Whistlestop PERSPECTIVE
By JOHN BOWMAN

One Woman’s Inspirational Decision

When Whistlestop Board Vice President Etta Allen was asked what inspires her, she looked up the word inspiration in the dictionary. “Then I thought about it for awhile and realized that my inspiration every time has come from the challenge in front of me,” she said.

Etta needed some serious inspiration in 1972 when her husband died and she was left with two sons and a business to run by herself. “I thought I wanted to be sure that those boys would have everything they would have had if Dad had been with us. I could have taken a job somewhere, but I decided running the business would be better.

“And when I needed to earn my license to become a contractor – something not readily available to women at that time – that inspired me.”

Once she got that license, she began to build Allen Heating and Sheet Metal to the great company it has become. Along the way, Etta achieved several firsts:

• First woman president of Marin Buildings Exchange
• First woman contractor on the Executive Committee of the California Association of Builders Exchange
• Named to the first annual Marin’s Women’s Hall of Fame

Etta became a Whistlestop Board member two and a half years ago. “The job on the board has been a lot of work, but the board of directors are on a good road. Fundraising has been an issue; I felt we needed our own fundraiser, which led to a great deal of conversation with the board of directors and staff. That is when we came up with the idea of Whistlestock, which is a music festival featuring well-known local rock musicians from the 60’s.

“What led me to Whistlestop was wanting to help older adults in any way I could. One day, a service technician came into my office and shared that the heat was not working at the home of an elderly person who could not afford the repair. I realized that there were too many older people who did not have the means for the needed repairs and I instructed my technicians to do the repairs at a discount or pro bono, as needed.”

Etta also is inspired by the hard work and loyalty of the dogs being trained for Guide Dogs for the Blind. She loves dogs and learned that she could be a breeder/keeper for Guide Dogs. Her first dog was a German Shepherd named Nissan, which came from the breeder program. After Nissan, she learned many of the retired guide dogs needed good homes. “This is when I volunteered in the foster program and accepted Guide Dogs for short periods of time, which has led me to adopt retirees today. This is the inspiration of why I volunteer for Guide Dogs for the Blind, sat on their board for nine years and serve on the Board of Whistlestop today.”
Inspired by the Beauty of Life

By VAL BOWMAN

Anna Ladyzhenskaya, Russian Multicultural Coordinator at Whistlestop, created our cover art. She is an internationally known artist who was born in Moldova, an Eastern European nation, when it was still part of the former Soviet Union. She completed art school there, earning her credentials in both the practice and teaching of art, before going on to get her Master’s degree in architecture. With over 30 years of experience in the art field, Anna works with all forms of media, from oils and pastels, to watercolor and colored pencils, to create works that are just as diverse as the materials she uses, ranging from landscape, to still life and portrait.

She is an active member of the Bay Area art community, living in Novato with her husband, two beautiful daughters and two wonderful kittens. Recent exhibits of her artwork include San Francisco’s annual Celebration of Craftswomen at Fort Mason and regular displays at Gallery Elektra in Sausalito.

Anna shares her inspirations: “Living in beautiful California, I get easily inspired by the mountains, the ocean, California colors, its foggy weather, flowers, music, other artists’ work, and the beauty of life. Sometimes I paint still lifes and landscapes; however, most of my inspiration comes from people. I am inspired by my communication with people, by their eyes, by their stories.

“I get mentally stimulated and inspired by finding common ground with people or noticing when there are differences of viewpoints. These moments spawn possible messages for paintings and the rest is easy – to make the viewer read and feel the message. The piece that is chosen for this issue is an example of such a process. I love working at Whistlestop with people of different cultural backgrounds, ages, mentalities and traditions. They inspire me every day.”

Anna is teaching an abstract watercolor class at Whistlestop.

MARIN COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

Thurs June 2
10am – 12:30pm
Alma Via of San Rafael, 515 Northgate Drive

Topic:
Transit Options in Marin for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Speakers:
Jon Gaffney,
Senior Mobility Analyst, Marin Transit

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Inspiration Grows From Life’s Challenges

By JOHN BOWMAN

Whether it is dealing with illness, losing a loved one or making the difficult decision of moving from one country to another, everyone faces challenges in their lives. It’s what people do with those challenges that birth inspirational stories.

In this issue of the Express, we share people’s inspirational stories. Here are three of them.

Beverly Bloch Savitt, Marin County’s first female Superior Court judge, has inspired many people over her long career. So, who inspired her? “Ann Landy Diamond, who also later became a judge, was quite wonderful to me when I was starting,” retired Judge Savitt said. “And she was very knowledgeable.”

Diamond was practicing law at the time and she hired Savitt and suggested she start by doing volunteer legwork. “Which I did, and she let me use her office.” Later, in 1970, Diamond and Savitt were partners in the first all-female law firm in the U.S. “We even made Time Magazine,” said Savitt, who graduated from Boalt Law School in Berkeley at age 40.

Savitt became accustomed early to stepping up to big challenges. She had started law school in Illinois and was very interested in politics. She was the first woman elected to the Park Forest village Board of Trustees. She noticed that most of the successful state legislators were lawyers. “So, I decided to become a lawyer. But after I started practicing, I found I loved it. It was a career made for me.”

She graduated from Boalt in 1967, at 40. She became the first female superior court judge in Marin in 1983. She had a long and successful tenure on the bench. “After retiring, I did mediation and arbitration work for JAMS (Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services). When I was about 75, I found myself getting tired.” She has continued to do some volunteering for the League of Women Voters.

She celebrated her 90th birthday on May 12. She fondly recalls being on the Whistlestop Board of Directors “in the early days – maybe forty years ago.”

Teresa Pilian, another Whistlestop client, is inspired by helping others. “I love helping people anyway I can,” she says. Teresa, who prays daily, prepared tamales weekly for Food Pantry clients until chronic arthritis caused her to discontinue. She is mother to six children and 15 grandchildren.

Karima Joya was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, but has lived in the United States for about 25 years. She is sad about what is going on in her home country. “There is no safety there,” she says. She learned to knit when she was five years old and is still knitting, often when she comes to Whistlestop.

She also loves coming for the Brown Bag Pantry and says it is very helpful to her. Karima likes visiting with people when she comes. She is a breast cancer survivor, having had many surgeries. During her treatment, she took up painting, using acrylics and watercolors. She goes water walking at the YMCA three times a week. She is grateful that she feels so good following her recovery and her positive attitude is inspiring.

“Everyone faces challenges in their lives. It’s what people do with those challenges that birth inspirational stories.”
Herb Meyer Just Keeps Getting Back Up

By JOHN BOWMAN

Herb Meyer, who has inspired so many people over the years, is himself inspired by much, including what he calls his birdies. When we interviewed him he was sitting outside in his wheelchair on a sunny morning, watching his feathered friends. His home overlooks a wetlands sanctuary and on this day he says he is seeing egrets, mallard ducks, and one big blue heron. As we talk, two Canada geese fly by, and I hear their honking. “Sometimes the geese will teach their chicks to fly right out here.”

Herb is 84, according to the Internet. “I’m not going to say my age. But I have clear blue eyes, my skin is very good and some people guess that I am in my sixties.”

He was an avid sailor for many years, but then he was seriously injured in a sailing accident that seemed to end his days on the sea. On May 31, 1993, a puff of wind hit just as he was trying to ease the Genoa sail. Herb was hurled forward and hit the bulkhead. He wound up on the floor of the cockpit and could not move. His spinal cord was injured but not severed, leaving him a quadriplegic.

A chance encounter with a stranger at a grocery store a year later led Herb back to sailing. He had a “Sailors Have More Fun” sticker on his wheelchair. This led the stranger to ask Herb about his sailing days and to tell him about the many disabled sailors there were

Continued on page 9
**CELEBRATIONS/EVENTS**

**Annual Multicultural Party at Pickleweed Park**

Wed, June 8, 10:30am-1:30pm
Albert Boro Community Center (Pickleweed), 50 Canal Street, San Rafael
Cost: $3 suggested donation, 60 and over/$6 for people under 60
Registration required; Call to sign up today at 415-456-9062.

Marin County Division of Aging and Adult Services, City of San Rafael, and Whistlestop invite you to our Annual Multicultural Party. Live entertainment will include Bread & Roses Presents ™, as well as Mexican and ukulele music. The menu features BBQ chicken, roast potatoes, salad, fruit, juice, and dessert.

**The Bubble Lady Magic Performance**

Mon, June 13, 3-4 pm; Fee: $5/7
Presented by Rebecca Nile, this show really pops. It’s crazy, zany, super silly fun for all ages. Follow “The Bubble Lady” to Bubbleland, and participate in musically-enhanced bubble adventures. Experience dancing bubbles, trick bubbles, spaceship bubbles, love bubbles, bubble haircuts, bubble brains, dragon and whale bubbles, universe bubbles and people in bubbles.

**Hawaiian Celebration Lunch**

Thurs, June 23, Lunch: 11:30am-1:30pm/Entertainment: 12-1 pm; Fee: $8/10
To celebrate summer, entertainers Lucina Tison and Sandy Bailey will sing your Hawaiian favorites, along with traditional dances from Hawaiian dancer Lela. Featuring glazed pork and pineapple buns, coconut lime shrimp (or tofu) skewers, salad, and mango sorbet. Dress in your favorite Hawaiian shirt. Tickets on sale until June 20 at the front desk.

**NEW/HIGHLIGHTED CLASSES & WORKSHOPS**

**Community Arts and Crafts: Celebrating Fathers and Flags**

Tues, June 7, 3:30-5pm; Free (Donations Appreciated) Instructor: Marta Villela
Come and make colorful crafts to honor our fathers. We will show you how. Supplies provided.

**Beginning and Intermediate Ukulele**

Wednesdays, June 8-July 13, 12:30-1:30 pm; Fee: $35/40
Maximum 25 participants/Sign up soon; Instructor: Fred Riley
Learn to play the ukulele from teacher Fred Riley or improve if you already play. Bring your own ukulele, borrow one to try, or buy one at a discount.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Mondays and Wednesdays from June 8-July 27, 2-3:30 pm; Fee: $12/15
Instructors: Canal Alliance ESL trained teachers. Whistlestop will offer Basic, Intermediate and Advanced classes. Registration required; deadline is May 30. Fee covers enrollment and materials. To register or for info in English/Spanish, call 415-454-0998. For information in Russian, call 415-456-9062, ext. 138.

**English Pronunciation & Conversation Class**

Wednesdays, from June 8-July 27, 1-2pm; Fee: $10/12
Instructor: Katherine Brinnier
Learn Basic English pronunciation and conversation with dynamic teacher Katherine Brinnier. To register or for info in English/Spanish, call 415-454-0998; for Russian, call 415-456-9062, ext. 138.

**Beginning Italian**

Thursdays, from June 9-Aug 18 (will meet 10 of the 11 weeks), from 2:30-3:30 pm; Fee: $20/25
Instructor: Karen Raccanello
Registration required

**Financial Abuse Prevention Presentation**

Tues, June 21, 3-4 pm; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Presented by: Marin County Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST)
Please come to this very important presentation about financial abuse. Topics covered will include: Robo-calls, Telemarketers and How to Deal with Them, Fraud, Identity Theft, Hiring Caretakers, Reporting Abuse, and Computer Scams.

**Seniors Circle**

Wednesdays 10-11:30 am; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Volunteer Facilitators from Center for Attitudinal Healing. This is an open support group for independent older adults (men and women, 55+) who give each other the gift of listening in a caring environment, which encourages mutual sharing of the joys, concerns, and wisdom of aging. Drop-in.

**Brain Fitness Workshop**

Thurs, June 9, 9:30-10:30 am; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Instructor: Bob Nations, President, Senior Access Board of Directors
The top four things to promote good brain health as we age: move your body, eat right, find a challenge, and socialize. In this Senior Access Brain Fitness class we will talk about eating right and challenge you with fun activities in a room full of people socializing.

**NEW/HIGHLIGHTED HEALTH PROGRAMS**

**Weekly Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Screenings, and Medication Reviews**

Fridays, 9:30-11am; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Free weekly blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, and medication reviews provided by Bright Star Care, a home care agency that provides home care, caregivers, and medical staffing solutions to families and businesses in Marin. For info, call 415-332-3300.

**Medicare 101 Seminar: Learn the Nuts and Bolts**

Wed, June 8, 10am-12pm; Free (Donations Appreciated)
Instructor: Cara Suminski of SCAN Health Plan

Turning 65? Losing coverage with an employer? We understand that Medicare can be confusing. Let Cara show you how simple Medicare can be. This event is for educational purposes only and no plan-specific benefits or details will be shared. Contact Cara at 415-720-2133 to sign up today.

**Memory Screening**

Wed, June 15, 8:30am-12:15pm (45-minute appointments); Free (Donations Appreciated)
Are you concerned about your memory? Memory screening makes sense for anyone concerned about memory loss. Take a simple 30-minute test with a geriatric professional provided by Senior Access. Sign up in advance, as space is limited.

**Need Assistance? Multicultural Consultants Can Help**

By appointment: 415-456-9062
Spanish: Marta, 415-454-0998; Russian: Anna, ext. 138; Farsi/English: Mrs. Esmaili, 415-472-6020

Whistlestop offers information, resources, and referrals to English and non-English speakers in Spanish, Russian, and Farsi. No fee for consultations; small fee may apply for translation services.

**Homeshare, Telephone Reassurance and Rotary Home Team Work Day Programs**

Call Leslie Klor: 415-456-9062, ext. 132; Free (Donations Appreciated)
The Homeshare Program is a free referral service for older adults providing an affordable and alternative way of meeting housing needs with numerous benefits to renters and homeowners.
HIGHLIGHTED SUPPORT SERVICES, CONT.

Telephone Reassurance Program: If you often feel isolated and are looking for connection and peace of mind, trained volunteers can call you three mornings a week to check in on you.

Rotary Home Team Work Day – Sat, June 4, 9am-12pm: The Rotary Home Team offers a free service for qualified San Rafael seniors and people with disabilities who have financial or physical challenges performing small household repairs.

Victim Witness Assistance Resources, Outreach, and Assistance: 2nd & 4th Thursdays, from 9am-12pm; Free (Donations Appreciated)

Yolanda Johnson, Advocate from the District Attorney’s office, will be available to answer questions, provide information, and connect you to resources. Call 415-473-6450.

Free Legal Consultation for Adults 1st & 4th Thursdays of each month at Whistlestop: 1st and 3rd Thursdays at the Mill Valley Community Center

By appointment only. Call 415 459-6700 for appointments at both locations. Legal Aid of Marin provides a free 30-minute legal consultation for Marin County residents who are 60 and older. Marin lawyers volunteer to give general advice, offer options, explain rights and, if appropriate, refer people to attorneys who have expertise in certain areas of law.

TECHNOLOGY JUNE 2016

Pre-registration and payment required. 415-456-9062

Intro to Computers 2: Moving Beyond Basics
Tuesdays, June 7 & 14, 10am-12noon (2 classes) • Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people • The perfect sequel to the Intro to Computers 1 class or course if you have a basic understanding of computers and want to learn more. This 2-week class will focus on using Internet tools to learn new skills, iTunes and social media. Review how to write a letter and print it out, store files and documents so you can find them again, and use email.

iPad/iPhone Basics 2: Essential Built-in Applications
Thursdays, June 23 & 30, 10am-12noon (2 classes) • Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people (For Apple devices only)

Review the basics and learn how to get the most out of Photo editing, iCloud, Calendar, Siri, E-mail, Texting, Facetime, Maps/GPS, and more. We’ll introduce the steps to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize your apps. Go beyond the basics. Bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class.

iPad/iPhone Basics 3: World of Applications
Tuesdays, July 12 & 19, 10am-12noon (2 classes) • Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people (For Apple devices only)

Focus on how to use apps for shopping, brain training, fitness, Internet radio, stock tickers, games, translation, and travel (such as Uber). Learn how to organize apps and how to get rid of unwanted ones. Bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class.

ONGOING
Open Lab
Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-12noon
No Fee • Use our PCs to access the Internet. Volunteer staff available for advice on problems with your electronic devices – laptops, tablets, phones – and they can help with software applications.

Whistlestop Weekly ACTIVITIES
This Month at Whistlestop Please view our most recent class schedule at www.whistlestop.org/classes/calendar/ or call 415-456-9062 for updates to the schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>INFO</th>
<th>FEE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Zumba</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–11PM</td>
<td>Therapeutic Massage</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–NOON</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30AM–NOON</td>
<td>German Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Persian Social Group</td>
<td>415-472-6020</td>
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<tr>
<td>11AM–NOON</td>
<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Russian Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL Classes</td>
<td>6/8-7/27</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Whistleizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10AM–NOON</td>
<td>Mah Jongg</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM–1:30PM</td>
<td>Manicures</td>
<td>Call</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45–11:45AM</td>
<td>Cardio/Yoga Exercise Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30AM–12:30PM</td>
<td>French Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>French Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3PM</td>
<td>Beg./Int. Conversational Spanish</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10–NOON</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–1PM</td>
<td>Therapeutic Massage</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>10:30AM–NOON</td>
<td>Abstract Watercolor</td>
<td>Ends 6/29</td>
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<td>Persian Social Group</td>
<td>415-472-6020</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>* 11AM–1PM</td>
<td>Corazón Latino</td>
<td>415-454-0998</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30–1:30PM</td>
<td>Beginning &amp; Intermediate Ukulele</td>
<td>6/8-7/13</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2PM</td>
<td>English Pronunciation &amp; Conversation</td>
<td>6/8-7/27</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL Classes</td>
<td>6/8-7/27</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Knitting Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>3:30–5PM</td>
<td>Citizenship Class</td>
<td>415-454-0998</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>10AM–1PM</td>
<td>Therapeutic Massage</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11AM–NOON</td>
<td>Whistleizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15–2:15PM</td>
<td>Vietnamese Social Group</td>
<td>415-419-4553</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–2:25PM</td>
<td>Intermediate Italian</td>
<td>6/9-8/18</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>2:30–3:30PM</td>
<td>Beginning Italian</td>
<td>6/9-8/18</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45–3:45PM</td>
<td>Balance Class</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>9–10AM</td>
<td>Community Breakfast</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30–11AM</td>
<td>Weekly Blood Press./Cholesterol Checks</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11AM–NOON</td>
<td>Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>415-456-9067</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3PM</td>
<td>ACASA</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30–3PM</td>
<td>Spanish Club</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Movie Time</td>
<td>6/3 &amp; 6/17</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4PM</td>
<td>Ping-Pong</td>
<td>6/10 &amp; 6/24</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4PM</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>N</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

FREE PARKING
Lot at corner of 3rd St. & Tamalpais Ave • 8:30AM-5:00 PM for Whistlestop & Jackson Café guests.

Jackson Café
Entrees from $6-$8
Open to the public for lunch every weekday!
Located in Whistlestop Active Aging Center.

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HECM Loan Specialist, NMLS # 468646  
415.233.1007  
mcardenas@reversefunding.com  
reversefunding.com/marylince-cardenas

**The Bubble Lady Magic Performance**  
Mon, June 13, 3-4 pm; See p 6 for more information!

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sequoias-pv.org  
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501 Portola Valley Rd

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Home Care Aide Services  
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A Life Care Community  
sequoias-sf.org  
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in the Bay Area. Before long Herb was sailing again and was an enthusiastic member of the Bay Area Association of Disabled Sailors (BAADS). By 2002, he became Commodore of BAADS, a post he held for three years.

In a way, that stranger was the start of Herb’s inspirational story. And then came another inspiration, a woman who helped him after another accident. He was headed back to his car in a parking lot near the bridge over the Corte Madera Creek, where the 101 crosses the creek.

“I started down the hill and there were supposed to be white posts at the bottom of the hill that would lead you to the right,” he explained. “The posts weren’t there. I kept going straight, it was dark, so I didn’t see the drop off of about twelve inches. My wheelchair overturned and I lay there in pain.”

The woman came along and called 911. Larkspur Paramedics came to his aid and asked him if he was all right. “I said I was fine. I felt okay,” he said. But the next day, he woke up in serious pain and his leg was badly swollen. He ended up in the hospital where doctors discovered he had broken both his tibia and ankle.

Herb wound up with a $60,000 settlement he used to acquire 10 Liberty Boats for BAADS. He later raised enough money from friends and others to pay himself back.

He sailed in some of the Liberties on a trip to Australia to visit Chris Mitchell, who designs sailboats – boats that sailors with disabilities can sail. “The El Toro has a center board designed so the boat can’t capsize,” Herb said.

So, because of Herb Meyer, who never has let his being a quadriplegic keep him out of boats, many other sailors with disabilities are able to sail in specially designed boats.

He once told an SF Gate reporter, “Becoming disabled ushered me into a new lifestyle, and helped me empathize with others.” He added, “Life is like sailing. You get knocked down, and you are out of it. But you get back up and you get a fresh wind, and you get going again and make it to the finish line.”

That’s Herb’s story. And he has inspired many others to make it theirs.

“Life is like sailing. You get knocked down ... but you get back up.”
The Gift of Inspiration
By TRUE HEITZ

The year is 1947. I am eight years old, and I’m sitting with hundreds of other children in a theater in Los Angeles. We are about to watch the first stage production ever of Peter Pan. The curtain goes up, and we see Mary Martin, her hair shorn, flying across the stage. We are enraptured by the adventures of Boys and Pirates and Captain Hook. But no matter that! When Tinker Bell drinks the poison and is dying, a great voice comes echoing out of the darkness to tell us the only thing that can save her is if we believe in fairies ... not just in any fairies, mind you, but in that fairy, in Tinker Bell, who is dying right before our eyes.

“If you believe, light your light!”

We are holding paper cups with battery-powered lights inside them, not knowing why, and upon hearing these words, every child in the audience turns on the lights, and stops breathing. Then, the miracle. Her little wings flutter; her dainty legs wobble; she stands. Tinker Bell will live!

Whenever I need inspiration, this memory comes back from where it has been cherished for 70 years – in my mind and heart.

Many things were inspirational to me as I was growing up. I was a Hollywood brat, which means I didn’t come home after school like most kids, but mostly hung out in studios with writers, directors, and actors, whose intention was to create entertainment that would move people deeply.

Who was not deeply affected by Dorothy, Toto in her arms, singing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow?” By Robin Hood robbing from the rich and giving to the poor? By Satchmo’s “It’s a Wonderful World?”

As a grown-up, with children of my own, I often found inspiration, as did they, watching Mister Rogers, who created a wonderful, safe neighborhood for children on early television. “When I was a boy,” he told us, “and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

Indeed, helpers – people who inspire us with their visions, words and actions, who give us hope – are always available to us. High on my list of teachers, heroes, models and mentors are Thich Nhat Hahn, Martin Luther King Jr., Helen Keller, Malala, Mary Oliver, San Rafael’s Linda Graham, regular Spirit Rock presenter and friend. Which lives have inspired you?

My mother’s personal mantra: “In the center of God’s love I stand. Nothing can hurt me there. And from that center, I go forth, to love and to serve, to shine my light.”
Sharing His Varied Skills

By LAURIE VERMONT

We are so lucky to have Frank as one of our regular computer lab volunteers. He is always patient and ready to listen when someone comes into the lab with computer questions.

Frank is a San Francisco native who moved to Marin in the early 1960's when he was lucky enough to get a teaching job at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. Teaching was not his intended profession, he would have rather been a musician or a baseball player, but you know how that goes.

At the suggestion of his father, he chose something practical and studied to be a CPA. Before he could get a job in that field, he joined the Navy and was on his way to Korea. While waiting for transport overseas, he was suddenly assigned to an electronics training unit in San Diego and never left the United States. This led to his love of teaching. He returned home and got his teaching degree at USF where he met his wife. They have four children.

During his 29 years as a teacher at Tam High, he taught typing, bookkeeping, French, and “office machines” before moving to the administrative side. He is still in contact with some of his former students and meets with them on a regular basis. While volunteering at Whistlestop, he has run into former students, former colleagues or wives of former colleagues.

Frank is a docent at the Bear Valley Visitors Center in Point Reyes and at the Tiburon Railroad & Ferry Depot Museum.

Since he is from their generation, Frank believes he has a good understanding of how to explain computers to the older adults he helps. He points out that there is a difference between reality and virtual reality. You can’t open the computer to pull out the photos you are looking at but the pictures can be enjoyed on the screen and printed out if you want to have a copy.

Frank says, “The igniters of my genuine delight in this kind of volunteering as a post-retirement career are the ‘Wows!’ of my amazing spouse, kids and grandkids, who collectively make all this effort worthwhile.”

For more volunteer opportunities: 415-456-9067 or volunteer@whistlestop.org.
Thank you to our volunteers!

Laurie Vermont and Joy Gordon were honored at the annual Whistlestop Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on April 27, 2016, where CEO Joe O’Hehir expressed his gratitude. Thanks for donations from EO Products, Arizmendi Bakery San Rafael, and KIND Healthy Snacks.

VOLUNTEER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Make a Difference in an Older Adult’s Life!

Jackson Café Weekday Lunch Servers and Cashiers & Friday Community Breakfast Servers
The Jackson Café provides a warm and comfortable setting for older adults to eat a nutritious meal at an affordable price. Café volunteers provide friendly greetings, excellent customer service and support social interaction. Free breakfast or lunch is provided for Café volunteers.
Lunch hour shifts: Monday-Friday, 10:45 am-2pm. (Café hours: 11:30am-2pm) Cashier or food service experience is a plus but not required. Friday morning breakfast shift: 8-10am. (Breakfast open to the public from 9-10am Fridays.)

Brown Bag Pantry Volunteers Needed
Helpers are needed Friday mornings from 9:15am-12:15pm for the Brown Bag Pantry. Duties: unload the truck from the Food Bank, sort produce, greet and help recipients get their food. This fun group is looking for new members. Ability to lift 25 pounds is a plus.

Meals on Wheels Drivers Needed
Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers are needed to deliver meals to homebound meal recipients. Required: a valid California Driver’s License, clear DMV report, a reliable vehicle and current insurance certificate. A minimum of one 2-3 hour weekday shift is asked of volunteers.

Whistlestop CarePool Volunteer Driver Program
Volunteer drivers provide round-trip rides to ambulatory older adults going to the doctor or grocery store (usually 2-3 hours). Use your own car and receive ride requests through email. Accept or decline requests, and drive on your own schedule. Volunteers need reliable passenger automobile with current insurance certificate, a valid California Driver License and a clear background check and DMV report.

To learn more about these opportunities or others, contact Laurie, volunteer@whistlestop.org or 415-456-9067.

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