Finding meaning as we grow older is different for each person. After retiring from the regular 8 to 5 workday or switching to work that requires a less rigid schedule, many older adults find themselves facing a feeling of emptiness. The strategies we choose to find meaning when we have more time might include reflection, social activism, meditation, Yoga, Qigong, Tai Chi and reading inspiring works of others.

Sylvia Boorstein, PhD, is a shining model for anyone interested in finding meaning in later life. She is a co-founding teacher at the Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, as well as a psychotherapist, author, workshop leader and someone who practices what she preaches. She started meditating after attending a Mindfulness Meditation weekend retreat in 1977. Her primary teachers have been Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein. Today she leads a popular class on Wednesday mornings at Spirit Rock.

Sylvia believes that meditation clears the mind and, “When the mind is clear, behavior is always impeccable.” She says that political activism was her spiritual practice in the 1960s. “I was a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the Marin Women for Peace. I marched, accompanied by my four young children, two sons and two daughters, in rallies protesting the Vietnam War. Just a few years ago, I was part of a clergy peace rally, and agreed to be arrested, along with friends and colleagues, as a protest to the invasion of Afghanistan. My grandchildren watched on TV and were proud of me.”

In her best-selling book, Happiness is an Inside Job, Sylvia writes that the Buddhist practices of meditation, mindfulness and metta (loving kindness) can quiet the mind, deepen concentration and lower anxiety. You can find out more about Sylvia’s classes and other events at Spirit Rock at www.spiritrock.org. A list of some upcoming events can be found on Page 3 of this issue.
Finding Meaning Amidst Change

When I first agreed to write an article on the topic of “finding meaning,” I quickly discovered that I had no clue how to proceed. Finding meaning? What kind of deep existential philosophical off-the-wall topic have I agreed to write about? After searching for truth and meaning for two weeks and finding nothing, I decided to take a step back. I went to my favorite source of inspiration—famous quotes from other people. There’s nothing better than searching through the quotes of others to help get the creative juices going. Besides, you never know where searching quotes may lead you.

My quote search led me to these words by the famous author, Joseph Campbell, “We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us.” Deep, eh? What do Mr. Campbell’s words have to do with anything? Lots actually.

As I thought about Mr. Campbell’s quote, I kept coming back to some of my own life experiences, especially my escape with my guide dog, Roselle, from the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. For the past 11 years, I have been traveling the world telling my story of survival and talking about the lessons of trust, teamwork, and dealing with change that I felt were important for people to hear, rather than just focusing on the tragedy and horror of that day. I talk about the fact that every one of us encounters change, sometimes radical change, in our lives. While we may not be able to influence or anticipate the change itself, we have total and absolute control over our thoughts and how we choose to deal with the change we face.

Many of us who associate with Whistlestop are involved with becoming older adults and the resulting physical changes that come with growing older. Our lives change because we can no longer accomplish tasks the way we used to or live life like we did 10 or 15 years ago. We come to wonder if life is worth living or how we will be able to keep up with our ever-changing world.

I have some thoughts which may help. These are lessons I discuss in my talks and which I hope may find relevance to you.

1. Don’t worry about the things you can’t control – focus on the things you can and the rest will take care of themselves. If we constantly worry about every little thing, especially those things we can’t influence, we will worry ourselves to death and never accomplish anything.

2. Find at least three things to laugh about every day. Medical research has demonstrated time and time again that laughter is a positive influence in our lives; laughter relaxes us. Even laughing at ourselves can be fun and often it will provide us with the best

continued on page 4
Sampling of Upcoming Classes at Spirit Rock

Here are some of the classes, retreats and workshops scheduled in January at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, 5000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Woodacre. Call 415-488-0164 or go to www.spiritrock.org for information on registration, times and cost.

Jan. 5: Beginning … and Beginning Again: An Overview of the Path to Happiness, with Sylvia Boorstein.


Jan. 8: Qigong and Meditation Series, with Mington Gu and Debra Chamberlain-Taylor.

Jan. 8-13: Essential Dharma Meditation Retreat, with Howard Cohn and Mark Coleman.


Jan 19: Cultivating Resilience As We Age (for people 55 and older), with Anna Douglas and Lauren Vanett.

This workshop will be from 10am to 4pm in the Community Meditation Hall. Cost: $50 to $108 sliding scale. People 65 years and older with a limited and fixed income are invited to attend for $25.

No matter our age, we can cultivate resources of heart and mind to help us through our deepest challenges. The day will be a blend of meditation, teachings, experiential exercises, and discussion.

Take a warm environment. Add a time-honored tradition of care. Blend with just the right level of support. These are the ingredients that make up AlmaVia of San Rafael, a loving senior community devoted to meeting the needs of older adults, with respect and compassion.

Schedule a tour and have lunch on us!

Hear life’s special moments... clearly

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From Rocky's PANTRY by ROCKY PACKARD

Mango Salsa

This spicy, fruity blend of ingredients will turn any dish into an exciting new favorite!

Serves 4

1 Mango, peeled & cut into 1/3 inch dice
2 Tbs Red onion, finely diced
4 Tbs Cilantro, chopped
1 Red bell pepper, finely diced
1 Pinch Red chili flakes
6 Fresh chopped mint leaves
Juice of 2 limes
Salt & Pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and let sit for an hour before serving. ✦

continued from page 2

3. Embrace change. As someone once said, “The world doesn’t stand still.” Technology is evolving. We are growing older and thus our physical and mental abilities may be changing. While medical science may be able to help us with some of the physical and mental changes, our job is not to give up, but to live life to the fullest and face change head-on.

4. Former President Jimmy Carter once said, “We must adjust to changing times while holding to unwavering principles.” Our values and ethical principles are the guideposts that direct our lives. Just because we may experience change in many ways, we don’t need to change our basic core values. As we grow older, we may not have the income we used to have, but that doesn’t mean that we should begin to steal.

5. Don’t ask, “why me?” Instead ask, “What am I going to do about it?” Each of us can choose to be a victim or a winner. Life is about choices, it always has been and it always will be. God’s greatest gift to us is free will and choice. As I say in my book, Thunder Dog, shake off the dust and move on. Remember the first guide dog command, ‘FORWARD.’ ✦

Michael Hingson is secretary of the Whistlestop board.
Mindfulness-Based Dementia Care

“I savor the times when the light switch goes on and caregivers finally understand: It’s about learning how to ‘be.’ I know that new attitude is going to carry them through the long journey of dementia.” — Marguerite Manteau-Rao

Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at UCSF is offering a new eight-week program specifically designed for professional and family caregivers of persons with dementia. It is also appropriate for health care providers and anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of dementia care from a mindfulness perspective. Learn how the practice of mindfulness can help you cope with the challenges and stresses of dementia care, and also greatly improve the experience of the person in your care. This intensive course requires that you practice in between classes. You will be rewarded with a transformative experience that will sustain you over the long course of the dementia journey.

The course will be co-led by Marguerite Manteau-Rao LCSW, a social worker and psychotherapist with many years of experience working with dementia, and Dr. Kevin Barrows, physician director of mindfulness programs. The cost for the eight-week program is $295 plus $25 for materials. Register online at www.isher.ucsf.edu.

SESSION 1: FREE INFORMATION SESSION
Thursday, Jan. 24 • 7-9:30pm
Course Dates:
Thursdays, Feb. 7-Mar. 28 • 7-9:30pm
Daylong Retreat:
Sunday, Mar. 17 • 9:30am - 4:30pm

SESSION 2: FREE INFORMATION SESSION
Thursday, April 25 • 7-9:30 pm
Course Dates:
Thursdays, May 9-June 27 • 7-9:30 pm
Daylong Retreat:
Saturday, June 15 • 9:30am-4:30pm
Free Specialized Phones

Free specialized phones from the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) help Californians with disabilities stay connected. The phones are for people who need special accommodations around hearing, seeing, speaking, moving and remembering.

There’s a California Phone for every need. For example, there are amplified phones that make it easier to hear conversations, big button phones that are easier to dial, phones with lights that flash for incoming calls, convenient portable phones – and more. Some phones are specially designed for individuals with more significant disabilities.

California Phones are available to all eligible California residents. Individuals can receive free phone equipment with the signature of a certified professional: medical doctor, licensed audiologist, qualified state agency, or a hearing aid dispenser.

CTAP is a program of the California Public Utilities Commission Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program funded by a small surcharge that appears on all telephone bills in California. This surcharge appears on your phone bill as “CA Relay Service and Communications Devices Fund.”

To apply:
1. Pick up an application at Whistlestop’s Help Desk, fill it out and sign.
2. Get a signature of a certified professional: the application needs to be signed by any medical doctor, physician assistant, audiologist, ophthalmologist or other eligible agent, specified on the form. If you don’t have one of these available, CTAP can help you find a professional Certifying Agent, www.californiaphones.org/certifying_agent.html.
3. Submit application by mail or fax; you will receive your approval by mail within about one week. You then need to call the Contact Center at 1-800-806-1191 to discuss what is the best phone for you.
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

NEW! ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION CLASS
Mondays • 1-2pm, starting Jan. 28
Fee: Register by January 18
Information, call Sandra or Vicky at 456-9062
This class will explore reading, conversation, and pronunciation exercises. Basic knowledge of the English language is required.

NEW! FRENCH SOCIAL GROUP
Tuesdays • 1-2pm
Information: Call Vicky Voicehowsky, 457-0586
Whistlestop has a new French Social group on Tuesday afternoons, and French speakers are invited to attend.

BEADING CLASS
Thursday, Jan. 17 (once a month) • 1:30-2:45pm
Fee: $8 per class—includes materials
Registration and payment are required prior to the class | Maximum space available: 10-12 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 • 10-Noon
Need help using a computer? We have volunteer computer tutors available to work with you one-on-one, if needed.

COMPUTER/PICTURE CLASS
Beginning: 1st Friday • 2-4pm
Advanced: 2nd Friday • 2-4pm
Fee: $15 | Instructor: Gene Dyer
Registration required: 459-6700
Call for more information and class descriptions.

EMAIL & WORD FOR BEGINNERS
Thursdays, Jan. 24, 31 & Feb. 7, 14 • 10am-Noon
Fee: $35 for four classes
Pre-registration required: 459-6700
You will learn how to create an email account and use the basics of Microsoft Word. You will also learn about email setup, creating contact lists, using email attachments, and Word basics to create, edit, and save documents.

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• Memory Care
• Med Reminders
• Bathing/Dressing
• Laundry
• Cooking
• And Much More!

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415-451-0100
INTERNET & SHOPPING/SELLING ONLINE
Thursdays, Jan. 10 & 17 • 10am-Noon
Fee: $20 includes both classes
Pre-registration required: 459-6700
You will learn how to use the Internet to shop and sell online. Also covered are Internet basics, search tools, price comparison shopping, safe shopping practices, and using eBay and Craigslist to sell online.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Contact: Millie at 456-9062 or volunteer@whistlestop.org
• Board/Card Game Leaders
• Chiropractor
• Russian Social Group Leader
• Bi-lingual Computer Teacher
• Jackson Café Volunteers needed to work at least one day a week from 10:30am to 1:45pm.
• Center Service volunteer needed to answer phones and do various office duties. Computer experience a plus, but not required. Volunteers are needed from 11am to 1pm, with some flexibility.
• Volunteer Drivers for Meals on Wheels Program.

IN-KIND DONATIONS NEEDED
Mah Jongg sets, Chess set, Dominos, books, yarn, movies on DVD and brown paper grocery bags. If you have items to donate, please call Debbie at 456-9062.

ZUMBA GOLD
Thursdays • 11am-Noon
Fee: $6 per class
Instructor: Angela Jakab-Miller
Zumba is a great way to stay fit and active. 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.

DIABETES 101
Monday, Jan. 14 • 10-11:30am
Presented by: Mindy Schwartz, CNS, MSN, CDE, Dina Griffith, PT, MHA, Tori Murray RD, and Ruth Vosmek LCSW with Marin General Hospital
To register: 456-9062
Come listen and discuss what to watch for, how to minimize your risk and how to improve your health. Topics will include risk factors, signs of high blood sugar, meal planning, exercise and life style choices.
We will look at how to prevent or even delay the onset of type 2 Diabetes as it is an ever-growing concern in this country. Symptoms such as frequent urination, fatigue, increased thirst, dry itchy skin, numbness and tingling in feet or hands may be early warning signs. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables and monitoring of carbohydrates is important.

FREE DIABETIC SHOE CLINIC
Monday, Jan. 14 • 11:30am -1:30pm
Following Diabetes Presentation by Marin General Hospital
Properly fitted therapeutic shoes are critical to protecting sensitive feet. Shoes designed specifically for diabetic feet help prevent blisters, sores and skin breakdown. Certain features not found in ordinary shoes, such as extra depth and width, help provide a proper fit and prevent the development of unwanted foot complications.

Our Program Includes:
• Fitting & Measurement – Judith Rooke, RN – Golden Years Medical, Inc.
• We will process your paperwork with your doctor & bill Medicare
• We will mold your shoe in-soles in-house
• Your feet can get relief within a week.

THE WHISTLESTOP HOME-DELIVERED 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, i.e. 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 the Program Coordinator at 456-9062, x124.

Marin County Commission on Aging
Thursday, Jan. 10 • 10am-12:30 pm
Where: Bennett House, Fairfax
Topic: Issues Facing Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities
Speaker: David Buccheri, Supervisor, Marin County Ombudsman
NEW BROWN BAG PANTRY PROGRAM CAN STRETCH YOUR FOOD DOLLARS

Fridays • 11:30am-12:30pm
Starting January 11. For adults 60 and over to help with the rising cost of food.

The Brown Bag Pantry is open to older adults who need affordable healthy food. The pantry is a supplemental food program that allows you to choose from a vast array of seasonal fruits and veggies; protein items, such as meat, eggs or beans; grains, pasta, bread, or rice and canned goods. Please bring your own bag. Food is provided through the San Francisco/Marin Food Bank.

Volunteers are needed to help set up, assist shoppers and clean up after the food distribution. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Millie Makarewicz at 456-9062, x117.

PING PONG

Fridays, Jan. 11 & 18 • 2-4pm
Drop in to play or watch!
Have fun and get your heart pumping with ping pong! Ping pong, also known as table tennis, has many benefits for those who play. It is great for working up a sweat and getting your heart rate up; it is gentle on your body; anyone can play; it is a sport for life and is known to help keep you mentally sharp.

The game features light balls and paddles, all provided by Whistlestop. It is easy to learn and playing is free to all players. Comfortable clothing and tennis shoes are recommended.

FRIDAY FLICKS

Movie starts at 1:30pm • The Lounge
Fee: Free
Jan. 4: To Catch a Thief
Jan. 11: On Golden Pond
Jan. 18: Going My Way
Jan. 25: Some Like It Hot

NEED HELP PREPARING YOUR INCOME TAXES?
Whistlestop is offering free income tax preparation assistance at Whistlestop and the Margaret Todd Senior Center February through April. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is available for individuals with basic, uncomplicated tax returns who qualify. Trained volunteers are available to help. Taxpayers are asked to bring a copy of their previous year’s return and all of the documents reporting income for the 2011 tax year.

INSURANCE FRAUD – HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

Wednesday, Jan. 16 • 1:30-2:30pm
Marin County District Attorney’s Office, Insurance Fraud Unit, will offer a one-hour fraud awareness PowerPoint program. Presenters are Inspectors Mike Miller and Jack Cooper. They will talk about ways older adults can protect themselves against insurance fraud, such as workers comp, construction, auto, Life and Annuity. We also have fraud awareness booklets provided by the California Department of Insurance for the attendees.

REVITALIZE YOUR BODY WITH ENERGY EXERCISES

Monday, Jan. 14 • 2:30-3:30pm
Fee: Free | To Register: 456-9062
Instructor: Dr. Susan Wright, LCSW, PhD, has been a practicing therapist for over 30 years.

This class will give you the tools to keep positive energy flowing throughout your body by eliminating the negative. Blocked energy can interfere with your health and emotional well being. Learning how to do the exercises will help you improve your concentration and your memory, overcome exhaustion, balance your energy flow, boost your immune system, blow out anger, and many other positive ways you can keep yourself feeling good. The exercises are not difficult and most can be done in a chair or wheelchair.

MOVEMENT AND MUSIC FOR THE OLDER ADULT

7 Mondays, Jan. 28–March 18 (No class Feb. 18) 11:10 am- Noon
Instructor: Diane Hain
Registration required: 456-9062 or thru College of Marin, 485-9305
Created for older adults who have not been exercising regularly, or have arthritis-related problems. It moves at a moderate, comfortable, yet progressively challenging, pace to meet individual needs. Also included: joint flexibility, muscle strengthening, balance, breathing coordination and modified Tai Chi movements, combined with relaxing music conducive to reducing stress.

Transportation Numbers

Marin Access Call Center: 454-0902
Get Qualified to Ride: 456-9062, x106
eligibility@whistlestop.org
Cancel a Ride: 457-4630
STAR Volunteer Driving: 454-0969
### This Month at Whistlestop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAYS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–2 PM</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 AM</td>
<td>Language AM Monday</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12:30 PM</td>
<td>Language German Social Group</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Movement &amp; Music 1/28</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2 PM</td>
<td>Language English Pronunciation</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–5:30 PM</td>
<td>Language Citizenship Class</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15 AM</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>10:45–11:45 AM</td>
<td>Exercise Cardio Exercise Class</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon–3 PM</td>
<td>Relax Manicurist</td>
<td>Appt. Needed</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2 PM</td>
<td>Language French Social Group</td>
<td>457-0586</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3 PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–10:15 AM</td>
<td>Exercise Tai Chi Qigong</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–2 PM</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11:30 AM</td>
<td>Support Seniors' Circle</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–12 PM</td>
<td>Learn Computer Lab</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30–11:45 AM</td>
<td>Support Corazón Latino</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Language English as a Second Language (ESL)</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15 AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</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>2–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Relax Friday Flicks</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Support ACASA</td>
<td>Peer Counseling</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Language Practice Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4 PM</td>
<td>Learn Arts &amp; Crafts w/Vicky</td>
<td>Jan. 4 &amp; 18</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4 PM</td>
<td>Exercise Ping Pong</td>
<td>Jan. 11 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–3:30 PM</td>
<td>Exercise Yoga</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.
Ever wonder why the brilliant colors of a hummingbird flash on and off and shift as they do? The hummingbird’s colors do not come from pigments, like those in paints and crayons. Their iridescent hues are interference colors, much like those at the edges of oil films on water and in soap bubbles. These colors change when the angle of light falling on the feathers’ special refractive materials shift.

These two images of an Anna’s Hummingbird were taken less than a second apart. In the first, the sunlight refracted, producing the iridescent colors. In the second, the bird turned just a bit and the angle of the light changed, revealing the natural matte black pigment of the bird’s neck feathers.

You can see more about the Hummingbird’s iridescent colors in my blog at: www.RichardsBirdBlog.com.

Every weekend I email a special bird photo to Express readers. If you’d like something nice amidst the junk in your inbox, just ask me at SHENmaker@MSN.com.

‘Til next month, Richard
Recently the Multicultural team started a pilot project with Sir Francis Drake High School. Our Hispanic older adults visited the school’s Spanish program to practice conversation together with the students. The project connected these two generations through the exchange of language and culture. This type of experience brings immense pride and joy to these older adults, who gain a feeling of usefulness in our busy community. For the students, the opportunity allows them to practice their Spanish skills with native speakers. They also get a chance to learn about Hispanic culture. Inevitably, a mutual respect and relationship grows between the generations. Lolita Risueño, one of our participants, said the experience was both heartfelt and educational. “The students were very interested in learning about me, and I was happy to get to know them. They made me feel welcomed.”

We hope to collaborate in the future with other high schools throughout Marin and continue with our efforts in bringing generations together. Eda Vargas, from El Salvador, said “I loved the enthusiasm that the teachers and students showed towards us. The students were ever so respectful! Their energy really lifted my spirits.”
“My Senior Citizen body has become much more flexible since I started attending the class, and I look forward to our weekly group session. Kelly keeps the class interesting and challenging with new poses. She gives us individual guidance & attention.”

—Alice Pollard

A group has gathered at Whistlestop each Friday to practice yoga and enjoy community, or sangha in Sanskrit, for more than a year. Students come for a number of reasons: the exercise and physical benefits, serendipity and community.

Students are silent as each one proceeds on her own path through the practice, yet there is meaning in the silence. While yoga benefits both body and mind, at the core it is not about changing or improving, but about uncovering and rediscovering the perfect essence of the true self — the one best positioned to understand what is meaningful. The stillness that is our essence is always available, even when the world around is not so still.

The time before and after class also brings great moments of meaning: sharing life stories and extra garden vegetables, giving a card or small gift for a holiday or important birthday, and student and teacher both taking time to listen, help or inquire how others are doing.

Yoga provides an opportunity to move, explore and feel better, both inside and out.

Kelly Lynch is the instructor for the Yoga class that meets from 2:30 to 3:30 Friday afternoons at Whistlestop. Classes are $3.
Elaine Brockbank of Kentfield sent us this photo of her grandchildren, Erik, 21; Amanda, 18; and Maia, 13, all children of her son, Brad Brockbank, from Denver, CO. The photo was taken in Indonesia and shows Erik and Maia with the mahout in front and Amanda on the elephant in the rear.

Sheri Langer of San Anselmo sent us this photo of her grandsons on a reindeer sculpture outside of San Anselmo City Hall. From left are Ari and Jonah on the reindeer and their dads, Michael (Jonah’s dad) and David (in blue coat, Ari’s dad).

Betty Pagett of San Rafael shares these photos of her grandsons. James, 4, (top) in the spring of 2009, feeds a giraffe at Safari West in Santa Rosa, and Zachary, 2, at home, 2011, playing guitar.

No Grand Mom Column

Audrey Mettel Fixmer is experiencing a health challenge that prevents her from writing her Grand Mom column this month. Audrey is quite disappointed that she was unable to write the column this time. We wish Audrey a speedy recovery. Anyone who would like to send her their best wishes may do so via the following email address: zanneyfix@gmail.com.

Betty Pagett of San Rafael shares these photos of her grandsons. James, 4, (top) in the spring of 2009, feeds a giraffe at Safari West in Santa Rosa, and Zachary, 2, at home, 2011, playing guitar.
Manicurist Donates Service

Nominated for Volunteer of the year, Christy Hayes has owned and operated two salons in Marin County for 20 years. Now she’s coming to our Active Aging Center once a week to pamper clients with free manicures. She will be here every Tuesday from Noon to 3pm. Call 456-9062 to make an appointment.

County, State Employees Can Help Whistlestop

All Marin County and California State government employees may designate Whistlestop as your beneficiary through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) – look for us under the Local Independent Charities heading, and write in code 40150.

Thank You For Holiday Cards – More Than 1,200 of Them!

The Whistlestop staff want to express deep gratitude to all who donated personalized holiday cards (more than 1,200) for homebound older adults in Marin. In December, Whistlestop invited Express readers to drop off holiday cards for homebound older adults with a personal message inside. Blank cards were available at Whistlestop as well.

Whistlestop is now putting out a call for a similar project for Valentine’s Day. Anyone who wishes to participate may drop off signed Valentines (with a personal message) at our office, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael no later than Feb. 11, 2013.

Card Contributors
Matilde Arroyo
Autodesk Employees
Joretta Barnett
Roger & Beverlee Beem
Lynne Bender
Debbie Benedetti
A.C. Camp
Mercedes Cari
Megan & Estella
DeGraeve
Pat Dickens
Venessa Dixon
Lolita Duerte
Edna Maguire
4th Grade Class
German Social Group at Whistlestop
Holland Family
Betty Jackson
Scott Marcum
Lisa Maslow
Mary Lou Miller
Kay Noguchi
Yvonne O’Keefe
O’Keefe Family
Karen Olson
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
Yvonne Roberts
Stacy Scott
Jen & Bob Sheppard
Lenice & Kai Smith
Barbara Squires
Whistlestop Staff
Judith Taylor
Orville Teising
Bill Thielen
Vicky Voicehowsky
Jennie Winton & Family
Marian Yamate
Shirley Young
Kathy Z
B.J. Denise & Diane
Caroline & Maddie
Crista Debra & Lance
Eda • Ella • Hope
Jeanette • JoAnne
Joe • Jossie • Julian
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