Marin Gray Panthers: Great Way To Advocate for Older Adults

At a time when older adults are struggling with such issues as Social Security support, healthcare and economic hardship, membership of the once robust Gray Panthers in Marin County is on a dangerous downhill spiral.

One Fairfax resident who is painfully aware of this dilemma is Yvette Wakefield, co-conveyor of the Gray Panthers of Marin. “We are a very tiny chapter,” Wakefield said. “Our members are dying off, and we do not have the clout we once did. People will call us with problems, and sadly, I have to tell them that we cannot advocate on someone’s behalf. We are trying to recruit new members, but it is really hard. Few people can afford even our new, ten-dollar a year membership for low income residents.”

On the bright side, she said that the organization’s speaker series continues to draw large audiences. As an example, Leslie Klor spoke to a big crowd in May. Klor, Director of Shared Housing at Episcopal Senior Communities, spoke on “Affordable Senior Housing Options in Marin.”

Wakefield said, “We also had a great turnout for a speaker recently who talked about Palestine and the possibility of peace in the Mideast.” She said that other popular speakers’ topics are the economy, peace, immigration, and health. The public is always invited.

Wakefield is a living example of an older adult who dedicates herself to helping others. She worked for years as a paralegal, including a stint in the Financial District in San Francisco. And then a work injury six years ago put her on Social Security disability. She had long wanted to help immigrants, so she went back to school and earned her degree in Spanish with a minor in Rasa Studies at San Francisco State University.

She extends an invitation to anyone in Marin who wants to advocate for older adults and reminded everyone that the Gray Panthers motto is “We Can Make a Difference: Age and Youth in Action.” She said, “People of all ages are invited to join us. With more members there is much we could accomplish.”

www.graypanthersmarin.org
Whistlestop

PERSPECTIVE  B Y  L I Z  F R O N E B E R G E R

The Beauty of Our Elders

I see Whistlestop as a big umbrella for helping older adults in Marin County. Whistlestop provides so many services, and I think, with help, it could do even more. Our elder population is growing, and there are so many great minds in this county. I would like to see many more bridges built between the generations. I know that must feel daunting. But our younger people would benefit. Honestly, people talk about the importance of elders feeling useful – and that is important; no one benefits from being cast aside and isolated. But I think the younger generations suffer at least as much if they do not spend time with their elders.

I worked for Whistlestop in 1975-76. Debbie Bruce and I were responsible for coordinating our two or three Whistlestop drivers, about 75 volunteer drivers, and all of the people who needed rides to their medical appointments.

How does Whistlestop help older adults? The answer would make a book, really. I know there are different feelings about what to call senior citizens – older adults, seniors, elders, actively retired, etc. We can get caught up in the semantics, or we can talk about what an experienced person brings to the table. What do my parents, your parents, YOU, bring? A sense of patience, recognition of the long arm of history and how that can help or hurt us – there are so many advantages of paying attention to the past. There are disadvantages of our past as well – if we are stuck in the past with regard to certain issues, we suffer. But I find that, particularly in Marin, my elders are able to see the errors of their day – racism, sexism, etc., and tell me how things have improved.

I have a funny connection to Whistlestop. My phone number, which has been the same for about 25 years, is one number off of Whistlestop’s main number. So I get phone calls, probably every 3-4 weeks, from someone leaving a message for Whistlestop. If they leave their number, I call them back as soon as I get home and tell them. I have had some lovely conversations with people! If they don’t leave their number, or I can’t understand their full name, I call the scheduler and give them as much info as I can and they can usually figure out who it is – I always worry if I don’t get the message until the end of the day because I imagine them sitting there wondering why WS hasn’t called them back. I just hope that they don’t wait too long before calling again and hitting the right number the next time. ♦

Liz Froneberger, RN, lives in Fairfax and works for Kaiser and the Corte Madera Fire Department.
Meals on 2 Wheels

Linda Siegel, a Whistlestop Meals on Wheels delivery driver volunteer, found a new and creative way to deliver her meals to homebound older adults. She calls her delivery system “meals on 2 wheels.” Her route is short — four miles around downtown San Rafael — so she wanted to find a way to deliver by bike. She got the cart attachment for free from The Bicycle Works (a bike co-op in San Anselmo) and gave it a new coat of paint. Her next improvement is to add a Meals on Wheels sign on the back. Linda doesn’t give up; she is also going to try out an electric bike from The Bicycle Works. She says, “It has a much cooler attachment.” Anyone out there who wants to volunteer while staying in shape? Call the volunteer office at 456-9062 x117 or volunteer@whistlestop.org.

Generosity from Driftwood

From left are: Marguerite Middendorf, Sheila Lyons, Sondra Blake, Patty Cerf, Joe O’Hehir and Barbara Lonn. The Driftwood Board of Directors presented Whistlestop CEO Joe O’Hehir with a $15,000 donation at their annual breakfast meeting at the Jackson Café. Driftwood has been raising money since the 1960’s; they have given Whistlestop an annual donation for the past 13 years. Driftwood has raised over $480,000 for Whistlestop (www.driftwoodmarin.org).
For more than 500 consecutive Fridays, during chilling rain and in scorching weather, a band of hearty older adults has congregated between the hours of 4 and 5pm at the corner of Miller Avenue and Camino Alto in Mill Valley to voice their passion for peace.

Helen Anderson, 87, is the current facilitator of the group, Seniors for Peace, and she says they do much more than hold up “End War” signs and wave to passing motorists. “The demonstrations on the corner are a big part of what we do,” she said. “But we are also advocates for other social justice issues such as the environment, healthcare, affordable housing and voter and water rights.”

She added, “We recognize that some of the troops are out of Afghanistan, but we continue to make peace our primary effort. On Sunday evenings at 6:45pm, we hold a silent candlelight vigil at The Redwoods to connect with other similar-thinking people around the world. With the global community linking together, it is our hope that peace, love and justice will prevail on Earth. On Mondays in the auditorium, we provide speakers on a wide variety of topics and all events are well attended.” Most of the demonstrators live at The Redwoods in Mill Valley, but everyone is welcome and all ages have shown up, including students from Tamalpais High School.

The average age of the group, which now numbers about 150, is 87. One regular is Al Goldbaum, 100. Several of them play musical instruments, including Rolly Mulvey, popular guitar player and group leader. Helen’s husband, Gordon, often plays the harmonica, and the group, averaging 30 to 40 each Friday, loves to sing Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie songs.
New Whistlestop board member Cynthia Wuthmann is Director of Advancement for Cedars of Marin. A former ballet dancer, she is an advocate and ambassador for individuals with disabilities. She has a strong personal connection with aging adults and their diverse needs and interests via her experiences with her aging parents and parents-in-law. She has volunteered with the Buck Institute board and committee members to support and fundraise for their research on aging.

She is also a business department faculty member at City College of San Francisco. She is eager to bring communications, team building, fund development, finance and positioning skills to support Whistlestop. She is an enthusiastic champion of intergenerational alchemy and the 1+1=3 model of participation, support and community engagement for all individuals.

Cynthia says, “I love what my father told me as he was becoming aware of his own physical deficits due to Parkinson’s: ‘I’m sorry my body is failing me; I believe my mind is at its very creative best and I have so much to give at this time in my life.’ I know my dad was not alone in his experience of the wisdom and creativity of age and I am excited to support all the wise and creative individuals who Whistlestop serves.”

Cynthia Wuthmann, second from left, with friends.
Do you get discouraged when you hear your telephone ring? Do you avoid using your phone because hearing difficulties make it hard to understand the person on the other end of the line? For many Americans the telephone conversation – once an important part of everyday life – has become a thing of the past. Because they can’t understand what is said to them on the phone, they’re often cut off from friends, family, doctors and caregivers. Now, thanks to innovative technology there is finally a better way.

A simple idea... made possible with sophisticated technology. If you have trouble understanding a call, the Captioning Telephone can change your life. During a phone call the words spoken to you appear on the phone’s screen – similar to closed captioning on TV. So when you make or receive a call, the words spoken to you are not only amplified by the phone, but scroll across the phone so you can listen while reading everything that's said to you. The captioning function can be turned on as needed. Each call is routed through a call center, where computer technology – aided by a live representative – generates immediate voice-to-text translations. The captioning is real-time, accurate and readable. Your conversation is private and the captioning service doesn’t cost you a penny – all you need is a high-speed Internet connection from any Internet provider and a standard phone line. Callers do not need special equipment or a captioning phone in order to speak with you.

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New amplified phone lets you hear AND see the conversation.

The Captioning Telephone converts phone conversations to easy-to-read captions for individuals with hearing loss

“Finally… a phone you can use again. The Captioning Telephone is also packed with features to help make phone calls easier. The keypad has large, easy to use buttons. You get adjustable volume amplification along with the ability to save captions for review later. It even has an answering machine that provides you with the captions of each message.”

See for yourself with our exclusive home trial. Try the Captioning Telephone in your own home and if you are not completely amazed, simply return it within 30-days for a refund of the product purchase price.

Captioning Telephone

Call now for our special introductory price!

1-877-683-5051

Please mention promotion code 49993.

The Captioning Telephone is intended for use by people with hearing loss. In purchasing a Captioning Telephone, you acknowledge that it will be used by someone who cannot hear well over a traditional phone.
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

ESL SUMMER CLASSES
We are offering a summer session of English classes. Registration is required. Fee: New students: $15, returning spring semester students, free.

Basic English
Monday & Wednesday • 2-3:30pm (through July 17)

Intermediate English
Monday & Wednesday • 2-3:30pm (through July 17)

Advanced Reading and Conversation
Monday & Wednesday • 2-3:30pm (through July 24)

English Conversation
Tuesday & Thursday • 2-3:30pm (through July 18)

CALFRESH PROGRAM
The CalFresh Program, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), can add to your food budget to put healthy and nutritious food on the table. The program issues monthly electronic benefits that can be used to buy most foods at many markets and food stores. Whistlestop offers assistance with the application process. Eligibility is determined by CalFresh. For more information or to make an appointment, call Sandra Jimenez or Vicky Voicehowsky at 456-9062.

VOLUNTEER TUTORS NEEDED
The multicultural department is looking for volunteer tutors to help our English students improve their language skills. This is a great opportunity to help others better integrate into our community. Hours are very flexible. If interested, please contact Vicky Voicehowsky at 457-0586.

NEW PORTUGUESE SOCIAL GROUP FORMING
This is a great opportunity for Portuguese speakers to have a support group and a good time in the community. If you are interested in participating or you know someone who is, please contact Sandra Jimenez at 456-9062.

Marin County’s Choice for Home Health Care
To arrange for care or learn more about our services, please call 415.492.4600 or visit us online at www.SutterCareAtHome.org
www.facebook.com/SutterCareAH
Not For Profit, Locally Based

Visiting Nurses • Home Care • Mom/Baby Visits

Sutter Care at Home offers you the most comprehensive range of home care services available.
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

GERMAN SOCIAL GROUP TIME
For our German-speaking friends: our summer meeting time for the German Social Group is Mondays, 11am to 12:30pm in Caboose 2 at Whistlestop. A heartfelt welcome to all!

PICKLEWEED COMMUNITY CENTER LUNCH & ENTERTAINMENT
July 12 & 26 • 11am-1pm
50 Canal Street, San Rafael. This is a partnership between Whistlestop, San Rafael Community Services, and Marin County Division of Aging and Adult Services to promote socialization, education, entertainment, and a nutritious lunch. For more information call Sandra Jimenez at 456-9062.

JEWELRY CLASS NOW MEETS TWICE A MONTH
Thursday, July 11 • 10-11:45am
Thursday, July 18 • 1:30-2:45pm
Fee: $8 per class/Fee includes materials
Registration and payment are required prior to class. Maximum: 10 people. Maria Barsesat, local bead artist, will show you how to make beautiful, simple and easy jewelry items for yourself or as gifts.

DROP-IN COMPUTER LAB
Mondays & Wednesdays 10am-Noon
Volunteer computer tutors are available to work with you one-on-one if needed.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Be a part of the incredible Whistlestop family of volunteers, have fun, inspire others, and gain the satisfaction of being an active member of your community.
Contact: Millie at 456-9062 x117 or volunteer@whistlestop.org
• Board/Card Game Leaders
• Bi-lingual Computer Teacher
• English Tutors
• Jackson Café Volunteers
• Information and Referral Office
• Volunteer Drivers for Meals on Wheels Program

BRING A SMILE – DELIVER A MEAL!
Many older adults in our community are homebound and are unable to prepare a balanced meal to get the nutrition they need. You can help solve this problem by offering to volunteer on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, delivering nutritious meals to people who are isolated and need your help. You will enjoy establishing relationships while enabling someone to stay in good health. Call Millie, Volunteer Coordinator, at 456-9062 x117 or volunteer@whistlestop.org.

IN-KIND DONATIONS NEEDED
Mah Jongg sets, Chess set, Dominos, books, yarn, movies on DVDs. If you have items to donate, please call 456-9062.

THANKS, FLASH MOBBERS!
We want to give many thanks to all who participated, sponsored, videoed, photographed, and watched the Flash Mob event at Whistlestop on May 29.
• Whistlestop Participants and Staff
• Angela Jakab-Miller, Zumba Instructor
• S. Kramer Herzog, Producer/Videographer
• Peggy Day Producer of Seriously Now News Program
• Mary Denton • Michael Hingson • Bob Sonnenberg
• Drake Terrace Executive Director Erik Flatt and his team
• Dario D’Arrigo/Videographer
• Marin Independent Journal

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES AT JACKSON CAFÉ
Bread & Roses and Whistlestop are hosting a Summer Concert Series during lunch at the Jackson Café on the third Thursday of the month. July 18th: Vocals, Piano and Jazz with Debbie Ann Cucalon and Benny Watson. Please call 456-9062 for more information!

Marin County Commission on Aging
Thursday, July 11 • 10am-12:30pm
Where: Marguerita Johnson, Marin City
Topic: Vision and Aging
Speaker(s): (Tentative) Guide Dogs for the Blind and/or Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired
**HOME DELIVERY GROCERY PROGRAM**

This program is available for homebound [San Rafael](#) older adults (60+) who need shopping assistance. Delivery is free. Older adults pay only for the groceries. Participants can use the program on a weekly, monthly, or shorter basis, for example, while recovering from an illness.

The program is a partnership between Episcopal Senior Communities, Novato Independent Elders Program, and San Rafael Safeway. For eligibility or if you would like to volunteer, contact Millie Makarewicz at 456-9062 x117.

**WHISTLESIZERS INSTRUCTOR RETIRES AFTER 39 YEARS**

Ruth Fleshman was the first instructor to bring health into the focus at Whistlestop. For 39 years she has led the exercise class “Whistlesizers,” motivating many older adults to lead a higher quality of life through staying fit and limber. She loves to quip that she came with the building. Now, she plans to spend time developing similar ideas for classes in West Marin. We will miss Ruth and her many years of service and wish her well in her new endeavors.

**WHISTLESIZERS BECOMES FITNESS FOR LIVING**

**Tuesday & Thursday • 9:15-10:15am**  
**Fee:** $2

A new way to exercise for pain relief and physical repair. [Meg Margolis](#), founder and director of Fitness for Living, was trained in anatomy, kinesiology, and physiology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass. Since moving to California, Meg has taught more than 2,000 people how to move outside the limits of pain with her original exercises and positioning system. Meg will be the new instructor for the fitness class formerly known as Whistlesizers.

**ZUMBA CLASS MONDAY & THURSDAY!**

**Monday • 10-11am • Thursday • 11am-Noon**

Fee: $6 each time, Cash Only  
Instructor: Angela Jakab-Miller

Zumba is a great way to stay fit and active with a fun, motivating combination of Latin-inspired music and dance steps guaranteed to get you moving. Zumba movements are easy-to-follow and for all activity levels. Bring water and a small towel.

**COME PLAY PING-PONG!**

**Friday, July 5 & 19 • 2-4pm**

Have fun and get your heart pumping with ping-pong! Ping-Pong, also called table tennis, is a fun way to strengthen your hand-eye coordination. The game features light balls and paddles and is easy to learn. Play is free to all players. This non-competitive game brings people together for the love of table tennis. Comfortable clothing and tennis shoes are recommended.

**GOING PLACES**

To register for a trip or hike, contact Lisa O’Brien, MARIN YMCA, 446-2113 or Vicky Voicehowsky, Whistlestop, 457-0586.

**Friday, July 5, Salvation Army Headquarters and Post Office Winery, Healdsburg**

If regular old Salvation Army stores are like Chuck-e-Cheeses, then the Healdsburg Salvation Army is Disney World. This facility resembles a sprawling ranch estate. After the shopping frenzy, lunch at a local eatery, then visit Soda Rock Winery, formerly a general store and post office. Wine-tasting at the winery for a small fee. Depart: 9:30am; Return about 3pm. **Fees:** Facility Members $20, Program Members $25, Community Members $30.

**Friday, July 19, Exploratorium, San Francisco**

The Exploratorium now has a spectacular new home at Pier 15 on San Francisco’s Embarcadero. There are 150 new exhibits plus hundreds of beloved classics. Enjoy a behind-the-scene tour with a docent, lunch at the Seaglass Restaurant or bring your own. Depart: 9:30am; Return about 2pm. **Fees:** Facility Members $35, Program Members $40, Community Members $45. Cost covers entry ticket and transportation.

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**Important Numbers**

- **Marin Access Call Center:** 454-0902
- **Get Qualified to Ride:** 456-9062, x106eligibility@whistlestop.org
- **Schedule a Ride:** 454-0964
- **Cancel a Ride:** 457-4630
- **STAR Volunteer Driving:** 454-0969
- **Meals on Wheels:** 457-4636
<table>
<thead>
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<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9–NOON</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11AM</td>
<td>Language AM Monday</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–11AM</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12:30PM</td>
<td>Language German Social Group</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30–5PM</td>
<td>Language Citizenship Class</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00–NOON</td>
<td>Relax Mah Jongg</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45–11:45AM</td>
<td>Exercise Cardio Exercise Class</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOON–1PM</td>
<td>Language French Class</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOON–3PM</td>
<td>Relax Manicurist</td>
<td>Appt. Needed</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>Language French Social Group</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Italian</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$24/mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Tai Chi Qigong</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11:30AM</td>
<td>Support Seniors' Circle</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–12PM</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Corazón Latino</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Relax Knit!!</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Memoir Writing Class</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$5/class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Italian</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$24/mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00–NOON</td>
<td>Support Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Support ACASA</td>
<td>Peer Counseling</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language Practice Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Arts &amp; Crafts w/Vicky</td>
<td>July 12 &amp; 26</td>
<td>$3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Exercise Ping-Pong</td>
<td>July 5 &amp; 19</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Exercise Yoga</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$3</td>
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For a complete list of all classes, visit whistlestop.org

The Caboose, Computer Lab, Board Room and Jackson Café are all located at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center – 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael.
Red-winged Blackbirds at my Feeders

We know springtime is here when we hear the joyous songs of the Red-winged Blackbirds singing to mark the edges of their feeding territories, normally areas large enough to feed themselves and their wives. Standing in my kitchen one recent morning, I heard the territorial song of a Red-winged Blackbird emanating from my bird feeders. What was this? I grabbed my camera and rushed to a nearby window.

At the center feeder, a Red-wing had fluffed his epaulets and was singing loudly, warning a second Red-wing that was trying to land on his ‘territory.’ The Red-wing wasn’t having it; vocally he chased the intruder over to another feeder, at which point the singer went back to eating. For several days, Red-wings came to feed four feet away at the other feeders, carefully avoiding his ‘feeder-territory.’

Every weekend I email a special bird photo (free) to those who would like something nice to look at in their Inbox. Email me at SHENmaker@MSN.com if you’d like to be on my list.

’Til next month, Richard
A Mini United Nations

Whistlestop has become a mini United Nations. Everyday, Whistlestop is filled with conversations in different languages and dialects. Some people are speaking in their native tongues and some are learning a new language. At the Ninth Annual Healthy Aging Symposium in Marin, Allan L. Bernstein, M.D. declared that, “Learning a new language is a great opportunity for older adults to exercise their brains.”

Although our English Language Program is popular and well attended, a few other language classes have emerged with much success this year. In March, we started the French Class, led by volunteer instructor Susan Duncan, who taught French in a local high school for 18 years. “Working with older adults is a whole different arena — they really want to be there and learn. I feel a real sense of camaraderie among the students,” says Duncan.

Liz Guagenti, the Italian instructor, is not only passionate about teaching the language, but she also provides the students with an Italian environment. One of her students, Sylvia Sanchez, said, “Learning Italian makes me feel happier and I don’t think about the negatives that are going on in life. It takes me to a fantasy world, so to speak.”

Both of these classes have had a spectacular attendance and interest. Established many years ago, the Spanish class has provided many world travelers with necessary conversational skills. Robert Chandler says, “This class has helped me travel all around Latin America and most of all, enriched my life.”

Learn something new today; take a language class and enrich your life. You will find more information on our language classes on page 10. ♦
To Live, Love, Laugh & Learn
By LOIS ELLISON

The 9th Annual Healthy Aging Symposium was held May 9 in San Rafael. Keynote speaker Simon Melov, PhD, heads Buck Institute’s Genomic Core Studies. He stressed the need for exercise because it reduces muscle aging. Without use, our muscles atrophy with age. He suggested we think of exercise the way we think about brushing our teeth and showering – it’s important to do daily.

Allan L. Bernstein, MD, a Kaiser neurologist, encouraged the audience to “use your freedom and ability to meet new people, try new things and listen and learn from people, music and other stimulation.” He suggested taking a class, learning a new skill, upgrading what we know and have fun. Learning improves brain function, produces cognitive reserve, reduces isolation and makes you smile. He said certain things interfere with learning: social isolation, depression, alcohol (more than one drink can slow thinking), poor sleep, sedating medications, chronic pain and uncorrected hearing and vision problems.

Beth Ashley, another speaker, and her husband, Rowland Fellows, have been married three years. They knew each other as children but Rowland’s family moved away and they lost contact with each other. Both married, raised families and lost their spouses. Sixty-seven years later, he called Beth to say he had moved to Santa Rosa. They reconnected. Beth said they both have some health problems but, “We do not let that stop us. We refuse to say we can’t. Don’t give up. Don’t worry. Use the aids you need. For example, we now use airport wheelchairs. Dream. Reach out to others.”

Rowland’s top ten list: 1. When very angry, count to 100. 2. When angry, count to 10 before speaking. 3. Use your sense of humor. 4. Learn something. 5. Improve something; plan something. 6. Grow something. 7. Have a pet. 8. Have a friend or confidant. 9. Money: plan, use it. 10. Maintain your health; don’t talk about it. ♦
Scolding your most favorite person in the universe is not an easy thing to do. But you must. This business of grandparents watching children throw sand at the playground, or push to the best seat on the bus or bring out something to eat without offering to guests has got to stop. The behavior of the young generation before you may be your masterwork. Stand tall, straighten your shoulders and get to it!

The Italian for rudeness is vulgare. The French call it betise. In Spanish you might warn a child “No seas mal llevado.” The Chinese say, “Na bateau.” They all mean the same thing: “That’s not nice.” Whatever language you choose, do choose to name it and change it.

Here’s one way you might do it. Perhaps you find one child teasing another. Go up to the culprit, lean forward, close to their ear and say firmly, “What you are doing is not good. Stop doing it.” Any self-respecting child or teen will then say, “But he/she started it.” If you think there is some merit in this, lift your head and, with your eyes, include the other child. Repeat the phrases again, firmly, quietly. Then walk away. Stay apart for several minutes. If your young miscreant approaches you later to talk of something else, respond with acceptance. This approach is kids’ talk for: “I’m sorry.”

Teaching manners is key to curbing rudeness. Watch for opportunities to change bad to good. Insist on “Please” and “Thank you,” of course. Also, don’t let them make you their valet. Even a child of three can carry a light object to the car or pick up after themselves. Say: “Everyone helps in this family. You need to help, too.” Train them properly, and when they’re teens they’ll carry your luggage for you.

Table manners can be tough, so keep the kerfuffles to a minimum. Picnics are better than restaurant meals. Snacks shared are easier than dinners. And show is better than tell. Even a teenager will pick up your meaning when you silently take their napkin and put it on their lap. Spilled milk is not much to cry over, certainly. Try prevention – light-weight, easy to grasp, short glassware is good for all ages. Save Grandma’s crystal for later years.

A simple word, an affirming nod or thumbs up will make strong imprints on your grandkids. Over time, you will see them following your teachings. One day they might thank you, too!

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Playing Hookey to Snag Dodger Autographs

by GERRI ALANIZ of Greenbrae

In 1958, I was riding the streetcar to school when I noticed the ceremonies for the Los Angeles Dodgers being held in front of the L.A. City Hall. I got off, knowing I shouldn’t. But I couldn’t miss the opportunity and I had my baseball glove with me. Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale and others signed my glove! I didn’t go to school and went to the game at the Coliseum, where I was spotted by my brother on TV. It was worth the scolding and I still have the glove (I played second base on our softball team). The autographs are fading but what a great memory!
READERS Write In

I attended the Symposium on Aging a few weeks ago. Thomas Attardi was introduced and I laughed – he was going to do some stretches with 300 or so people, sitting older people – he had to be kidding. One word: amazing!

I went to his class Thursday at Whistlestop. How this man works with older people, all of whom have varying degrees of decreased mobility, and gets everyone moving and stretching and enjoying it is amazing.

Along with being patient, kind and so knowledgeable, he has one other exceptional thing going for him – his smile. It is warm and encouraging.

Most Sincerely,
Betty Viering, San Rafael

CUTE Pets

Terrors of the Neighborhood

Nancy Abruzzo of Novato says her toy poodles, Bogart (black) and Stewart Louis (creme brule) are half brothers but more like brothers. “They fight, chew, get into trouble and hate cats. Yes, they are cute. And they are the terrors of the neighborhood and big dogs will cross the street to avoid them.”

TravelNavigators: Helping Marin Residents Discover Transit Options

Marin Access’s Paratransit Eligibility Department is evolving, according to Ron Esparza, Whistlestop’s Manager of Client Services.

Under the current system, there are separate phone numbers for Paratransit, Catch-a-Ride and the STAR Volunteer Driver Program. Understanding that this can be confusing to clients, Marin Transit has been working with Whistlestop to implement a one-stop approach to program information and eligibility. This approach will create a single point of contact for all of these programs and more.

Esparza added, “Our Travel Navigators will be able to recommend the program or programs that will best suit our riders and then instantly walk them through the eligibility process for those specific programs. Rather than just sending riders a Paratransit application, this program will allow us to offer a customized transit plan based on our riders’ needs.”

Raphael Krantz, who currently manages the STAR program, and Janet Van Rijsbergen, who currently handles eligibility for Marin Access Paratransit, will be the first specialists for the program. They will bring a high degree of empathy and compassion as well as wealth of program knowledge and are eager to provide Marin residents with the information needed to discover their transit options.

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**Meet Francie.** Francie Bedinger is the Home Care Assistance Kentfield client care manager and works directly with clients and their families throughout Marin County. With a masters in Gerontology, Francie is an expert in health and wellness for older adults and works hard to ensure her clients are happy and healthy at all times.

**Call Francie Today for Your Free Assessment:**

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