Staying Connected

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The Power of Personal Connection

The power of personal connection is a strong and positive force within our lives. The loss of connection reminds us how important a need it plays toward our happiness and fulfillment.

Four months ago I experienced the sudden loss of our beloved family dog, Caleb, who passed away after giving us over 12 years of unconditional love and companionship. I have mentioned my “fur friend” in several Whistlestop Express articles over the past 8 years while I have worked at Whistlestop, most recently in the May 2016 edition where I described how Caleb helped keep me physically active with daily walks through the foothills of China Camp. That sudden loss of connection to a loved one, be it human or animal, is emotionally overwhelming. You are left with an empty feeling of loneliness and longing for that connection to somehow return. During the grieving process, we turn to other personal connections in our lives to help provide comfort and solace.

Fortunately for me, I work at an organization where the power and importance of personal connection is deeply embedded within Whistlestop’s mission, vision, and values. Every day, our dedicated staff and corps of volunteers provide the power of personal connection to thousands of Marin’s older adults and individuals with disabilities. Whether it’s a ride on one of our Marin Access buses, a CarePool volunteer helping with a doctor’s appointment, serving a fresh warm meal at our Jackson Café, delivering food to the housebound, providing emotional support through a help group, or participating in a class or activity at our Active Aging Center, our job is to provide Marin’s seniors with ample opportunities to stay personally connected to their community.

Thousands of individuals over 60 years old in Marin live alone. Approximately 75% are women, and many have suffered the recent loss of a beloved partner. And, the number will only continue to grow as our population ages. A new term has sprung up to describe this growing group: “elder orphans.” Elder orphans are older adults who do not have relatives living close by to provide the typical family personal connection and support. Elder orphans are more prevalent in Marin because many of the children of our older adults cannot afford to live near their parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles due to the escalating cost of housing.

There are several recent published studies describing the negative effects of loneliness and isolation on the older adult population, such as drug and alcohol dependency, as well as potential worsening of chronic disease conditions. Fortunately, Whistlestop’s programs and services help provide an “antidote” to loneliness and isolation for Marin’s older adults who live alone. We can be their surrogate family members who make sure they have a variety of opportunities to enjoy personal connections to their community.

By supporting Whistlestop, you can help ensure that Marin’s older adults have the power of personal connection at their time of need.
We asked Jerry Jampolsky, MD, and Diane Cirincione, PhD, for tips to help people stay hopeful and centered when facing changing and challenging times. The couple has recently published their latest book called Aging with Attitude. In 1975, Jerry established the first Center for Attitudinal Healing in Tiburon; there are now more than 130 satellite centers around the world. Diane is founder and executive director of Attitudinal Healing International. Over the last four decades, they have been invited to work together in more than 60 countries. Oprah Winfrey says, “After 25 years and more than 30,000 guests, it was Jerry Jampolsky’s definition of forgiveness that changed my life.”

What are three tips you could offer for people going through challenging times?

♦ Stay in the present instead of the pain from the past or fear of the future.
♦ Wake up every morning and commit to listing three things you are grateful for. Count your blessings instead of your hurts throughout the day. Count your smile wrinkles instead of your aging and worry wrinkles.
♦ Stay within a consciousness of helping others and being kind and compassionate to everyone you meet, especially yourself.

What are some of your suggestions for avoiding isolation?

♦ Every day, do something nice for someone else, even if it is giving them a smile.
♦ Every morning, send love and compassion to those who are hurting or suffering either mentally, physically, financially, or spiritually.
♦ Find a group or organization that is helping others and get involved.
♦ Join the Attitudinal Healing Support Group at Whistlestop.

Are there parts of your new book, Aging With Attitude, that could be particularly helpful?

The Forgiveness Exercise, which begins with picturing the face of someone you have a negative feeling toward or a grievance against and say the following:

I forgive you … and I forgive myself.
I thank you … and I thank myself.
I love you … and I love myself.
And I release you … and I release myself.

The Aging With Attitude guidelines in chapter five are very helpful. We suggest taking one or two a day and imagining them becoming a part of your heart. Here are a few:

♦ Choose to no longer see value in holding on to guilt.
♦ Choose to make forgiving others and yourself as important as breathing.
♦ Let go of all your judgments. Start to believe that when you stop complaining about your age, and about what may be happening to your body, your day will be more happy and peace-filled.

What other advice do you have?

♦ Decide not to be a victim of the world or your circumstances.
♦ Commit to deciding that this is going to be the happiest and best day of your life, regardless of what is put on your plate or the state of your body.

Anything else you would like to say?

♦ Believe that happiness is part of our spiritual DNA and that we all deserve the right to be happy.
♦ Make sure you are no longer holding onto any grudges or attack thoughts against anyone else or yourself.
♦ Getting older does not have to be associated with fear, unhappiness, or the loss of inner peace. We can turn things around when we develop an attitude of forgiveness rather than fear. Visit their website at www.ahinternational.org.
On Connectedness: Speaking Kindness

BY SYLVIA BOORSTEIN

The bell ringer for the Salvation Army at the mall was smiling and wholeheartedly wished my daughter and me well as we stopped to talk. I commented on the fact that it had been raining earlier and was a particularly cold day for Marin, but he said he looked forward all year to this season because he got to wish so many people well. Our short exchange of good-mood greetings boosted my mood and my daughter and I thought we had probably boosted his spirits as well.

This is probably the most difficult time of the year to feel in a cheerful mood. It gets light late and dark early and the weather is cold. We’ve all just come through a very tense election period in which everyone — no matter who they were supporting — had their nerves more on edge than usual because people had strong feelings about what was happening. Being in the holiday season doesn’t make things necessarily better. Not everyone has a family to be with and not all families get along like the ones shown on the cover of magazines where everyone is happy and surrounded by abundance. This is a very good time to make yourself happier and everyone around you happier by making each moment of connection a pleasure.

I wonder what would happen if everyone decided we were in a contest to say kind things to each other at every opportunity. We could thank the checkout person at the market with a personal compliment. We could smile at the person across from me on the bus. We could hold some doors open for others to enter a building before me. I know people who try to say as many blessings as they can during a day as gratitude for being alive. I think that every moment of warm connection, in words or acts or smiles, is a blessing that means, “May you be well.” It makes you feel glad to be alive.

A psychotherapist and author, Sylvia Boorstein is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Marin.
Letter from Techie Nana

Dear Mia:

After 65 happy years of marriage, the last 12 years caring for your East Coast Grandfather (Alzheimer’s), you can imagine the sudden emptiness that was in my life. My dear one passed away in November, 2012 and Santa Claus left me my first iPad — a most amazing miracle — a month later. It has helped me so much with coping; I still miss him so much.

Some of my iPad joys so far:

E-MAIL: How quickly I can communicate with my children and grandchildren! I have discovered Jackie Lawson every occasion e-cards — so easy and such a delight. No searching the card shop for something appropriate, finding stamps, etc. They record all you have sent so that you don’t repeat the same video from year-to-year and tell you if it has been viewed.

BOOKS: My local public library has an app for the iPad that allows you to read samples of books that you can put on hold and digitally check out when they become available. No driving to the library and searching. There are also many other sources online for free eBooks.

PUZZLES and GAMES: Your Pop and I always loved “rainy day” jigsaw puzzles but usually managed to lose some pieces. That doesn’t happen with the iPad — you have several choices of difficulty and you can also create your own puzzles from your favorite picture.

And the games available are endless!

SHOPPING: My super market sends me current sales available and you can order for home delivery if desired. Amazon and endless others have just about anything you wish to deliver door-to-door.

QUESTIONS: Safari has the answer for all my curiosities!

DICTIONARY: Not only corrects my spelling while writing an email but there is also a voice that gives you the proper pronunciation of the word. Amazing.

I have only “scratched the surface” – it is truly a miracle. I think back many years to my youth when we were thrilled with the radio and also having a telephone.

One caution – I must remember to exercise. It is so easy to be mesmerized by this wonderful technology.

Hugs,

Nana

P.S. I forgot to mention the neat camera feature — you have the picture at once — no taking the negative to the drug store and waiting days for it to be developed and often being disappointed with the results. So much to learn and so little time.

Whistlestop offers a free computer lab to help seniors with any tech needs on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10am; see page 7 or call 415-456-9062 for more details.

Mia Edwards is Whistlestop’s Marketing and Communications Administrative Assistant and the granddaughter of the Techie Nana.
Seeking Valentine’s Day Cards

Whistlestop invites everyone to make homemade Valentine’s Day cards for Meals on Wheels recipients. Their eyes light up when they receive these cards!

Be creative, let your inner artist come out, and invite children you know to create the cards with you. Mail or deliver your sealed cards to Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael, 94901. Must arrive by Friday, Feb 9. Call 415-456-9062 for more details.

Back to the Future Luncheon

Thurs, Jan 19, 11:30am-1:30pm, Lunch; 12:15-1:15pm, Entertainment Fee: $8/$10

Celebrate a historic Cubs win with a grand slam, 80s inspired lunch in the Jackson Cafe with free music provided by Bread & Roses Presents. Purchase tickets at the front desk by Thurs, Jan 12 – they may sell out.

Poetry Writing

Tues, Jan 10; 10:45-11:45am; Fee: $5 Facilitator: Stephen Galani

Poetic forms, with an emphasis on memoir, will be discussed along with time to share, listen to, read, and discuss each others poems. Please bring a poem you have written or one of your favorite poems (maximum 40 lines). Sign up at the Front Desk.

Collage & Mixed Media

Wednesdays, starting Jan 11, 10:30am-12pm; Fee: $40/$45 for 4 weeks

Experiment with different textures, papers, mixed media applications and techniques to create your own story in a collage. Sign up at the Front Desk or call Anna at 415-456-9062, ext. 138.

Citizenship Weekly Tutoring

Wednesdays, starting Jan 11, 3:30-5pm; Fee: $35 for 8 sessions

Receive individual attention while you study and prepare for your citizenship interview and exam. Individual preparation of the N400 citizenship application provided. Sign up at the Front Desk or call Caroline at 415-454-0998.

Spring ESL

Mondays and Wednesdays, starting Jan 25-May 3; 2-3:30pm; Fee: $25

We offer ESL levels 75, 100, 150, and 250 with experienced teachers. All ages and levels welcome. Get $5 off your ESL classes if you become a Whistlestop member for only $10/year. Sign up before Jan 16 at the Front Desk or call Caroline at 415-454-0998.

Landlord Seminar

Tues, Jan 24; 2:30-4:30pm; No Fee; Sign up at Front Desk

Guest Speaker: Leslie Klor

Homeowners: Do you have an extra room in your house? Do you want to stay as long as possible in your own home? Learn how you can either charge rent for your room and earn extra income or get an exchange of services for the room with our support and no fee services.

Immigration Forum

Mon, Jan 30; 9am-12pm; No Fee

Facilitated by: Andrew Bartlett, Immigration Lawyer from Brazilian Alliance; Caroline Remer and Anna Ladyzhenskaya

This is an open, safe space to voice your fears and become more aware of the services offered to you in the community. Get your concerns and questions answered here; everyone is welcome. Call Caroline at 415-454-0998 to sign up.

Russian Social Group

Mondays, 12:30-1:45pm; No Fee

Gain meaningful connections in Marin County. Join this weekly Russian Social group to contribute to intellectual and social discussions and learn about community resources. Call Anna at 415-456-9062, ext. 138 for info.

Senior Circle

Wednesdays, 10-11:30am; No Fee; Volunteer Facilitators from Center for Attitudinal Healing

A drop-in, open support group for independent older men and women (55+), who give each other the gift of listening in a caring environment, which encourages mutual sharing of older adult experiences – the joys, concerns, and wisdom.

Ping Pong

Fridays, 2-4pm; Fee: $2/$4

Instructor: Vivian Malcy

Ping pong is a lively game that offers a great social outlet for anyone 60+, each week. Stimulate the brain, improve agility and flexibility, and make new friends.

Movie Times at Whistlestop

Select Fridays, Jan 6 & 13; 2-4pm; No Fee; Bring a friend and view together.

January Theme: Science Fiction/Fantasy. Back to the Future; Back to the Future 2
**TECHNOLOGY JAN – FEB 2017**
Pre-registration and payment required. 415-456-9062

**iPad/iPhone Basics 2: Essential Built-in Applications**
Tuesdays, Jan 10 & Jan 17 (2 classes)
10am-12pm
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people

Need a refresher for using your iPhone or iPad? Are you using the latest iOS 10.0? This course will review some of the basics and show you how to get the most out of your built-in apps including: Photo editing, iCloud, Calendar, Siri, E-mail, Texting, FaceTime, iHealth, Maps/GPS, and more! Learn steps to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize your apps for easy access. Don’t forget to bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class (For Apple devices only).

**iPad/iPhone: What’s New in iOS 10?**
Tuesdays, Jan 24 & Jan 31 (2 classes)
10am-12pm
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people

Have you upgraded? For those who have already taken the Basics classes, this class is for you. Come and find out what has changed and how to use the new features. We will show you new Siri functions, new map features, and fun new tools to improve text messaging. Also, we will show you what a widget is and how the touch ID system has been improved to help you lock and unlock your phone. Learn about new photo organization tools that let you group photos together for easier access. This class is a great refresher for those who have used the iPhone/iPad for a little while and want to get up to speed on the new features. Don’t forget to bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class (For Apple devices only).

**iPad/iPhone Basics 3: World of Applications**
Tuesdays, February 14 & February 21
(2 classes) 10am-12pm
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people

iPad and iPhone users, come discover the incredible world of applications! In this two week course, we will focus on finding helpful, fun and interesting applications that you can download. Come discover how to use apps for shopping, brain training, fitness, internet radio, stock trackers, games, translation, travel, and much more! Don’t forget to bring your fully charged device, Apple ID, and Apple password to class (For Apple devices only).

**Smart Phone/Tablet Basics 2: (Android Users Only)**
Thursdays, February 16 & February 23
(2 classes) 10am-12pm
Fee: $48 Maximum 8 people

This course will review some of the basics of using your device and also show you a few of the apps that come built in that you might have missed or be afraid to try. Get the most out of your built-in apps including Photo editing, storing and retrieving photos, Calendar, E-mail, Texting, Maps/GPS, and more! Learn the steps to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize your apps for easy access. A perfect sequel to the Using Android Smart Phone & Tablets Basics 1 course. For all Android devices including: Samsung, LG, Motorola, Nokia.Bring your fully charged device.

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

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

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

**TIME**  **CLASS**  **INFO**  **FEE**

**MONDAYS**

9:30AM-10:30AM  |  Zumba Gold  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
10:00AM-1:00PM |  Therapeutic Massage  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
10:00AM-NOON  |  Computer Lab  |  Drop-in  |  N  
10:30AM-NOON  |  German Language Social Circle  |  Drop-in  |  N  
10:30AM-1:30PM |  Persian Social Group  |  415-472-6020 |  N  
12:30PM-1:45PM |  Russian Social Group  |  Drop-in  |  N  
2:00PM-3:30PM  |  ESL Classes  |  415-454-0998 |  Y  

**TUESDAYS**

9:30AM-10:30AM |  Whistlesizers  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
10:00AM-NOON  |  Mah Jongg  |  Drop-in  |  N  
10:30AM-1:30PM  |  Manicures  |  415-456-9062 |  N  
11:30AM-12:30PM |  French Class  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
1:00PM-2:00PM  |  French Social Group  |  Drop-in  |  N  
1:00PM-3:00PM  |  Spanish Class  |  415-454-0998 |  Y  

**WEDNESDAYS**

10:00AM-11:30AM |  Senior Circle  |  Drop-in  |  N  
10:00AM-NOON  |  Computer Lab  |  Drop-in  |  N  
10:00AM-1:00PM |  Therapeutic Massage  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
10:30AM-NOON  |  Collage & Mixed Media  |  1/11-2/1  |  Y  
10:30AM-1:30PM  |  Persian Social Group  |  415-472-6020 |  N  
11:00AM-1:00PM |  Multicultural Sr Program-Pickledew  |  Drop-in  |  N  
12:00PM-1:00PM  |  Beg/Intermediate Ukulele  |  Drop-in  1/4, 2/8  |  Y  
1:00PM-2:00PM  |  English Pronunciation/Conversation  |  415-454-0098  |  Y  
2:00PM-3:30PM  |  ESL Classes  |  415-454-0998 |  Y  
1:00PM-3:00PM  |  Knitting/Crocheting Group  |  Drop-in  |  N  
3:30PM-5:00PM  |  Citizenship Weekly Tutoring  |  415-454-0998 |  Y  

**THURSDAYS**

9:30AM-10:30AM  |  Zumba Gold  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
10:00AM-1:00PM |  Therapeutic Massage  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
11:00AM-NOON  |  Whistlesizers  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
1:00PM-2:20PM  |  Italian 3  |  1/5-2/23  |  Y  
2:30PM-3:30PM  |  Italian 2  |  1/5-2/23  |  Y  
2:45PM-3:45PM  |  Balance Class  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
3:50PM-4:50PM  |  Drumming Circle  |  Drop-in  |  N  

**FRIDAYS**

9:30AM-11:00AM  |  Weekly B.P./Cholesterol Checks  |  Drop-in  |  N  
11:00AM-NOON  |  Brown Bag Pantry  |  415-456-9067  |  N  
1:00PM-1:30PM  |  Hispanic Social Group  |  415-454-0998  |  N  
1:30PM-3:00PM  |  ACASA  |  Drop-in  |  N  
1:30PM-3:00PM  |  Spanish Club  |  Drop-in  |  N  
2:00PM-4:00PM  |  Movie Time: Fantasy/Science Fiction  |  Drop-in; 1/6 & 1/13  |  N  
2:00PM-4:00PM  |  Ping-Pong  |  Drop-in  |  Y  
3:00PM-4:00PM  |  Yoga with Kelly  |  Drop-in  |  Y  

* Albert J. Boro Community Center
VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

David Ripp

David Ripp, our volunteer of the month, goes the extra mile, which he rides between 350 to 400 miles each week. Weather permitting, David rides one of his bikes on Mondays and Wednesdays from his home in San Rafael to Whistlestop. He is a volunteer in the computer open lab, where people can bring their laptops and get help with technical issues or drop in to use the computers that are set up. The computer lab now has both Windows 10 and Windows 7 computers.

David loves competitive bike racing, which he does whenever he can throughout Northern California. Before he took up biking, he was a runner. He did that for over 40 years until he began having trouble with his knee. At that point he transitioned to bikes and is still as competitive as he was before.

David is a Marin native who went to San Rafael High School and then to UC Berkeley. He received his undergraduate degree in Archeology and his graduate degree in Library and Information Science. After graduation, he worked for more than 30 years at Stanford University and the Research Libraries Group writing academic library programs.

After retiring a few years ago, he began volunteering. He saw a notice in the newspaper that Whistlestop needed some help and has been volunteering in the computer lab two days a week for the past two years. He also volunteers as a school tutor and helps Marin Village seniors with computer issues. David’s daughter recently graduated from medical school.

David finds working with seniors and teaching them how to use technology to be extremely rewarding. Technology helps keep people informed and connected to the outside world, to their family and friends. The computer lab is a fantastic resource and learning some of the programs like email and Facebook can reduce the feeling of isolation that many older adults experience. Many people who have not grown up with technology are intimidated and afraid to start something they don’t understand very well. When they give it a try, it is usually so much easier than they thought it would be and so rewarding. David would like to teach people online bridge. Bridge is a great game for the mind and online bridge can be safely played from home with friends or strangers.

Anyone interested in joining an online bridge class or in learning more about volunteer opportunities, contact Laurie at: volunteer@whistlestop.org or 415-456-9067.

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Manicures with Christie
Tues, 10am-1pm; No Fee; by appointment only; Call 415-456-9062
Six appointments each week are honored in the order received. Call and leave a message either Monday after business hours or Tuesday before 8:30am.

Therapeutic Massage by Rabel
Mon, Wed, & Thurs, 10am-3pm; Fee: $1 per minute
First come/first served. No appointment necessary. Therapeutic massages are performed by a Certified Massage Therapist.

Drumming Circle
Thurs, 3:50-4:50pm; No Fee; Everyone welcome
Create a sense of connectedness with others and enhance your overall well-being & health through each drumbeat. Please bring your own hand drum and/or percussion instruments.

Relaxation & Movement
Fri, Jan 27; 4-5pm; Fee: $5
Featuring: Juan and Janine of Savamantra and their friend Rob. They will guide you through gentle movements while singing songs to foster a greater sense of joy, peace, and connectedness.

Weekly Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Screenings, and Medication Reviews
Fri, 9:30-11am; No Fee
Weekly blood pressure and cholesterol screenings and medication reviews offered by Bright Star Care a local agency providing home care, caregivers, and medical staffing solutions to families and businesses in Marin, 415-332-3300.

Medicare 101 & SCAN Meetings:
Can a Medicare Advantage Plan Save you Money?
Wed, Jan 11 (Medicare 101); 10am-12pm; No Fee/Sign up: 415-456-9062

HIGHLIGHTED SUPPORT SERVICES

Need Assistance? Multicultural Consultants Can Help
By appointment only: Caroline Remer (bilingual Spanish), 415-454-0998; Anna Ladyzhenskaya (bilingual Russian), 415-456-9062 ext. 138; Mrs. Mehrbanoo Esmaili (Farsi), 415-472-6020.
Whistlestop offers information, resources and referrals to people of all cultures. No fee for consultations; small fee for translations.

Free Legal Consultation
Most Thursdays of each month at Whistlestop and the Mill Valley Community Center. By appointment only: 415-459-6700
Legal Aid of Marin provides free 30-minute legal consultations for Marin County residents who are 60+. 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.

Victim Witness Assistance
2nd & 4th Thurs, 9am-12pm; No Fee
Advocate Yolanda Johnson from the District Attorney’s office answers questions, provides information, and connects you to resources. More information? Call 415-473-6450.

Homeshare and Telephone Reassurance Programs
Call for appointment: Leslie Klor: 415-456-9068; No Fee
Homeshare is a free referral service for older adults seeking or offering housing. Telephone Reassurance is trained volunteers calling isolated older adults who need connections.
Sitting on the deck of my condo is a large green plastic container. I bought it at Target for $4.44. It was on sale. I never buy anything that is not on sale. It holds all my gardening supplies – extra potting soil, fertilizer, manure, rocks for the bottom of my pots – for I am a container gardener. After filling my pots in preparation for a visit with my No Name Writers Club, I neglected to put a rock on top of my container lid so it would not blow away. And sure enough, the next windy day, it did blow down the hill.

I told my husband, Paul Tandler, that the next time I was at Target, I would pick up a new container as the lid from the old one was down the hill – within sight, but about 50 yards away. Mr. T. said he would ask our trash collectors to pick it up on Monday. Monday came and went. Another Monday came and went. It rained. I now had potting mud. And fertilizer mud. And manure mud. Mr. T. said, “There’s a man coming to give us a bid for some grounds cleanup and I’ll have him pick up your container lid.” I did my errands and when I came home and looked around, there was the lid, still at the bottom of the hill in pristine condition.

I’m a very independent person, I thought. I’ll get it myself. I picked up two walking sticks and headed down the hill. Made it halfway down a rocky path and suddenly realized there was no way I could get up or down, so I slid the last 20 yards on my butt. I grabbed the container lid and looked up and knew there was no way I was going to get back up. It looked like Mt. Tam. I started walking west to my neighbor’s, thinking the ground might be gentler, but it was a mass of slippery leaves and rocks and I fell several times. It was winter in June in Tiburon and I was wearing a flimsy cotton robe, which had been washed a thousand times.

I wedged myself between two tree trunks and screamed, “Paul, help, help, Paul!” I tried throwing rocks at his bedroom window. After what seemed like an hour, Mr. T. came out on the deck. “Where are you? What are you doing down there?” he yelled.

If I had had my small, pearl-handled revolver, I would have shot him. “Call the Tiburon Fire Department,” I shouted. I did not hear sirens. Did they get a call from someone more important? Did they stop for coffee and a Danish? Finally, six of the handsomest men I have ever seen appeared. They gingerly made their way down the hill. Each was carrying enough baggage to survive six weeks in the wilderness. “Where are your St. Bernard dogs with whiskey?” I said. Mr. T. yelled from the deck, “Enough with your humor, Iris.” One of the men scouted a path around the condo to the east and they carefully led me out. I was taken to the ER for a series of Xrays and exams to head, neck and back. I was sent home five hours later, battered and bruised. I am one tough old bird. Mr. T. is not speaking to me. The two walking sticks and the container lid remain at the bottom of the hill.

Iris Tandler graduated from University of Missouri School of Journalism, was editor of her high school newspaper and has been writing ever since. She and her husband, Paul, live in Marin.
Whistlestop Wins Nonprofit Leadership Award

Whistlestop’s CEO Joe O’Hehir was one of several leaders to be presented with the 2016 North Bay Business Journal Nonprofit Leadership awards.

Beth Drummey, VP of Marketing and Community Relations, for Bank of Marin, nominated Whistlestop.

She said, “Since 1954, Whistlestop has been promoting independence, well-being and quality of life for older adults and people living with disabilities in Marin County. Each year they connect over 7,500 people with many essential services including transportation, nutrition and the social connections needed to support independence and keep them vibrant.”

O’Hehir said, “We at Whistlestop are honored to have received this award. We are in such good company with the other recipients. We especially appreciate the fact that the North Bay Business Journal acknowledged our leadership in providing myriad services for older adults in Marin County, which we have been doing for sixty-one years.”

Drummey added, “Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center in San Rafael is a welcoming hub where older adults can make new friends, find support and stay engaged through gatherings, educational classes and more.

“With many local agency partners including Marin Access, Marin Transit, and Golden Gate Transit, Whistlestop’s 100+ buses provide close to 400,000 rides a year throughout Marin, Sonoma and San Francisco counties. Through their CarePool program, volunteer drivers help older adults and people with disabilities get to medical appointments and the grocery store. Whistlestop has even been known to assist other local non-profits in providing transportation to their clients.

“Whistlestop has also been working with the City of San Rafael and BioMarin to bring a new active-aging center with senior housing to San Rafael.”
Whistlestop Is ‘Friendly, Lifesaving’

By JOHN BOWMAN

“An oasis.”

“Like going home.”

These were typical responses Whistlestop received in a survey that sought feedback from the Marin senior community.

Describe Whistlestop from your own perspective, in one sentence:

–“People working together to make the lives of other people less stressful and more meaningful.”

–“It provides necessary transportation to the disabled and elderly who otherwise would be stranded.”

–“The most important venue for seniors in Marin.”

What is the greatest benefit that Whistlestop provides?

–“I believe Whistlestop gives hope and support to those who are struggling.”

–“It’s a place to feel at home and get uplifted with its many offerings.”

–“Independence. Meeting new people and going to places I’ve never been before.”

If you were to describe Whistlestop to someone who wasn’t familiar with the organization, what words or phrases would you include?

–“Amazing, lifesaving, dedicated, determined, benevolent.”

–“Friendly, accepting, available, wisdom, opportunities, education, socializing.”

–“A literal lifesaver for some.”

–“Heartwarming.”

–“You must visit this place.”

These results are from Survey Monkey, an online survey development tool.

Whistlestop Can Benefit from Subaru Sales

Thinking about buying a new car? Whistlestop was selected by Ed Rossi, owner of Marin Mazda Subaru in San Rafael, as their Home Town Charity this fall. What this means is that any buyer of a new Subaru, between Nov. 17 and Jan. 2, 2017, can select Whistlestop to receive a $250 donation from Subaru of America. Please spread the word!

Whistlestop is Grateful for the Support of Local Businesses, Organizations

Thank you for the generosity of the following groups and businesses for their support of Whistlestop programs this holiday season:

Marin Foundation—Driftwood Unit
BoxTrot Gifts • Equator Coffee & Teas • Home Instead Senior Care
Mission San Rafael Rotary • Rotary Club of San Rafael Harbor
San Rafael Las Gallinas Lions Club

Thank you to the hundreds of community members who made holiday cards for our Meals on Wheels and Meals of Marin recipients.
Appreciation for Legacy Donors

By SERENA D’ARCY FISHER

In August 2015, Whistlestop was named as one of the beneficiaries of the estate of John Zimmer. Not much was known about John and his late wife, Janet “Jan” Willard Zimmer, but John’s second cousin Ruth Vallejo kindly filled in the gaps.

John Edward Zimmer was born in 1929 in Lakewood, Ohio. He enlisted in the U.S. Army, and was trained as a paratrooper in the 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment. Upon discharge, he attended the Ringling School of Art in Sarasota Florida, where he met and fell in love with Jan Willard, who later became his wife.

The Zimmers lived in Mill Valley on the side of Mt. Tam. Jan was a successful commercial artist; John made his career with the City of San Francisco Housing Department. Both enjoyed world travel, art, and spending time with their beloved cats. John volunteered to play chess with local prison inmates, and they both devotedly cared for their aging mothers who lived nearby. Jan died in 2011 and John in 2015. Both wished to continue giving after their deaths.

The Zimmer’s gift to Whistlestop was made in two parts: John and Jan created the Zimmer Charitable Remainder Unitrust in March 1999 through the Bank of Marin. As donors and trustees, the Zimmers were the income beneficiaries during their lifetime. Upon Jan’s death, John became the surviving income beneficiary until he passed on, when Whistlestop received the remainder of the trust. John also made a generous bequest to Whistlestop through the Zimmer Family Trust. The Trust included assets from his late wife as well as his own. The proceeds from the sale of their dream home on Mt. Tam were also part of their trust.

Half of John’s bequest was designated to support Whistlestop’s Meals-on-Wheels, a program that provides over 75,000 meals to homebound, disabled, elderly, and often impoverished Marin residents each year. The other half of John’s bequest was designated to go toward Whistlestop’s General Fund.

We are grateful to John and Jan Zimmer for their generous legacy gift in support of Whistlestop’s services. If you would like to know how you could make a planned gift to Whistlestop, please call, Serena D’Arcy-Fisher at 415-456-9062.