Volunteers Thrive By Giving Back

Volunteerism has always been important, and as the Marin County community ages, Whistlestop is finding that more and more people want to give back. Also, older adults find they receive many benefits by volunteering. A recent survey reveals that 70% of volunteers said they believed that their work helped them overcome isolation and depression.

Older adults who volunteer believe they are healthier and happier than those who don’t, according to a nationwide survey, conducted by the Home Instead Senior Care Network. The survey also found that 95% of older adult volunteers felt that volunteer work has physical as well as emotional benefits.

Three-fourths of those interviewed said that volunteering helps them control or manage chronic conditions like diabetes, arthritis or high blood pressure. Another finding: Older adults with chronic conditions devote slightly more time to volunteering than those without such conditions.

Whistlestop’s volunteers agree. One volunteer said, “Getting a chance to ‘give back’ to others and meeting new friends each week has been so good for me. Volunteering gives me time to focus on others and others’ needs instead of my own.”

The Brown Bag Pantry crew works every Friday morning unloading the truck from the Marin Food Bank, setting up, dispensing pantry items and cleaning up. They have fun, are reliable and they love the job.
As the new Volunteer Services Manager at Whistlestop, I am amazed by the dedication and team spirit of our volunteers. I am particularly impressed with how smoothly they work together to make programs like the Brown Bag Pantry, operated in concert with the Food Bank, such a success. Another example of teamwork and cohesiveness is evident every weekday as volunteers come together to make things run smoothly in the Jackson Café.

The volunteers work hard but they also have fun. And they tell me they get much more in return than they give. One volunteer said, “I get my exercise working in the Jackson Café.” She said she loves meeting and interacting with others. Another said that the majority of her friends are here at Whistlestop.

I came to my position at Whistlestop after years of overseeing as many as 500 volunteers a year at the Youth in Arts Italian Street Festival and eight years working with lots of volunteers for events at the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce.

When I started at Whistlestop, beginning with a transition period with my predecessor, Millie Makarewicz, I asked her, “Where will I get volunteers?” She replied in jest, “Just pray in the morning and they will come.” During my first week managing the program completely on my own, Meals on Wheels asked for two new drivers, so we listed the positions in the Marinscope newspapers. Later that day, a couple walked in and the man said he wanted to be a Meals on Wheels Driver. Two hours later another man came in and signed up. It’s a miracle. It helps that Whistlestop is such a popular place to volunteer.

Some time later, our Program Manager, Vicky Voicehowsky, mentioned she would love to have a bridge teacher. I remembered a friend of mine telling me that he knew how to play bridge and had taught his kids. I called him and said, “We’re having pot roast and mashed potatoes at the Jackson Café today. Come on over and I’ll buy you lunch.” He is now teaching a class in bridge at Whistlestop.

I thoroughly enjoy my job. It is inspiring to see these volunteers at work, knowing how much they are receiving in return. I went on a Meals on Wheels ride-along recently and I saw that for so many recipients, this is their only contact with the outside world. The services our volunteers provide are vital to the health and quality of life for our older adults in Marin.
AgeSong Marin Helps Navigate Journey of Losing & Finding

AgeSong Marin is a small discussion and support group of Family Service Agency where older adults meet to talk about what’s really important at this stage of life. A new eight-week group will be forming at Whistlestop in May. Most of us have faced some loss by this age: retirement, the death of a close friend or spouse, physical disability, or simply a loss of power or a place in the world. By talking about it with others who have experienced similar issues, we feel more understood and can strategize about new connections and possibilities.

AgeSong Marin, which is an all-volunteer organization, was co-founded eight years ago by Elizabeth Bugental and Ann Coffey, both retired psychologists. When Elizabeth died four years ago in her 80s, Ann became program director. Excerpts from Elizabeth’s book, Agesong: Meditations for Our Later Years, are often a springboard for discussion in the groups, helping people become more aware in making conscious, informed choices.

Each group of six to eight people (plus two facilitators) meets during the day for 90 minutes once weekly for eight weeks. At the first meeting, they might consider, “What surprises you about being this age?” All 17 facilitators are volunteers, mostly retired or semi-retired counseling and education professionals experienced in leading groups. Ranging in age from late 60s to mid-80s, these leaders participate as an AgeSong Marin group member before becoming a facilitator.

If you are interested in being part of the group, call 491-5726 or email info@agesongmarin.org to arrange for a short interview. In the group, you can be as quiet as you like; active listening is what’s important. ♦

DID YOU KNOW...

...that you can rent a Scooter, Powerchair or Wheelchair for as little as $15/day?!

SALES REPAIRS RENTALS

New & Used The only repair facility in Marin Daily Weekly Monthly

northeast mobility

Facilitating Movement through Technology

1281 Anderson Dr, Suite F • San Rafael
457.1664 • www.norcoastmobility.com
New Bookstore Caters to Older Adults

Copperfield’s Books recently opened two blocks from Whistlestop at 850 Fourth Street at Cijos. The bookstore is open daily and the Taylor Maid Cafe will join their new space soon, offering organic coffees and light fare. This Copperfield’s store is the seventh in the Sonoma County-based independent bookstore chain, and the first in Marin.

Copperfield’s San Rafael is a complete bookstore, with a full range of book genres, from mystery and cookbooks to crossword puzzle and current affairs titles. They also offer a wide variety of cards and gifts. The store has comfy chairs placed throughout the store to encourage lingering. Older adults will enjoy a 10% senior discount on everything except periodicals every Wednesday. Current top ten fiction and non-fiction hardcovers are always 20% off and there are special large print and audio book sections. Copperfield’s hopes to become a warm and welcoming destination for the Whistlestop community. ✦

Celebrating Volunteers

National Volunteer Week, April 6-12, is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. It’s about demonstrating to the nation that by working together, we have the fortitude to meet our challenges and accomplish our goals. National Volunteer Week is about taking action and encouraging individuals and their respective communities to be at the center of social change – discovering and actively demonstrating their collective power to make a difference. Established in 1974, this year marks the 40th anniversary of National Volunteer Week, demonstrating the enduring importance of recognizing our country’s volunteers for their vital contributions. In conjunction with Whistlestop’s 60th anniversary this year, we have a lot to celebrate and many devoted volunteers to be grateful for.

For volunteer opportunities at Whistlestop, call Laurie Vermont, 456-9062 x117. ✦

Want to Advertise?

You Can Help Whistlestop Win $1,000 in Marin’s Deep Green Energy Campaign

Whistlestop needs your help to win a $1,000 prize in the Marin Clean Energy’s Deep Green Energy campaign.

Here’s all you have to do: Sign up online at mceCleanEnergy.com/dg-enroll or by calling 888-632-3674 to enter the campaign and then check off Whistlestop as your favorite organization. The goal of this campaign is to promote participation in MCE’s Deep Green 100% renewable energy program as well as raise money for Whistlestop.

Deadline for signing up and voting is April 22 (Earth Day). ✦
Old

I am an old lady
walking to church
I see fuzzy seed pods
in a thicket of dying brambles,
berries around them already ripe
I stop to pick, purpling
my fingers and lips and tongue
and I weep

I am an old lady
I don’t want chocolate mousse
from a gourmet recipe
that has seven layers
and is slathered with whipped cream
that my granddaughter
has lovingly prepared for me
I want a tangerine

I am an old lady
I love to do improv with the children
It is midnight, and they are still playing
I do not want to freeze one more person
or act out one more scene
I want to go to bed

I am an old lady
a child I am tutoring
asks why the veins in my arms
look like brown earthworms
It’s because I’m old, I tell him
They have carried a lot of blood

I am an old lady
and weep as I watch my granddaughter
playing the part of Juliet
in her high school play
So young, so beautiful
she believes in love
and dies for it
I remember all the lines

I am an old lady
learning to receive
My grandson plays the piano for me
even though he hates to
My son takes my arm
when I cross the creek
The girls hug me when I visit
My daughter shares her pain

My house welcomes me
when I come home
The things I call mine
have been waiting
There is a wild bird, a dove I think,
who visits me every morning
when I have tea on the patio
I have named him Peter
I think he is an old bird

10th Annual Healthy Aging Symposium
Thursday, May 8, 2014
9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Embassy Suites Hotel
101 McInnis Parkway,
San Rafael

The Marin County Health & Human Services Office of Aging & Adult Services and the Commission on Aging present
“Longevity: Imagining the Potential and Promise”

David Lindeman, Ph. D.
Director, Center for Technology and Aging

COMPLETE REGISTRATION FORM BELOW & MAIL WITH CHECK
One form per person. Download additional forms at www.marinhhs.org/boards/commission-aging
Name (Print clearly):

Phone:

Please mark (√) your salad lunch selection:
☐ Asian Chicken  ☐ California Cobb
☐ Vegetarian

Check box (√) for special accommodations:
☐ Hearing  ☐ Wheel Chair/Walker
☐ Other:

Fee: $20 (includes lunch)
Registration Deadline: April 30, 2014
Make Check Payable to:
Marin County Aging & Adult Services

Mail Registration Form to:
Marin County Aging & Adult Services
Attn: Symposium
10 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael, CA 94903
Are you in love with your home but afraid of your stairs?

Why struggle up and down stairs when Easy Climber® can give you a lift?

*Easy Climber® is the easy, convenient and affordable way to get up and down your stairs without the danger and health risks.*

Remember the days when you woke up, jumped out of bed, threw on your clothes and ran down the stairs to greet the day? Yeah... me neither... that was years ago. Now, everyone from my doctor to my kids are telling me I need to avoid using my stairs. The problem is, I’ve lived in this house for years, and if I don’t use the stairs I either have to sleep in my family room or live in my bedroom. Why should I risk my safety just to get around? Then, a friend told me about an innovative solution, the Easy Climber®. It’s basically a chair lift for your stairs... and it’s given me back my home.

At the 1889 World’s Fair in Paris, the company that makes the Easy Climber was inspired by the lift used in the Eiffel Tower and later created a lift of their own. In 1961 they introduced the first seated stair lift, and now they’ve taken their knowledge and expertise and created the safest stair climber on the market today. Easy Climber has exclusive safety features and design innovations as standard equipment.

This exclusive product was designed with one overwhelming goal: safety first. From a seat that won’t let you get out the wrong way to a battery backup for power outages, this stair climber has the features you want and the safety you need. Why risk your life on the stairs when an easy and affordable solution is only a phone call away. Call now and a knowledgeable product expert will answer any questions you may have.

**Why this is the safest and most reliable product on the market**

**Safety:** Easy Climber features a swivel seat and footrest that are powered to enable you to get in and out of the chair safely and easily. Sensors automatically stop it immediately if it hits an object. There’s even a EZ Clip buckle on the seat belt and no slip handles for added peace of mind.

**Quality and Simplicity:** This company has been making these products for a long time– they do it right. This exclusive model features innovative design and quality components. It’s simple and reliable, with the least need for maintenance and repair.

**Warranty:** This system is backed by Easy Climber exclusive limited lifetime warranty - the best in the business.

**Flexibility:** Easy Climber is designed for easy installation on either side of the staircase. The seat-mounted controller can be placed on either side and the call/send controls can be mounted wherever you want them. When you’re not using it, simply park Easy Climber at the top of the stairs and out of sight.

Call now toll free to find out how you can get your own Easy Climber.

Please mention promotional code 58159.

For fastest service, call 24 hours a day.

1-888-774-9531
Keep Learning at WHISTLESTOP
For a complete list of classes, visit whistlestop.org

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

HEALTH FAIR
Thurs, Apr 3 • 10:30am-1:30pm
No cost, drop-in
Whistlestop is holding a health fair in collaboration with Marin County’s Department of Health and Human Services, Lift! Levantate and San Rafael Harbor Mission Rotary. We will offer free diabetes screenings, anemia screenings, blood pressure checks, BMI (Body Mass Index) measurements and self-breast exam education.

Spring Fling Luncheon
Thurs, Apr 10 • 11:30am-2pm
Music show times: Noon-12:30pm and 12:45-1:15pm
No registration or tickets required
Please join us for a light and delicious lunch at the Jackson Café to welcome spring and the warm weather. Kurt Huget and Peter Penhallow will be performing classic 60’s rock, pop and folk songs, including songs by the Beatles. Entertainment provided by Bread & Roses.

Stressed Out?
Thurs, Apr 10 • 10:30-11:30am
No cost
Registration preferred
April is Stress Awareness Month. Everyone deals with stress; it affects us in many ways. Come learn how to relax, manage your stress, and let go. Nursing students from Dominican University will talk about how stress affects the body and how to cope with it.

Meet the Mayor Luncheon
Tues, Apr 15 • Noon-1pm
Regular menu and pricing
No tickets necessary, space is limited
Whistlestop would like to invite you to come and meet San Rafael’s mayor, Gary Phillips. Enjoy a nutritious lunch at the Jackson Café and bring all of your concerns, questions and opinions about your local city to your mayor. This is a great opportunity to find out the latest news of what’s happening in your own community. Questions submitted in advance are much appreciated. Please drop them off in Front Office.

Take Control Of Your Driving Future
Wed, Apr 16 • 10:30-11:30am
No cost
Registration preferred: 456-9062
Rosemary Robles from DMV’s Senior Driver Ombudsman Program will present a workshop about all aspects of driving. The presentation covers: myths about older drivers, license renewal options, compensating for age-related changes, tune-up your driving skills, safe driving tips, transportation alternatives, and appropriate individual options. Don’t miss out!

Brain Fitness
Thurs, Apr 17 • 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 will offer a workshop on how to exercise your brain. Bob Nations will show how, such as using your non-dominant hand for tasks, changing up routines and playing games.

CLASSES

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Jewelry Class – Basic Stringing With Knots
Thurs, Apr 17 • 1:30-2:45pm
Cost: $8 per class/includes materials
Registration and payment required before class: 456-9062
Maria Barsesat, local bead artist, will demonstrate knotting technique for bracelets or necklaces. Class limited to 10 people.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Hand and Foot Reflexology Massage
Thurs • 11am-12:30pm
Cost: $1 a minute
Drop-ins welcome
Gena Galenski, certified massage therapist since 1997, will offer hand and foot reflexology massage. Reflexology promotes relaxation, improves circulation and encourages the body to heal.
Free Blood Pressure Clinic, Meds and Blood Sugar Checks
**Tues, Apr 1 • 11:30am-1pm**
No cost/Drop-in
Facilitators: Student nurses from Dominican University
Bring all of your medications and supplements to find out how & when to take them, how to store them, side effects, or interactions with other drugs. Don’t miss an opportunity to prevent health problems by keeping blood pressure, meds and sugar in check.

Ping Pong
**Fri, Apr 4 & 18 • 2-4pm**
No cost/Drop-in
Join the Whistlestop Racketeers for Ping Pong. Good for your mind, spirit and body. We have two tables and a wonderful group who enjoy the benefits of the game. All levels welcome.

**LANGUAGE**

Basic English & Citizenship Class for Farsi Speakers
**Mon & Wed**
No Cost • Contact: Mrs. Esmaili, 472-6020
Mrs. Esmaili has volunteered at Whistlestop for over 16 years. She offers Basic English instruction and preparation for the U.S. Citizenship test to Farsi speakers in Marin.

Imparare Italiano! (Learn Italian!)
Beginning Italian Class
**Thurs • 1:30-3pm**
Cost: $25/month
Learn Italian with our teacher Elizabeth Guagenti, who has a Bachelor’s degree in Italian Language and Literature from UCLA. The class focuses on Italian language skills and culture.

**SOCIAL GROUPS**

German Group (Deutsche Gesellschaft)
**Mon • 12:15-1:45pm**
Contact: Vicky, 457-0586
Discussion group led by volunteer German Coordinators meets weekly for social purposes and support.
Fuer unsere deutsch sprechenden Freunde: unser neuer Treffpunkt fuer die Deutsche Gesellschaftsgruppe ist Montags, 12:15-1:45pm, in der Whistlestop Caboose 2. Herzlich willkommen!

Russian Social Group
**Mon • 12:30-1:30pm**
Contact: Anna Ladyzhenskaya, 336-8430
Whistlestop has a new Russian social group. This is a great opportunity for Russian speakers to have a support group and meet new people in the community.

Vietnamese Social Group
**Thurs • 12:15-1:45pm**
Contact: Lieu Phan, 456-9062, ext. 129
The Vietnamese Social Group meets weekly for fun games like bingo, educational and health presentations, support and much more.

Conversation Group for 90-Year-Olds & Older
**3rd Thurs every month • 1:30-3pm**
No cost • Contact: Virginia Dziomba, 456-6647
Join our friendly conversation group!

**SERVICES**

Multicultural Consultation Services
**By appointment: 456-9062**
No cost for consultations; small cost may apply for translation.
Whistlestop offers assistance and services to English and non-English speakers in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. We assist with applications for many social services (healthcare management, citizenship, housing, employment, and federal assistance), translations and referrals.
Contacts:
Spanish - Marta Villela
Russian - Anna Ladyzhenskaya
Vietnamese - Lieu Phan
**Immigration Assistance Clinics**  
**Last Fri. every month, 9-11:30am**  
General consultation fee: $30  
By appointment only: call Marta, 454-0998  
Whistlestop and Brazil Alliance offer Immigration assistance consultations regarding Immigration Law and Reform, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and citizenship and naturalization.

**Telephone Reassurance Program**  
No Cost • Register: Leslie Klor, 456-9062, ext. 132  
Live alone? Would you like someone to care about how you are doing? If you live by yourself and often feel isolated or are looking for connection and peace of mind, this program is for you. Trained volunteers will call you three mornings a week to check on how you are doing. We now also offer this service in Spanish.

**Homeshare Program**  
No Cost • Info: Leslie Klor, 456-9062, ext. 132  
The Homeshare Program is a free referral service for older adults providing an affordable and alternative way of meeting housing needs with benefits to renters and homeowners. Do you have a room to share or do you need a place to live? Call us.

**GOING PLACES**

Marin YMCA and Whistlestop invites you to join Adventures in Culture.  
Register: Lauren Clapperton, MARIN YMCA, 446-2114, or Vicky Voicehowsky, Whistlestop, 457-0586

- **Fri, Apr 11, 9:30am-3:30pm, $45-$55**  
  Walt Disney Museum and Walk in the Presidio  
  Register with YMCA by Mon, Apr 7; lunch not provided.

- **Fri, Apr 25, 9:30am-4pm, $45-$55**  
  Napa Outlets & Yountville Shopping and Lunch  
  Register with YMCA by Mon, Apr 21; lunch not provided.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**TECHNOLOGY**

Pre-registration and payment required. To register, 456-9062. See details of classes online.

**iPad/iPhone Applications**  
**Fridays, Apr 18 & 25, 10am-Noon**  
You’ve learned the basics and now want to find out the apps the cool kids are using. There are apps for everything. In this workshop, we’ll highlight the most popular, fun and useful apps to get the most out of your i-device. (For Apple devices only) Maximum 8 people/Minimum 4 people • COST: $48

**Open Lab**  
**Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-Noon**  
Use our desktops for your own purposes, access internet, etc. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your electronic devices: laptops, tablets, etc, and to provide help with software applications. Practice what you learn in our classes. • NO COST

**Computer Tutor**  
**Wednesdays, Noon-1pm; By advance appointment**  
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. • COST: $20/hour

**Teen Tech Support**  
**Every Tuesday, 3:30pm-5pm**  
Have a Kindle, tablet, iPad, smart phone, laptop, or computer but no one to answer your specific questions? Bring your device and your questions to our lab and our high school whiz kids will turn your technology fear into tech savvy. Open every Tuesday but sign up a few days in advance as space is limited.  
COST: $15/session

**Marin County Commission on Aging**

**Thursday, April 10 • 10 am – 12:30 pm**  
Where: San Rafael Community Center (Club Rooms)  
**Topic: Public Hearing**  
**Speaker: Amy Dietz of Aging and Adult Services**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9–NOON</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>
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<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00–12:10PM</td>
<td>Exercise Movement &amp; Music</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15–1:45PM</td>
<td>Language German Social Group</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Russian Social Group</td>
<td>336-8430</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language ESL</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30AM–12:30PM</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>
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<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Support Mastery of Aging Class</td>
<td>453-9808</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:15PM</td>
<td>Language English Conversation</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Acting Class</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30–4:30PM</td>
<td>Learn Korean Drumming</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–10:15AM</td>
<td>Exercise Tai Chi Qigong</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10 or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–12PM</td>
<td>Support Seniors' Circle</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Language Persian Social Group</td>
<td>472-6020</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Support Corazón Latino</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language ESL</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$15 Non Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Exercise Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4PM</td>
<td>Relax Chair Massage</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$4/8 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–NOON</td>
<td>Exercise Zumba</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$6/$8 Non Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12:30PM</td>
<td>Relax Reflexology Massage</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$1/minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15–1:45PM</td>
<td>Language Vietnamese Social Group</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30–2:30PM</td>
<td>Language Learn Italian</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>$25/mo</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45–3:45PM</td>
<td>Exercise Balance Class</td>
<td>Sugg. Donation</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45–4:45PM</td>
<td>Learn Korean Drumming</td>
<td>456-9062</td>
<td>Free</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>1–3PM</td>
<td>Support ACASA</td>
<td>Peer Counseling</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Language Practice Spanish</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Learn Arts &amp; Crafts w/Vicky</td>
<td>April 11 &amp; 25</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Exercise Ping-Pong</td>
<td>April 4 &amp; 18</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Exercise Yoga</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>$3/$5 Non Members</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.
The Bird's Side OF MARIN  

by RICHARD PAVEK

Catching Up with the Egrets and Herons

Recently Audubon Canyon Ranch announced that it wouldn’t open on schedule this year because the Egrets have not returned. The Egrets abandoned their nests mid-season last year leaving unhatched eggs. No one knows why or where they went or if they’ll be back.

Since some of you asked about the Ninth Street Rookery, I decided to survey that site and some of the other nesting spots around. I will update those of you who receive my weekly bird photos with pertinent changes.

Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park had two, possibly three, Great Blue Herons on February 22. One is an old graybeard with a broken branch through his/her lower mandible, who has been nesting at Stow for several years. Da Silva Island on Richardson Bay had one active Great Blue Heron nest last week. No sign of Egrets at the Marin Islands off San Rafael this morning.

The Ninth Street Rookery in Santa Rosa is off to a good start. About 20 industrious Black-crowned Night Heron pairs are nest building in their favorite tree, and there is one recently hatched juvenile. I saw a single pair there about two weeks ago; they must have been busy.

There are six Great Egrets in mating colors – bright green lores – in the second of three nesting trees. No birds yet in the third nesting tree. I expect the Snowy Egrets and Cattle Egrets will be along soon.

I have a PDF map of the Rookery available for downloading. It’s free; just email me and ask. I may do a map for Stowe Lake, if there is interest.

Email me if you want to be on my weekly bird photo list. It’s free at: SHENmaker@MSN.com

Till next month,

Richard
Tutors Meet a Need

Two years ago, we saw a need for more English education at Whistlestop. We had a thriving English Language Program in collaboration with Canal Alliance, but many students needed the extra attention of a tutor. We saw this as an opportunity to enhance peoples’ lives, both students and prospective volunteers. Today we have seven volunteer tutors and nine students receiving one-on-one help.

Roberta Cohen came on board as a volunteer tutor over a year ago. Roberta’s background is in Bilingual Education; her focus has been to help students learn to read. “I worked with many students over the years who knew how to pronounce and read the words, but had no idea what they were reading. I wanted to give them the best possible chance to learn English by helping out,” said Roberta.

Wenceslao Bojorquez, originally from El Salvador and five-year veteran at Whistlestop, had to work from the age of seven and was not able to go to school and learn how to read or write properly. Feeling discouraged with English classes, he sought out help. He said, “Señora Roberta has been so patient and kind with me, I’m so grateful.”

Jerry Schofield had been tutoring kids from Venetia Valley School and Marin Literacy Program when he saw our “Tutors Wanted” ad in the newsletter and joined the tutoring gang. Although Nadjmeh’s English level was good, she was very shy about her pronunciation and afraid she wouldn’t pass her citizenship test. “Nadjmeh had the opportunity to speak only English with me. At home she spoke Farsi,” said Jerry. Nadjmeh studied with Jerry every week and passed her test. “I feel I can speak better with people in stores and on the street. I was shy before, but I am comfortable now,” she said.

What is most rewarding about this program is how volunteer tutors change the lives of their students. Thank you Rachel, Lisa, Olivia, Roberta, Gillian, Jerry, and Pat.
We count calories. We watch our sugar. We weigh good fats and bad. We go vegetarian or vegan. We do everything we can to satisfy our bodies. Rarely do we do much for our Souls.

Many cultures believe our Soul is in our stomach. When we say, “I’ve got a gut feeling about this,” we are fulfilling this belief. Working as a Chaplain, I have seen many people suffering because their stomachs are “tied up in knots.” You want to just make them a pot of chicken soup and feed it to them saying, “Try this, you’ll feel better.” And they very likely would.

When we suffer in our minds, or our outer bodies, the deep recesses of the Soul suffer, too. The Soul may be hungry for Truth or Silence or Peace. The Soul may be hungry for Companionship. It may want to call us to Wonder or Joy or even Grief. When we do not give the Soul what it asks for, the Soul is hungry. Where do we go to end this Soul hunger? Perhaps we should begin with the way we eat.

No matter what your faith, you must have noticed the wondrousness of an apple, the sublime artistry of a peach. You may have sighed when you smelled the nutty aroma of rice simmering or smiled at the way milk commands a cookie. When you look at a plate of delicious food, your stomach exclaims, “Isn’t the world Divine!”

In seminary, we learned, “The first prayer is gratitude.” Perhaps we could stop and say a grateful prayer each time we eat. Before we dig in, let us put away the cell phone and the magazine and shut off the TV and let us say, “Thank you” to Whoever or Whatever laid this wonder before us. As we eat, let us say “Thank you” as we savor each incredible bite.

From the prayer of gratitude we may become more expansive. We might plan to light a candle before a meal. In preparation, we might walk instead of drive to the store, looking at the world around us. When we arrive, we might pick up each loaf of bread, bunch of grapes, or lump of cheese and feel the gratitude bubbling up inside us. And in this happy moment, perhaps we will feel suddenly that our Soul is blessing us, saying, “Grace.”

Mary Ann Maggiore consults with teens, young people & their families on building a successful life. Contact her at: maryannmaggiore@gmail.com, 577-6627.

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by MARY ANN MAGGIORE

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Marin Civil Grand Jurors Sought

Superior Court Judges in Marin County will soon nominate persons to the 2014-2015 Grand Jury, and residents have until April 2 to apply. Application forms are available at the Marin County Grand Jury, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275, San Rafael, or at Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Ave.

Law requires that the court prepare a list of no fewer than 25 or greater than 30 potential Civil Grand Jurors. The court expects 60-75 applications. Those applying will be interviewed twice, in April and again in May. After the interviews with judges, 30 potential jurors will be selected to advance to the June 5 drawing of new Grand Jurors.

For more information, contact Patti Church Baseheart, aide to the Grand Jury, at pbaseheart@marincounty.org or 473-6132.

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