Twig membership began feeling pressure to pay these pledges off. And so, when it came time for the next one, and I believe we, because we did, we pay it off very quickly. The next one, I think was when Seema was president—.</p> |
| <p>Starlet Zarek:</p> | <p>Uh-huh, yeah.</p> |
| <p>JH:</p> | <p>Yeah. I said, “You realize, Seema, that they are going to ask us to pledge a million dollars.” And that's how it all started. So, Starlet really put us into the big bucks, as I like to call it. [laughs] But our group could definitely do that with our—you know. And Starlet, you can talk about this too? The thrift shop, and—you know, we were</p> |

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| | selling shoes for a dollar and things like that compared to now, Maryanne. When you're in the shop, there's a real difference in those things. But—. |
| THE THRIFT SHOP 27:53 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Yeah. |
| JH: | So anyway, I think Starlet really led us into a new—as a leader—into a new role as to, into fundraising for Twig. [unclear] |
| Starlet Zarek: | And we had quality control at the thrift shop, we always accept any donations from anyone. If we cannot use the donations, we donate to other charities. Vietnam Vets, for example. And some customers purchase clothes to sell them, you know, by the pound. |
| JH: | Yeah. So, the other thing I thought would be fun for you to talk a little bit about is something else Maryanne might take for granted, is the dumbwaiter. |
| THE DUMBWAITER 28:26 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Ah, Jeeves. I called him, we named him Jeeves. And for—[laughs]—Janet, thank you. I've forgotten all about Jeeves, and I love Jeeves so much. Anyway, when I became president, Jeeves hadn't worked for I don't know how long. Janet, had it been about seven years, eight years? I had a contest during my presidency to come up with a name for the dumbwaiter. |
| JH: | When I was a shop chair, and we were dragging all those bags up the stairs. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Yeah. |
| JH: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | So I went to see Ken Kozloff, the administrator. And I said, “Would you have somebody look at our dumbwaiter? Going up those stairs with all those clothes is—” Well, he had someone on the hospital staff look at the dumbwaiter and it was clear it was going to be a costly repair. “You know, Starlet, it's going to cost me a lot of money.” And I said, “And your problem is?” [laughs] And he said, “Okay, okay. You want it fixed.” I said, “Yes, sir. I'd appreciate it so much.” And so, he got it fixed for us. And it was like a miracle. Jeeves was a little temperamental at times, but there were many happy Twigs the day we were able to use the dumbwaiter. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| Starlet Zarek: | So, you know. And people used to—I said, “Listen, y'all don't talk about Jeeves badly because he's done a lot for us.” I forget when we got our new—when did we get our new one? |
| JH: | It's been a couple of years when—and that's when the new |

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| | dumbwaiter was installed and has the capability to service all three levels. Before, it was just the two levels. So, on the main floor, and it just didn't close those stairs to the stocking. And then, there was—we had more money, so we were able to make an investment in that. |
| Starlet Zarek: | I think—well, what happened it became hard to find parts for Jeeves. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| JH: | Yeah. |
| Starlet Zarek: | So poor old Jeeves, I had to wave goodbye to him. |
| MB: | [laughs] |
| JH: | But anyway, that was a big deal when that happened. The other thing I wanted to ask you about is when you were membership chair—and that's when Julie Brasfield was president, and so Starlet was membership chair—you did something called the Unsung Heroes. Do you remember that? |
| THE UNSUNG HEROES 30:49 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | No. I did Unsung Heroes? You mean people in our Twig that were unsung heroes? |
| JH: | I want to say you did some spotlights about Twigs. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, yeah. I always try to highlight people that were going beyond the call of duty. I mean—you know, as a matter of fact, I just would sit around thinking, “How can I thank these people?” And I did some unusual things. [laughs] What I did was if you were married, or had a partner, or la-la-la, I wrote the person’s significant other a note thanking them for being a part of Twig. And then, if they was no significant other or whatever, I wrote the Twig a note, thanking her for taking on a role that would be challenging. But I remember briefly that I did acknowledge a few special members by highlighting what they had done for The Twig. It is such an enormous resource of people have done so many different things. It was easy to feel grateful as there have been so many accomplishments over the years. Twig has a remarkable history. |
| MB: | Uh-huh. That’s nice. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Yeah. Janet, was that what you were talking about? |
| JH: | Yeah. I was just remembering that you were—the year you were membership chair, you were trying to focus on some of the Twigs that the membership doesn’t really consider their roles. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Oh, yes. I'm sorry, I did do that. You know, I always say every time we have a membership meeting to elect a president; it's easy to be highlighted, you know, when you are committee chair. You are constantly visible, giving reports at meetings and everybody knows |

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| | you, and that is great because of that. You're doing wonderful things. And there is always this quieter person, someone sitting there very capable but does not have the spotlight because she hasn't chaired anything but may be very qualified to be the next president. Every chance I get enjoy finding those people and sharing that info with Twig's nominating committee. |
| JH: | Well, okay. I think that's it. Starlet, is there anything else you wanted to add? |
| FINAL THOUGHTS 34:08 | |
| Starlet Zarek: | Well, you know, the only—I guess not. But I thank you, Janet, for remembering some fun things that I had forgotten. Now, I did go to—which I did go to Katrina and do volunteer work when we had Hurricane Katrina [in 2005]. And I mean, I love that too. And I have—there is somebody in Mississippi who named their baby after me. I teamed up with another woman and we had security remove a woman from a building because she was trying fraud the American Red Cross. |
| MB: | Oh. |
| Starlet Zarek: | I was with Red Cross; I volunteered with Red Cross. And I was in Mississippi after Katrina. And that was—I mean, every time I get to do something that I can reach out to people, I don't know, it does something inside for me. It makes me feel better, you know. So, I'm selfish in a way that I do those things because it's a feel-good thing. I also called people from my church and Twig during COVID-19. It was exceptional outreach. The people I spoke with so grateful for the connection. |
| JH: | Absolutely. |
| MB: | Uh-huh, yeah. |
| Starlet Zarek: | Thank you so much. And if I think of anything else, I'll call you again. |
| JH: | All righty. We thank you. |