Connecting With the Community: Whistlestop’s Annual Report Issue

Whistlestop is pleased to share with you the impact of your support. Experts tell us that as Marin residents age, their need for connection increases. At Whistlestop, we help older adults connect to their community by providing mobility-friendly transportation, choices for healthy nutrition, referrals to older adult-friendly housing, opportunities to socialize and learn, and access to healthcare support. Over the past year, Whistlestop transformed lives in each of these areas.

**Transportation**

Whistlestop is Marin County’s sole provider of paratransit services for older adults and people living with disabilities. These services are federally mandated for all communities with public transportation. Whistlestop operates Marin Access which serves 96.6% of Marin County on behalf of Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit. With more than 90 employees in transportation, Whistlestop operates a robust call center, dispatch services, and employs more than 60 drivers. We also provide vehicle maintenance and ongoing safety trainings for our staff.

In 2013, Whistlestop partnered with Marin Transit to introduce the “Travel Navigator” program. This program provides the public with eligibility and resource information on the various transportation options available in Marin County for people with disabilities. During the 2012-13 operating year, Whistlestop provided more than 138,000 rides, operating 20 hours a day, 365 days a year for Marin Access and other non-profit organizations. On a typical day, we handle more than 500 transportation-related calls, always greeting callers with a friendly voice ready to assist.

There are currently 60 fully accessible vehicles in the Whistlestop fleet. Because our drivers are expected to provide consistently excellent service to some of our county’s most fragile residents, they must complete comprehensive training.

*continued on page 3*

**1,922 individuals with disabilities took 138,000 rides**
This special Annual Report edition highlights Whistlestop’s progress toward creating a new framework for aging in Marin. The report illustrates that our Transportation, Nutrition, Active Aging, and Volunteer Services programs are all experiencing significant growth due to an ever increasing demand from Marin’s rapidly aging population.

For the 2013 edition of the United States of Aging Survey, the National Council on Aging, United Healthcare, and USA TODAY surveyed 4,000 adults including a nationally representative sample of individuals ages 60 and over. The survey reported that connections with their community and family – not money – were the most important aspects for older adults’ quality of life. When asked what is most important to maintaining a high quality of life in their elder years, staying connected to friends and family was the top choice of 4 in 10 older adults, ahead of financial means (30%).

The survey finds that older adults are driven by a desire for connectedness. More than half of them (53%) nationally indicate that being close to friends and family is important. And, 84% of older adults cite technology as important to their ability to connect with the world around them.

Older adults who report experiencing feelings of isolation and depression express less optimism regarding their future health and quality of life compared with elders nationally. Thirty-seven percent of isolated older adults believe that their overall quality of life will get worse in the next 10 years compared with 24% of all older adults.

Seventy-one percent of older adults surveyed feel that the community they live in is responsive to their needs, but less than half (49%) believe their city or town is doing enough to prepare for the future needs of a growing older adult population. Twenty-six percent say that their community should invest in better transportation options for older adults, and 23% feel that their community should help provide more affordable health care services and housing.

This new framework for aging focused on connectivity to friends and family is the core theme for all of Whistlestop’s programs and services.

Let’s all try to pay special attention to the social connectivity needs of our older adults, whether they be family, friends or neighbors – especially during this holiday season.
Meals on Wheels: A Father and Daughter Story

Anna had been living near her dad, Charles, in Seattle when she relocated to Marin County for a job in 1997. At that time, her dad, who had lived in the Seattle area since the age of 5, was 77 and happily independent, driving around town and volunteering in food service at senior residences. Over the next few years, however, Charles was told by his doctor to stop driving due to poor eyesight, and his memory began to decline. “I am his only child,” said Anna, “so I convinced him to move to an independent living apartment in Sonoma. But before long, his memory issues became more severe.”

Concerned for her father’s safety, Anna moved him in with her in late 2005. “My dad took care of me when I was younger, so I rearranged my life so I could take care of him as he ages,” she said. “We have both been enriched by the experience.” At first, Anna’s dad spent lots of time at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center, which allowed her to have a full workday. “The bus picked him up and he took classes and ate lunch there,” she said. “He’s very social so it was great for him.” Before long, however, Charles was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, so Anna enrolled him at an adult day center.

Whistlestop Meals on Wheels delivers fresh meals to Anna’s house three times a week. “They bring fresh salads and sandwiches, which my dad loves, and the nutritional quality is excellent,” she said. Anna knows how important this service is to so many. “Meals on Wheels can be life saving for people who are isolated,” she said. “There is so much need out there and it is important for our community to support the program.”

250 homebound older adults enjoyed 64,800 meals

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friends at below-market prices, the Café also sells to-go meals for people to take home and enjoy at another time.

18,373 low-cost meals served in the Jackson Café

The Jackson Café is operated in partnership with Homeward Bound of Marin’s Fresh Start Culinary Academy, whose graduates order fresh food, design daily menus and prepare over 100 daily meals for Jackson Café customers. The Culinary Academy program provides formerly homeless individuals with skills in kitchen management, catering and food safety, preparing them to find jobs in the food industry and to become independent. Whistlestop is pleased to be a partner in this successful model that fulfills the missions of both nonprofit organizations.

Whistlestop’s Brown Bag Pantry was established in partnership with the San Francisco/Marin Food Bank in January 2013. The Pantry provides healthy groceries, free of charge, for adults over 60 and serves more than 100 people each week. Nineteen volunteers operate this program every Friday at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center.

On the third Wednesday of each month, Whistlestop participates in the Supplemental Food Program, where an average of 66 older adults and five children receive food boxes that include a variety of nutritious foods such as canned tuna, rice, cheese, pasta and peanut butter. This federally subsidized program is being offered in Marin for the first time.

Whistlestop’s Home-Delivered Grocery Program is our newest nutrition program that offers volunteer-based shopping assistance to homebound older adults who live in San Rafael. These recipients have the means to pay for their groceries, but they rely on our volunteers to shop for the food and deliver it to their homes. One typical recipient, Rita, 71, lives alone and recently had a stroke. Her volunteer, Janis, not only buys and delivers her groceries, she also puts them away and opens items that Rita might struggle with. As Rita told us, “Janis is a life saver.”

Socialization

Whistlestop is fast becoming the “United Nations” for our aging population. Every day, Marin County’s older adults come to our Active Aging Center to connect to the world. They take classes in Spanish, French, Italian, English as a Second Language and citizenship. They make new friends through social groups in their native languages of Spanish, German, Persian, French and Russian. They have fun playing games like Mah Jongg and ping pong, and discover new skills like jewelry making, arts and crafts, knitting, writing and photography. One of our most popular classes is Intergenerational Tech Savvy, which connects older adults with local high school students who come into our volunteer-run computer lab for two hours every week. During each session, Whistlestop participants bring in their own electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops and the teens demonstrate how to use them. Our Active Aging

‘I have told numerous people about Jackson Café and they have been as impressed as I am. Great service and great food!’

— A Whistlestop Customer

continued from page 3

continued on page 5
Center also gives older adults a variety of ways to stay fit, with classes in Zumba, Tai Chi, Yoga and Balance Training and outdoor hikes along the beautiful trails of Marin County.

**Referral Services & Publications**

Whistlestop has long served as a vital resource for Marin County’s adult children of aging parents. By giving aging parents a safe, convenient place where they can engage in activities and socialize, our Active Aging Center provides peace of mind to the children of older adults who are often juggling family and work responsibilities of their own. Whistlestop offers an Information and Referral phone service and publishes an annual Directory of Older Adult Services in collaboration with the Pacific Sun. Last year, we published and distributed 10,000 copies of this free publication. In addition, 24,000 copies of our newsletter, the Whistlestop Express, are distributed each month to inform readers about how best to support aging with dignity, independence and grace in Marin County.

**Housing on the Horizon**

The impending arrival of the SMART train in the downtown area of Central San Rafael has presented Whistlestop with an opportunity to transform its current building into a transit-oriented Active Aging Center with on-site services and housing for older adults. This transformation will not only allow us to manage the impacts of the new train station, but will also allow for a modernization and expansion of our facilities that serve older adults all over Marin and create critically needed affordable housing. Whistlestop has partnered with Eden Housing to help realize this vision for a new facility.

**Community Benefits**

The new Whistlestop development will allow us to meet the growing demand for our services.

According to a recent article in the *Marin Independent Journal*, more than one in every three Marin residents will be 65 or older by 2030. Meeting the needs of this so-called “Silver Tsunami” will require a variety of improvements to available services including more convenient public transit, improved access to affordable health care, and increased availability of congregate meal and home-delivered food programs. Whistlestop – as the oldest and largest older adult services provider, the paratransit operator for the whole County and with our location at Marin County’s regional transportation hub (Bettini Transit Center) and future SMART station – is ideally positioned to help meet these needs and serve the aging population in Marin in the most efficient way possible.
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Whistlestop is a wonderful haven for older adults and we are so fortunate to have it in our community. It has become like a second home to me.’

– Virginia Dziomba, Whistlestop Participant

Our central location and transit options will make it easier for older adults to travel to the center, and the expanded building space will allow us to continue leveraging partnerships with other nonprofits to offer a wide array of services to older adults (health clinics, screenings, etc.).

The new development will provide up to 51 units of critically needed affordable one-bedroom units to very low to extremely low income older adults, aged 55 and older, who earn less than 50% of Area Median Income. The project will include high quality amenities including a community room, a computer center and library, landscaped courtyards and furnished lobbies for casual social interaction. The affordable units will not only offer quality, safe homes at an affordable price, but as the first affordable transit-oriented community for older adults in Marin County, the development will also allow residents a high degree of mobility without a car. Combined with our on-site services and the amenities in nearby downtown San Rafael, older adults will be able to live a fulfilling, engaged life.

Development Financing & Schedule

The estimated total cost for the development is $23 million including both the housing and Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center. The potential funding sources for this project include tax credit equity, Marin County HOME funds, City Inclusionary/In-Lieu funds, and other grants/loans from private foundations and individuals.

The development team intends to submit entitlement applications to the City this fall and secure funding in time to start construction by Summer 2015 with the grand opening in Spring 2017.

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Health-related Programs and Services

Everything we do at Whistlestop is aimed at promoting the health and wellbeing of Marin
County’s older adults so they can age with dignity, independence and grace. With that in mind, last year we continued to offer a variety of health-related programs and services.

**Whistlestop’s Nursing Student Program** was established in partnership with Dominican University. Each month during the eight-month academic year, nursing students who are focusing on geriatrics come to Whistlestop to perform free blood pressure checks and glucose testing. The students also give presentations on health topics such as brain fitness and stroke awareness. Last year, nearly 1,000 health checks were provided to older adults at Whistlestop.

**Free Flu Shots** In Fall 2013, Whistlestop partnered with Walgreens to offer vouchers for free flu shots, and exceeded our goal by vaccinating 56 uninsured older adults.

**Chiropractic & Massage Services** provide Whistlestop participants with a natural, beneficial way to promote good health. Each week, a local chiropractor comes to our Active Aging Center to provide gentle chiropractic adjustments. Whistlestop also offers its popular chair massage services twice a week, providing older adults with an easy, convenient way to soothe aching muscles. Plans are also underway to offer reflexology massage for hands and feet, which promises to provide welcome relief for people who suffer from arthritis.

> ‘I like the exercise classes and have attended for many years. It’s always very positive and uplifting.’
> —Whistlestop Participant

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Take a Night Proofs™ Briefs and pour eight full 12-oz glasses of water into it. The water will be fully absorbed and the surface of the lining will remain dry. (If you attempt this test with other adult diapers, you better try it over the sink!)

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Call now to take advantage of our special introductory offer. Helpful product experts are standing by for your call. The Night Proofs™ Briefs are not available in stores, and you won’t have to risk running into one of your former high school classmates with a shopping cart full of adult diapers. They come in three sizes, including x-large for up to a 67-inch waist, so they’ll fit perfectly. Don’t hesitate, call today!

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Waist Sizes: M (28”–43”), L (39”–60”), XL (43”–67”)

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One of our ongoing goals is to diversify our funding sources. We currently receive financial support from earned revenue, government and other contractual services, foundation grants, corporations and from individual donors. In addition, volunteers supply significant in-kind labor that enables the majority of our programs and services to thrive. It is with deep gratitude that we receive and put these funds to good use.

**Earned Revenue**

Today’s successful nonprofit organizations seek to include earned income opportunities as a critical element of keeping their operations sustainable. It is imperative to Whistlestop that such sources of income relate directly to our mission - to improve the wellbeing of older adults in Marin. Our primary sources of earned revenue stem from transportation contracts, catering services, bus-back advertising, and bus maintenance and training services. The income made from these contracts enables us to invest in the Active Aging Center programs and our other services, including nutrition programs, exercise classes, multicultural programs, educational classes, volunteer program, and information and referral services. Our transportation operations comprise, in essence, a social enterprise—a business that uses its operating margin to support the public good rather than individual gain. Contributions from our Transportation division are an essential source of financial support for the rest of our programs. This past year, our transportation operation generated $5,248,000 in operating revenue.

**Volunteers**

Our volunteers have given 18,000 hours of service to Whistlestop during the past year. These hours translate to $315,000 of in-kind support. We are so proud to have over 155 dedicated volunteers be a part of the Whistlestop team. Thank you for being an integral part in achieving our mission. You are the best!

**Foundation Support**

Whistlestop gratefully received $294,700 in funding from a variety of foundations including:

- Marin Community Foundation
- Marin Valentine’s Ball Foundation
- Unbroken Chain Foundation
- Alice Shaver Foundation
- Brewster West Foundation
- Hilltop Foundation
- Harbor Point Charitable Foundation

**Individual Donors**

We are pleased to report nearly 1,000 of you are new supporters within the last few years. This past year, we received $156,400 in gifts from generous individuals.

**County Services**

Whistlestop successfully operated the Meals on Wheels program for 14 years until 2006, when funding shortfalls forced us to opt out of the program. Financial challenges have since faced other delivery operators until early 2012, when Whistlestop worked with Marin County staff to devise a more sustainable solution. Whistlestop is now responsible for delivering fresh meals three times each week to more than 250 housebound older adults in our community. The current funding that comes through the County is $104,000. This support only covers a portion of our delivery costs, so we must now turn to you and other orga-
nizations to help cover the gap in funding.

In addition, the Marin County Board of Supervisors granted $7,000 in support of our Multicultural program.

**Corporate Support**

We so appreciate our corporate supporters. Please support these wonderful community businesses who have supported us with $51,300 this year.

Abey-Arnold Associates
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Bob Santini Windshield Repair
Boerio, Clark & Associates CPAs
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Coldwell Banker
Costello Risk Services, Inc
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Hired Hands Homecare
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Richard Whitney Stevens, Inc.
Seadrift Realty
Seagate Properties
Sherwin-Williams
Silver Rain Estate Transition Services
Tim’s Treads
Villa Marin
W. Bradley Electric, Inc.
Washington Vegetable
Wells Fargo Bank Foundation
West Bay Builders
WestAmerica Bancorp

**Community Organizations**

The following organizations have held events to benefit Whistlestop’s programs and services, asked their members to make contributions, and worked as a team to support active, healthy aging in Marin. We would like to thank and honor these groups for contributing $35,500.

Marin Foundation Driftwood Unit
Marin Country Club Women’s Association
The Outdoor Art Club
Rotary Club of Marin Sunrise
St. John’s Episcopal Church
Blythedale Rebekah Lodge No. 305
Westminster Presbyterian Church
San Rafael Host Lions Club
UNICO National Marin County Chapter
North Bay Corvette Association
Local Independent Charities of America
Novato Senior Citizens Club
Marin Country Club Nine Holer’s Association

**Bequests**

A wonderful way to continue supporting your values after your passing is to leave a gift in the form of a bequest. This year we received $31,400 in support from the Garnet Gorin Trust, the Myrtle R. Watson Fund and the Traeger Estate.

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Whistlestop is collecting personalized holiday cards for homebound Marin residents

Cards will be delivered by Meals on Wheels drivers during the month of December. Please send your personalized, signed cards in unsealed envelopes to Whistlestop’s front desk before December 16th.

**Call 415-456-9063 for more information**
New Whistlestop Board Member Embodies Success in Many Ways

By JOHN BOWMAN

Etta Allen of Greenbrae, a Marin County pioneer of women in non-traditional careers, is Whistlestop’s newest board member. Etta became a licensed contractor in heating, ventilation, air conditioning and sheet metal in 1972 – one of only two women to be licensed in California.

Etta is excited about joining Whistlestop’s board. “I recently completed nine years on the board of Guide Dogs for the Blind and I feel I am moving from one great organization to another.” Etta was chairman of the board of Guide Dogs and was pleased to see completion of the new dorm there. So, when she was invited to join the Whistlestop Board, “The timing was just right.”

She said that for some time the only thing she knew about Whistlestop was Whistlestop Wheels. “I would see all of those buses going around in the county. But now that I am on the board and getting oriented, I have a much larger view and I am very impressed. The Meals on Wheels Program is tremendous as is Jackson Café, where older adults can not only dine but also socialize. It’s wonderful for people who don’t get out a lot.”

She said that she also is impressed with the large number of classes and events offered. “I see people exercising, receiving medical advice and socializing. I didn’t realize there was so much going on here; it’s amazing.”

She added, “The contributions to the community and the family feeling here are similar to what I experienced at Guide Dogs for the Blind. We are very fortunate to have such a place as Whistlestop in Marin.”

Etta brings a long history of success to the table. She was the first woman president of Marin Buildings Exchange, the first woman contractor on the executive committee of California Association of Builders Exchanges and served nine years as director of Marin Builders Exchange, serving as a trustee of their very successful insurance trust.

Named to the first annual Marin Women’s Hall of Fame, she also has served as director of the YMCA Board, Boy Scouts of America executive board, La Familia Board, Marin Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Marin Mental Health Association, Marin General Hospital Foundation, San Rafael Rotary Club and Rotary Manor Boards. She is a past president of the Rotary Club of San Rafael, Marin Humane Society, Larkspur Chamber of Commerce, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce and Marin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. She also was a five-term chair of the Marin General Hospital Board, and is a past president of the Dominican University Leadership Forum.

Whistlestop is pleased to have a new board member with such a distinguished history of service and community dedication.
2nd Annual Whistlestop Holiday Boutique Dec. 5

Want to avoid the crowds at the mall? Whistlestop is hosting its 2nd Annual Holiday Boutique on Thursday, December 5 from 10:30am to 1:30pm at the Active Aging Center. There will be lots of handmade gifts, such as jewelry, canned and baked goods, knitted items and paper crafts, at very affordable prices.

Our very own Whistlestars members and local community artists are offering these handmade goodies. “Because it was a great success last year, we are doing the Holiday Boutique again. It gives our older adult participants the chance to make some extra income. But most importantly, it gives vendors and consumers the chance to connect with each other on a personal level, while supporting the talents of our older adults in Marin,” said Whistlestop Program Manager Vicky Voicehowsky. There will be many chances to win great handmade raffle prizes during the event. We hope to see you there!

Photo Looks Familiar

The front-page photo of the November issue of the Whistlestop Express with Cpl. Bill Brennen next to a bomb-loaded aircraft at Pohang-dong (K-3) South Korea, March 1951, brought back memories of my time at the same Marine air base. This photo of me in front of a similar Marine Corsair in Korea seems strikingly similar. Bill and I have not met, but we share the same age and the same current hometown.

I was an ensign in the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps with Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 101 at K-3 in 1953. At that time, fighting was about over. The Marines were still flying daily over North Korea with photo-reconnaissance aircraft and bomb-loaded Corsairs ready to do what was necessary.

It distresses me that that war still goes on in Korea from the time of this photo. I have not been to the Jackson Café, but I enjoy reading about the many activities there.

Sincerely,
Roy A. Bell, San Anselmo
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Healthy Eating on a Budget
**Wed, Dec 4 • 11am-Noon**
No cost
Register at 456-9062
Whistlestop and SCAN Health Plan invite you to a FREE Health Education Seminar. This presentation includes senior nutrition guidelines, nutritious and low cost sample meals and snacks, and community resources.

**Whistlestop Holiday Boutique**
**Thurs, Dec 5 • 10:30am-1:30pm**
No cost, open to the public
Call 456-9062 for info
Please join us for a little holiday shopping. Artsy and crafty Whistlestop clients and community vendors will be selling their handmade items (jewelry, cards, cookies, and more) at very affordable prices. Don't miss out on the raffle prizes.

Christmas Carols
**Mon, Dec 9 • Noon**
Jackson Café, No cost, open to the public
Please join us in welcoming the holidays with the sound of music. Boys and girls, ages 9 to 12, from St. Mark’s Singers, String Ensemble and Republic of Voice will be singing Christmas carols and more while you enjoy a delicious lunch at the Jackson Café.

Cedars of Marin Holiday Art Show
**Thurs, Dec 12 • 10:30am-Noon**
At Whistlestop, in lounge & arcade, featuring original artwork by individuals with disabilities who attend Cedars of Marin Victory Center. Some works include: Painting, Jewelry, Cards, “Out of sight” knitting and more. Great gift items.

Holiday Luncheon
**Thurs, Dec 19 • Noon-1:30pm**
**Showtimes:**
12 to 1pm
Whistlestop Jackson Café
The ever popular Christmas Jug Band is coming to Whistlestop to celebrate the holiday season. Regular lunch menu and pricing. Entertainment provided by Bread & Roses.

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CLASSES

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Jewelry Class
Thurs, Dec 12 • 1:30-2:45pm
Fee $8 per class/includes materials
Maximum space available: 10 people
Registration and payment are required prior to the class
Maria Barseat, local bead artist, will show you how to make beautiful and simple jewelry items for yourself or as gifts.

Acting Classes with Margie Belrose
Tues • 3-4pm
No cost
Please register, 456-9062
Maximum space available: 14 people
Have you always wanted to try your talent at acting? Marin’s Women Hall of Famer and local icon Margie Belrose will be offering her expertise in drama and performing arts in this acting class.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Brain Fitness
Thurs, Dec 12 • 10:15-11:15am
No cost
To register, 456-9062
Maintaining a healthy mind is important at every stage in life. Bob Nations, brain fitness expert, and Senior Access are presenting a workshop on how to exercise your brain. Bob will discuss and show the many ways to do so, such as using your non-dominant hand for tasks, changing up routines and playing games.

Ping Pong
Two Fridays a month • 2-4pm
No cost/Drop-in
Join the Whistlestop “Racketeers” for Ping Pong. Improves mind, spirit, and body. A year ago, a ping pong table was donated to Whistlestop and we now have a wonderful group of regulars who enjoy the benefits of the game. All levels are encouraged to come.

LANGUAGE

Imparare l’italiano! (Learn Italian!)
Learn Italian with our new teacher Elizabeth Guagenti. Elizabeth has a Bachelor’s degree in Italian Language and Literature from UCLA.

Beginning Italian
Thurs • 1:30-2:30pm
Fee: $18/month

Continuing Italian
Tues & Thurs • 2:30-4pm
Fee: $36/month
Registration required by Dec 3
Info: Sandra Jimenez, 454-0998

SOCIAL GROUPS

French Social Group
Tues • 1-2pm
Contact: Vicky, 457-0586
Come join the French Social group on Tuesday afternoons and connect with other French speakers in the community.

Conversation Group for 90-Year-Olds & Older
3rd Thurs every month • 1:30-3pm
No cost
Contact: Virginia Dziomba, 456-6647
Join this group for lively conversation. One rule: no discussing ailments!

Mastery of Aging Class
Tues • 1:30-3pm
No cost
Contact: Larry Berkelhammer, 453-9808
Learn new skills to master the various challenges associated with aging. Learn how to take charge of your healthcare and self-care. Discover new ways to give your life meaning and purpose, and explore as a group how to best adapt to all the age-related changes and losses. Please join us!
IN-KIND DONATIONS NEEDED
Mah Jongg sets, Chess set, Dominos, books, yarn, movies on DVDs. If you have items to donate, call 456-9062.
How to Use the iPad/iPhone  
**Fri, Jan 10 & Jan 17 • 10am-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Using Android SmartPhones & Tablets  
**Thurs • Feb 13 & Feb 20, 10am-Noon**  
Cost: $48

iPad/iPhone Applications  
**Tues, Feb 11 & 18 • 10:00am-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Intro to Computers (Windows)  
**Tues, Jan 14-Feb 4 (4 classes) 10am-Noon**  
Cost: $65

Computers Level 1 (Windows)  
**Tuesdays, Feb 25 & Mar 4 • 10-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Tech Connect-Intro to Social Media  
**Fri, Jan 24 & Jan 31 • 10am-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Managing Your Photos  
**Fri, Feb 7 & Feb 14 • 10-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Digital Scrapbooking  
**Fri, Feb 21 & Feb 28 • 10am-Noon**  
Cost: $48

Teen Tech Support  
**Every Thursday starting Jan 16, 1-2:30pm**  
Cost: $15/session

**OPEN LAB**  
Use our desktops for your own purposes to access the Internet. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your electronic devices: laptops and tablets, etc, and to provide help with software applications. Practice what you learn in our classes.  
**Every Monday and Wednesday • 10am-Noon**  
Free

**COMPUTER TUTOR**  
We offer personalized computer assistance and instruction for the PC user, specializing in assisting older adults and novices from computer basics to learning how to use the software on your computer. We can also troubleshoot software, hardware, and configuration problems.  
**Wednesdays • 1-2pm, by advance appointment**  
Cost: $20/hour

**TALKIN’ TECH LECTURE SERIES**  
Join us for a monthly talk demonstrating how you can use technology in your everyday life. Lectures will be the first Thursday of the month (except Jan.) in the Computer Lab from 10am-Noon limited to 15 people.  
Cost: $15 per lecture

**Jan 9:** Let’s Tell A Story: Managing photos & sharing as books and slide shows.

**Feb 6:** Gadget Guide: Do you want an iPhone, tablet or computer? Come try them out.

**REGISTRATION**  
Pre-registration and payment is required for all computer classes. Space is limited. We cannot hold space in a class unless you have registered and paid. No prorating to join already in-session class.

**Payment**  
Visa or Mastercard (for classes $20 and above), Cash and Check made payable to Whistlestop.

**2 ways to register**  
In-Person: Office is located at 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael. We are open Monday – Friday, 8:30am-4pm.

Or by Phone: Have your credit card and class information handy! Call 456-9062.

**Refund Policy**  
A full refund with notification before the class begins. Once the class begins, there are no refunds. If a class is canceled by Whistlestop, your payment will be fully refunded. We cannot apply payment from one class to another.

**Class Make-up**  
A make-up class will be scheduled if instructor is ill or unable to teach a class during the session. Make-up class will not be offered based on personal absence. It is your responsibility to attend all classes as scheduled.
# Whistlestop Weekly ACTIVITIES

<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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–2pm</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$6/$8 Non Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–NOON</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>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00–12:10PM</td>
<td>Exercise Movement &amp; Music</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15–1:45PM</td>
<td>Language German Social Group</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>Language English Pronunciation</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language ESL</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30–5PM</td>
<td>Language Citizenship Class</td>
<td>Free</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>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30AM–12:30PM</td>
<td>Language French Class</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOON–3PM</td>
<td>Relax Manicurist</td>
<td>Appt. Needed</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>Language French Social Group</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Spanish</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Support Mastery of Aging Group</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–4PM</td>
<td>Language Continuing Italian</td>
<td>$36/mo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Acting Classes</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAYS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></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>
</tr>
<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>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30–11:30AM</td>
<td>Support Corazón Latino</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–12PM</td>
<td>Relax Chiropractor</td>
<td>$2/$5 Non Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>Language English Pronunciation</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language ESL</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAYS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$6/$8 Non Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4PM</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–2:30PM</td>
<td>Language Beginning Italian</td>
<td>454-0998</td>
<td>$18/mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30–4PM</td>
<td>Language Continuing Italian</td>
<td>$36/mo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45–3:45PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAYS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00–NOON</td>
<td>Support Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<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>Dec. 13</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Ping-Pong</td>
<td>Dec. 6 &amp; 20</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Exercise Yoga</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$3/$5 Non Members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

---

**Jackson Café**

Monday-Friday 11:30am-2pm
Located in Whistlestop Active Aging Center • Open to the Public •

**LUNCH MENU**

**WHISTLESTAR MEMBER (LOWEST PRICE) / NON-MEMBER OVER 60 / UNDER 60**

- Main Entrée: $4.95/$5.95/$6.95
- Sandwiches: $4.25/$5.25/$6.25
- Soup du Jour: $1.95/$2.95/$2.95 bowl (yes two prices are the same)
- Hamburger w/Fries: $4.25/$5.25/$6.25
- Garden/Caesar Salads: $3.50-$4.50

**OTHER ITEMS**

- Tuna Salad Side: $1.25
- Beverages: $1.00
- Desserts/Fruit: $2.00
- Cheese: $0.50
- Avocado: $1.00

[whistlestop.org](http://whistlestop.org)
New amplified phone lets you hear AND see the conversation.

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. 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. Captioned Telephone Service (CTS) is regulated and funded by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is designed exclusively for individuals with hearing loss. In order to use CTS in your home, you must have standard telephone service and high-speed Internet connectivity where the phone will be used. Federal law prohibits anyone but registered users with hearing loss from using IP Captioned Telephones with the captions turned on. Callers do not need special equipment or a captioning phone in order to speak with you.

“For years I avoided phone calls because I couldn’t understand the caller… now I don’t miss a thing!”

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 60-days for a refund of the product purchase price. It even comes with a 5-year warranty.

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Call now for our special introductory price!
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1-888-432-8074
Please mention promotion code 50957.

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.

See what you’ve been missing!

Breakthrough technology converts phone calls to captions.
It is just past Pumpkin Eve and the garden on my floating home is brimming over with the violets and purples of my autumn flora. My long missed Anna’s Hummingbirds have returned to visit for the season (and for the Agastache or Hummingbird Mint). Where they are while away is a puzzle. Yesterday I drove past the pond just north of Nordstrom’s and discovered that it is overfilled with Gulls and Avocets, as is the channel with the old railroad tracks just east of the shopping center. Young Snowy Egrets are in abundance throughout the area. In July I had a hip replaced. While in recovery I was given an Orchid, my first ever. Because I had been told they were hard to care for and expensive, I never considered growing any. Now, over three months later, my not-so-frail after all *Phalaenopsis* has fifteen delicate blossoms.

I’ve discovered that Orchids are just about perfect for seniors. No digging in the dirt, no bugs, and no hair shed all over the furniture – almost no care. Just bathe the roots once a week and fertilize every two. Best of all, no poop to pick up and no smelly cat boxes! *Warning, they do not like to be petted* – and there is some concern about *Orchid addiction*.

Most nurseries carry a few but the largest assortment is at the three Trader Joes in Marin. Since they are reasonably priced I now have six, no, seven, *whoops*, eight beautiful Orchids.

If you are in the doldrums about nothing new to do, try an Orchid.

If you would like an interesting bird photo in your inbox every weekend, just send your name and email address to me at SHENmaker@MSN.com. *It’s free.*

Till next time,

Richard
December days are dark. But look at all the celebrating ahead. Food, singing, story telling, fun. And color everywhere to light our nights.

The blue and white of Hanukkah with candles glowing pale yellow light in the night window and songs of stubborn courage. Latkes sizzling on the stove. In the day, I hide myself in the dark purple of Advent and am glad for this time of quiet and of prayer. I eat a piece of bread and a crispy apple and am well satisfied.

For Winter Solstice the bonfire crackles. I join friends in howling at the moon and tasting a bit of meat. Then at last the exuberant red and green of Christmas comes. Scampi on the Eve and Rogelio’s mother’s mole on Christmas Day. Deliciousness.

The red, green, and black of Kwanzaa tell me to remember great principles: Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith.

Peanut Stew lush with spices is such a treat. How could we need more sustenance than this?

I dislike our American New Year, but I do love the brighter red and gold of Chinese New Year and the bang! bang! of happy drums. Time to celebrate with Moo Shu and chrysanthemum tea. For Mohammed’s birthday, shall we find delectable sesame treats and ask a Sufi to dance with us? Hindu Makar Sankranti is time to take a kite and a picnic and go to the beach.

This season will start slowly for me and my dear family. We are waiting for a new grandchild in January. So we won’t all meet in December. Instead we’ll gather together when she is newborn. And what togetherness there will be. The night the baby arrives, her older sister and I will bake our soon-to-be-famous meringues. In the morning, we’ll make lasagna. After that, I’ll start on a roast, some dressing and string beans almondine. We’ll grind the coffee; make sure there’s ice cream in the freezer and wait for the family to come. Glorious! Is there anything more satisfying than making other people happy? 

Mary Ann Maggiore consults with families and young people on college, career, job and life choices. You can reach her at maryannmaggiore@gmail.com or 577-6627.

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Pierre’s Second Chance

Carolynne Knoles and Marilynne Forusgon of San Rafael, major supporters of Whistlestop and animal lovers, almost returned their new rescue dog, Pierre, after he chewed up the corner of one of Carolynne’s meditation books. But the twin sisters, 72, couldn’t follow up on taking him back to the Humane Society when Carolynne said to Marilynne, “There’ll be three broken hearts if we do – yours, mine and his.”

Pierre, a big miniature poodle with the longest eyelashes in the neighborhood, redeemed himself and is now reportedly the best behaved of the four dogs they’ve had. He was two when they got him and he’s now six. “He’s a very loving dog,” says Marilynne, who had just returned from a bus trip with the Goldenaires to Lake Tahoe, $400 richer.
Mindful Holidays

Maintaining your weight during the holiday season, rather than gaining pounds, is a great step toward starting a healthy lifestyle for the New Year. Focus on a healthy, balanced diet, participating in activities and having fun.

Matilde Arroyo, a Whistlestars member, loves the holiday season, “If I go to a holiday party, I eat in moderation, especially sweets that contain a lot of sugar. Be aware of what you eat, because tables are full of tempting food.” Josefina Perez is also mindful about the holidays when it comes to food. “I avoid fried food and instead I enjoy delicious salads. I try to eat low fat foods and try to focus on quality rather than quantity. I don’t go out much during the holidays; I usually invite my Whistlestop friends over to share some good food and fun stories.”

These simple tips can make the holiday season more healthful and less guilt-ridden for you:

1. Prepare Yourself Before the Party. Try eating a healthy snack before going to a party to minimize hunger and cravings. Balance what you eat at parties with what you eat during the day.

2. Bring a Healthy Holiday Dish to the Party. Most hosts will welcome an additional dish, and the other guests may enjoy having a healthier option to choose from. Conversation is calorie-free, but move away from the buffet so you won’t be tempted to eat while you talk.

3. Be Mindful During the Party. Your mind should be focused on enjoying the time with your family and friends. During mealtime, fill your plate up mostly with vegetables. Use smaller plates if available when at a buffet-style party. Avoid drinking beverages that are high in sugar and calories, or at least limit your intake to a single drink. Alcohol adds extra unwanted calories. Try consuming water with lemon or lime, or skim milk. Being health conscious doesn’t mean that you can’t enjoy the holiday season and have a little bit of all the foods you love.

Enjoy the holidays, plan time for activities and incorporate healthy recipes into your holiday meal planning. In the long run, your mind and body will thank you. For ideas on activities, check out pages 7, 8, and 9.

Happy Holidays!

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You Can Get Published: Send Us Your Stories

This is a call to all amateur writers in Marin County. Starting in our January issue, the Whistlestop Express will publish stories by local residents in a feature called Tales From Marin.

If you have a story about yourself or a fictional story that you would like to see in print, send it to us and we will consider publishing it. This is an opportunity to be able to say you are a published writer!

Here are the criteria:

- Your story (fiction or non-fiction) must be no more than 700 words.
- The story must be previously unpublished.
- You must be 60 or older.
- You must be a resident of Marin County.

You might want to write a story about your own life, memoir-style, or about a special Marin resident, or about hiking on Mount Tam. Or, you may want to share a fictional story that has been percolating in your mind for months. There is no theme or other restriction other than the word limit.

That’s it. We look forward to receiving your stories. Please send it as a Word document by email to Editor John Bowman – john.bowman58@gmail.com. Please include your name, age, the story’s word count and the town where you live.

Or, if you don’t have access to a computer, send us a typed copy, double-spaced, with your name, age, where you live and word count at the top of the first page to: Tales From Marin, Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901.

Our Whistlestop editors’ decision on which stories to publish will be final and there may be some minor editing. There will be no payment for stories printed – all you get is the glory!

We look forward to receiving your writing and sharing it with our readers. ♦

Tour de Noël Holiday House Saturday, Dec. 14

St. John’s Episcopal Church in Ross will celebrate the 27th Tour de Noël Holiday House tour Saturday Dec. 14, 9am to 4pm. This traditional Marin County Holiday event features a shuttle van tour of fabulous homes decorated for the holidays. The Holiday Boutique offers a delectable assortment of homemade jams and baked goods. From 800 to 1,000 people regularly attend the event. More than 200 parishioners from St. John’s plan and staff the tour, and net proceeds benefit various charities in the community, including Whistlestop.

Location: St. John’s Episcopal Church, 14 Lagunitas Road, Ross
Cost: $40 morning/$30 afternoon -- Advance Purchase ($45/$35 day of event)
Link to Info and Tickets: www.stjohnsross.org/tour
Contact: tourdenoel@stjohnsross.org / 456-1102 ♦
**Volunteer of the Month – Philip Dito of Greenbrae**

Phil Dito celebrated his one-year anniversary on September 14 as a volunteer meal delivery driver for the Meals on Wheels Program. “Phil has a regular route every week and has also been incredibly generous by volunteering for extra shifts when we are short on drivers,” said Program Manager, Krista Pelletier. “Phil has been in law enforcement for 41 years and brings a lot to the table. He shares his many skills with our staff and finds great joy in the people he serves.” Phil said, “I enjoy the social aspect of this volunteer position from the people I work with and the people I serve. I also like to keep active.” If you would like to find out more about volunteer opportunities at Whistlestop please email millie@whistlestop.org or call 456-9062, ext. 117.

For more information go to www.givingtuesday.org.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Whistlestop announces its 1,000th Whistlestars member. Whistlestop is thrilled to announce that Lynn Linato of San Rafael became the 1,000th participant to enroll in our Whistlestars program. “The best part about Whistlestars is that there’s no cost to join, and it helps me stay connected to my friends in the community while enjoying a meal discount at the Jackson Café!” says Lynn.

For more information on becoming a Whistlestars member, please call 456-9062 or stop by our front desk to fill out an application.

---

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- Wardrobe, Dressing Assistance
- Help with Daily Grooming
- Toileting Assistance
- Help with Ambulation
- Bed-bound Assistance
- Protective Supervision for those with Impaired Judgment
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