Pg 3: Multicultural Holiday Traditions

Pg 4: A Grandmother’s Perspective on a Cultural Milestone

Pg 7: Whistlestop Holiday Card Drive is Back!
Celebrating Whistlestop’s Staff and Volunteers

By John Bowman

What I celebrate when I go to Whistlestop are all the great people – staff and volunteers – who work there to help make lives better for every person who walks through those doors.”

Michael Pritchard has been to Whistlestop several times. He is a popular comedian and motivational speaker who has been featured on CNN, NBC’s “The Today Show,” “The Tonight Show,” CBS “Sunday Morning” with Charles Kuralt, Time and People magazine. His seven educational series for PBS and distribution has been seen by millions and focuses on youth guidance in the areas of violence prevention.

Despite this acclaim, Michael says Whistlestop is one of his favorite gigs. He will be appearing at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center on December 10 with his Magical Mystical Elf Tour. He brings a spirit of celebration with his programs. He works a lot with young people but has a strong interest in helping older adults as well. He said social isolation is one of the most serious ills of our society today. “That’s why Whistlestop is so important to so many people.”

Michael has headlined with a number of big name performers, including comedian and actor Robin Williams, who was one of Michael’s closest professional and personal friends. Robin died in 2014. Today, Michael and Robin’s widow, Susan, work together to raise funds and awareness for the American Brain Foundation, particularly for Lewy Body Dementia, which led to Robin’s death. “The more we learn about this disease the better it is for all of us. With early intervention and proper meds, we can do what I call “solutioneering.”

Michael also is a prolific and entertaining storyteller. One of his favorites is about a man who stood up at a Sober Fest event in Boonville, where Michael was a featured performer. It was a drug- and alcohol-free event. “I invited people to tell their stories,” Michael related. “This man, a giant about six-foot-five and close to 300 pounds, stood up and disclosed how lonely he had been for some time. He said that he had been self-isolating and the more he did, the lonelier he got. He was depressed and drinking too much and it was a vicious cycle. Finally, he decided to stop the pattern. He took himself out on a date while sober and had a great time and the next day he woke up sober and felt better than he had in a long time.” The man told the audience that Michael had inspired him to continue his new way of living.

Michael is looking forward to performing at Whistlestop. “They build a sense of community and connection. I’ve performed there before, making sure people know they are acknowledged, respected and loved. People who go to Whistlestop aren’t just sitting there. They are engaged. They get connected.”
I grew up in Bavaria in southern Germany. The magic of the Christmas season began on Dec. 6, St. Nikolaus Day. On St. Nikolaus Eve, St. Nikolaus and Knecht Ruprecht visited children’s homes. If children behaved all year, St. Nikolaus would arrive with praise and presents. His henchman Knecht Ruprecht, a fearsome fellow, could be traced back to Pagan times; he would bestow moral sermons upon us. What we did not know was that this annual charade was staged, and the two were friends, family or a hired professional.

The real St. Nikolaus was a Bishop and a patron saint in the Russian Orthodox Church centuries ago. He was a compassionate man who helped the poor and was especially fond of children. Disguised as a peasant, he would roam the streets at night tossing gold coins through the windows and leaving food for the needy children.

We were too excited to eat on St. Nikolaus Eve and as night fell we could hear the faint rattling of Knecht Ruprecht’s dreaded chains. As he got closer, we drove to the farthest corner in a squirming huddle. When we heard the rap on the door we would look at our parents for reassurance.

When Grandfather opened the door, we saw St. Nikolaus dressed in his dazzling Bishop’s regalia of blue silk and gold brocade, a matching mitre on his head. For a moment, there was complete silence. We shook his hand with a curtsy, steering clear of Knecht Ruprecht, who was brandishing his switch of willow branches. He wore a shaggy sheepskin coat and oversized fur cap. He carried a large burlap sack.

Then the moment of truth: St. Nikolaus opened his golden book and fixing each of us with his friendly but solemn gaze as he read off a litany of our virtues, nodding his approval. Knecht Ruprecht fidgeted with his chains and St. Nikolaus turned to him. “Maybe I should have a quick look at the other book,” he said, “just to make sure I didn’t overlook anything.” He reached deep inside his sack and pulled out the ominous black book. St. Nikolaus leafed through it and smiled at us as we let out a collective, audible sigh of relief. Knecht Ruprecht emitted grunts of displeasure at having been denied his fun with the whip. After our solemn promise to be good in the coming year, St. Nikolaus waved to us from the door and strode out with regal dignity.

Only when we heard the chains receding down the street did we venture into the hallway to see what St. Nikolaus had left for us.

There were platters heaped with chocolates, gingerbread, marzipan, oranges, nuts and dates, and giggling and feeling bold again, we made jokes about silly old Knecht Ruprecht, glad that we were off the hook for another year.

German Social Group
Other members of the German Social Group wanted to include their childhood memories. The focus of the celebration on Dec. 24 was religious. Christkind, a young blonde girl with wings like an angel, who had Christ-like qualities, would deliver gifts. Since most members grew up in Post-War Germany, presents were hand-me-downs or homemade.

Persian Social Group
Mrs. Esmaili, Persian Social
Continued on page 11
Celebrating Her Grandkids
And Their B’nai Mitzvah

By Penny Markrack

I have had so much to celebrate this year. Our biggest family celebration was a B’nai Mitzvah (the plural term for a Bar Mitzvah and a Bat Mitzvah) for my grandson, Nathan, and granddaughter, Kailyn, in June.

The event was held at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael. A B’nai Mitzvah for a boy and a girl is an event that celebrates Jewish children becoming adults. Kailyn and Nathan spent two years getting ready for this day. They learned Hebrew and read from the Torah in Hebrew. The Torah can refer to all of traditional learning, but it usually refers to Torah ‘she’bi’ktav,’ or Pentateuch, sometimes referred to as The Five Books of Moses.

Kailyn is the daughter of my daughter, Jill Story, and Nathan is the son of my son, Gary Markrack.

They each delivered a speech to the congregation explaining what their Torah portion meant to them and how it related to their lives. This is a very happy celebration for family and friends. To say I was proud of my grandchildren would be an understatement! They worked hard to get to this day and they did a fabulous job.

As part of the ceremony, there comes a time when the Torah is lifted up and prayers are said and songs sung. The Torah is then handed to the grandparents who then pass to the parents and then the child. I, as well as the grandchildren’s grandfather, Lee Markrack, held the Torah, passed it to one of our children and then raced around to be on the other side to do the same for the other B’nai Mitzvah grandchild. For me this was a very meaningful experience. I felt so connected to the Torah and the knowledge of passing it to my family.

Penny was a volunteer at the Jackson Café and now is a Whistlestop staff member who you will often see at the receptionist desk.

Orange Vinaigrette

Pre-made dressings are often filled with sugar and/or salt. Here is a quick and easy dressing that you can whip up for your salads. Simply whisk together the following ingredients, or pour into a mason jar and give it a good shake. Save any excess in the jar and store in your refrigerator.

Ingredients:
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 8 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tsp salt

Keep your eye out for other fun recipes, or come join the Nutrition Bites class at Whistlestop!

Contact me to discuss your nutritional needs or concerns: sosotio@whistlestop.org.
To say Sandy Haevernick is a people person is an understatement. Sandy loves people and it is apparent when you walk into the Jackson Café on a day she is volunteering. Her smile lights up the room. Andy Guralas, a regular diner at the Café, said, “Seeing Sandy is one of the highlights of my day. Her graciousness and kindness make me feel welcome. She is the epitome of what Whistlestop stands for.”

As a child, Sandy moved with her family from Bend, Oregon and later to Concord, California. After graduation she studied cosmetology and worked in hair salons for 22 years.

Sandy’s first love is her family. She and her husband Tim met at church when she was in the sixth grade and they later reunited. They have two sons, Josh, a lawyer in San Francisco, and Gage, a Financial Advisor in Walnut Creek.

Sandy and Tim purchased a Mill Valley veterinary clinic after they married and moved to Marin. She worked on and off in the clinic.

Fully retired in 2014, she decided she wanted to give something back. Sandy came to Whistlestop for an interview thinking she wanted to deliver Meals on Wheels. We realized how much she enjoyed working with people and she decided to volunteer in the Jackson Café.

What she thought was an opportunity for her to give back to the community has turned into something so much more. She has developed close friendships with the staff, diners and the other volunteers, which added another dimension to her life that she didn’t expect. Volunteering at Whistlestop makes her unafraid of growing older.

Sandy and Tim are avid bike riders and love visiting museums and churches all over the world. Their next trips will be to Thailand, Spain and Russia.

To learn more about volunteering at the Jackson Café or other volunteer opportunities, contact Laurie: volunteer@whistlestop.org or 415-456-9067.
KEEP LEARNING AND HAVE FUN AT WHISTLESTOP

The following is a sampling of the events, workshops and classes at Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center. For a full list of classes, please see page 8. Visit us at whistlenest.org. For more information or to register, call 415-456-9062, ext. 100 or 101. Many of our classes are free or offered at a reduced rate, but donations are always welcome. Annual Membership is $20.

ACTIVE AGING CENTER HOLIDAY CLOSURES
Mon, Dec 24 Closes at 3pm
Tues, Dec 25 Closed
Mon, Dec 31 Closes at 3pm
Tues, Jan 1 Closed

SPECIAL EVENTS

Steve Considers NEW TIME
Wed, Nov 28, Dec 5 & 19; 11am-noon; No fee
Come join us for a cup of coffee and a lively, engaging take on the headlines. Our facilitator, Steve Gordon, will guide the group through an entertaining and intelligent discussion of current affairs and major national and international news events.

Rollin’ Root Mobile Farmers Market
Thursdays, rain or shine; 9-10am
The Agricultural Institute of Marin’s mobile Farmers Market visits Whistlestop every Thursday, rain or shine. Purchase local seasonal fruits and vegetables with ease.

Senior Housing Info Session
Tues, Dec 4; 11am-noon; No fee; Registration suggested
415-456-9068
Jen Arent, director of Covia’s Home Match Marin, will discuss senior housing options in Marin. Information about Covia’s free Home Match Marin’s comprehensive home sharing services to older adults and the Marin Housing Authority’s subsidized and low-cost housing will be shared.

Evaluación de memoria para hispanohablantes en asociación con Senior Access
Miércoles 5 de diciembre; Del mediodía a las 3pm; Sin cargo; Cita necesaria
Preocupado por la pérdida de memoria o simplemente desea tener una prueba de detección de referencia. Llame hoy para programar una cita gratuita de 45 minutos. La evaluación de la memoria no es diagnóstica, pero es una oportunidad para hablar en privado y de manera confidencial con un evaluador profesional. Limitado a 10 nombramientos.

Holiday Tree Decorating & Singers Marin Concert
Wed, Dec 5; 11am-noon; No fee; Drop-in
Come deck the trees at our community tree-trimming party with live music by Singers Marin led by Jan Pedersen Schiff and accompanied by Irene Jacobson. If you can’t join us, attend Singers Marin’s Annual Tis the Season ... Sing Joy! Concert on December 16, 4-6pm at the Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium.

Holiday Trifecta of Fun: Gift Shop Sale, Music & Hula
Thurs, Dec 6; 11am-2pm; Drop-in
Start your holiday shopping early at our Gift Shop Sale while you listen to music by the Dan & Crystal Duo. At noon, eat lunch in the Jackson Café and see our new Hula teacher demonstrate the Art of Hula accompanied by Sandy Bailey, our ukulele instructor. Charlotte will start teaching Hula on Wednesday, Jan 9.

Nutrition Bites Workshop
Thurs, Dec 6 & 20; 3-4 pm; No fee; Registration required
Join Sophia Osotio, Whistlestop’s Nutrition Program Coordinator, and learn how to improve your health by modifying your diet. Discussion topics: pre-diabetes, hypertension, and weight loss. Snacks and recipes provided.

Social Breakfast with Special Visit from Santa Claus
Fri, Dec 7; 9-10am; $3/6; Drop-in
Ho, ho, ho! Get your cameras ready; Santa will be stopping by our tasty, hot breakfast buffet.

Magical Mystical Elf Tour with Michael Pritchard
Mon, Dec 10; 11am-noon; $5/10; Registration required
(Event will sell out quickly) “You don’t stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing,” says Emmy-nominated comedian and motivational speaker Michael Pritchard. When is the last time you laughed so hard your belly hurt? Michael is known as the happy guy with the warm heart. Make a reservation today and join the fun!

Create a Holiday Wreath
Tues, Dec 11; 10:30-11:45am; $5/7; Registration required
Create a small wreath for the holidays. We’ll provide the greenery, ribbons and inspiration. Please bring a pair of gardening gloves to handle the greenery.

Healthy Aging Workshop
Thurs, Dec 20; 12:30-2pm; No fee; Registration required
Are you interested in evaluating and improving your health? Join Wells Whitney, Board Member of the Buck Institute, for a presentation of his healthy aging scorecard. Dr. Whitney will help you evaluate and identify the areas where you can improve your health and your life.

SNEAK PEEK OF NEW CLASSES FOR 2019

Age Reversing Essentrics
NEW TIME
Fridays starting Jan 11; 9:15-10:15am; $6/8; Drop-in
Slow paced class with relaxed movement to improve your mobility, strength and balance. Instructor: Elizabeth Lynn

Tai Chi NEW TIME
Mon, 11am-noon; (no time off during the holidays; class will meet Mon, Dec 24 & Dec 31, as well as all Mondays); $8/10; Drop-in
Try something new. David Mac Lam will be teaching Tai Chi over the holidays.

Capoeira NEW in partnership with Abada Capoeira Marin
Wed, Jan 9; 3-4pm; $8/10; Registration suggested
Capoeira begins with a gentle warm up, followed by a series of acrobatic, martial art movements, for individuals and partners, building strength, balance and agility. These movements are led by the rhythm on the berimbau, Capoeira’s lead instrument.

MARIAN COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING MONTHLY MEETING

WHEN: Thurs, Dec. 6
10am – 12:30pm
WHERE: Marin Valley Mobile Country Club
TOPIC: Legislative Update for 2019
SPEAKER: CA Senator Mike McGuire
MAKE PERSONALIZED HOLIDAY CARDS FOR HOMEBOUND OLDER ADULTS IN MARIN!

Every year, Marin residents create personalized holiday cards for homebound people over 60 who receive Meals on Wheels or Whistlestop Nourish meal deliveries. Please consider gathering friends or family and creating some cards for the special tradition. We need thousands of cards!

All cards should be handmade and non-denominational, in unsealed envelopes addressed to: Dear Neighbor/Friend.

December Holiday Cards are due on Mon, Dec 3

Valentine’s Day Holiday Cards are due on Mon, Jan 29

Please drop cards off at Whistlestop, 930 Tamalpais Ave., San Rafael

Questions? Contact Sue, 415-456-9062, ext. 102 or programs@whistlestop.org

A Touch of Hula: Beginning Hula NEW

Wed, Jan 9-Jan 30; 2-3pm; $32/36; Registration

Charlotte Kobayashi has been dancing for over 50 years! She will be teaching a beginning Hula Class where you will learn the history, evolution and appreciation of Hula with five basic steps and two modern hula dances.

Bi-Weekly Blood Pressure, Cholesterol Screenings, & Meds Reviews

Fri, Dec 14 & 28; 10:30am-noon; No fee

Bi-weekly blood pressure checks, cholesterol screenings, and medication reviews offered by BrightStar Care. BrightStar is a local agency providing home care, caregivers, and medical staffing solutions to families and businesses in Marin.

Free Legal Consultation

Thurs, Dec 6, 13 & 20; by appointment only; call 415-459-6700

Legal Aid of Marin provides free 30-minute legal consultations for Marin County residents who are 60+. Local volunteer lawyers offer general advice, explain legal options and rights, and recommend referrals to attorneys who have expertise in your particular area of concern.

Covia’s Social Call Program (NEW)

Are you an older adult or a homebound or disabled individual who lives alone? Register today for free, reassuring calls three mornings a week to say, “Good morning” and check in with you. Call 877-797-7299.

SF Marin Food Bank’s Monthly Food Box for older adults.

Dec 19; 9:30am-12:30pm; Drop-in

The SF-Marin Food Bank operates the Supplemental Food Program, providing a monthly box of quality U.S. Dept. of Agriculture food to low income older adults. To register, bring an ID, proof of income, and proof of residency and one of the Food Bank specialists will determine your eligibility.

CalFresh (eligibility & application assistance)

Fri, Dec 7 & Dec 21; 10am-noon; No fee; Call CalFresh/SF Marin Food Bank for assistance: 415-697-7411

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, CalFresh, provides qualified applicants with an EBT card to use at participating grocery stores and farmers' markets.

SF-Marin Food Bank’s Monthly Food Box for older adults.

Dec 19; 9:30am-12:30pm; Drop-in

The SF-Marin Food Bank operates the Supplemental Food Program, providing a monthly box of quality U.S. Dept. of Agriculture food to low income older adults. To register, bring an ID, proof of income, and proof of residency and one of the Food Bank specialists will determine your eligibility.

PARKWOOD HOME

Light Housekeeping & Laundry
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Medication Reminders
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Help with Daily Grooming
Bathing & Toileting Assistance
Help with Ambulation

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DECEMBER 2018 WHISTLESTOP EXPRESS
### COMPUTER CLASSES
**November & December 2018**

Pre-registration & payment required: 415-456-9062

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**iPad/iPhone Basics 1: Getting to Know Your Device**
*Tuesdays, Dec 4 & 11, 10am-Noon (2 classes)*

**Fee:** $48 Maximum 8 people

In this two-week course, you’ll learn how to make calls, send emails, send texts, download music and add applications. Each session provides one-on-one help and comes with instructional handouts. (Bring your charged-up Apple device to class.)

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**NEW! Learn to Make a Photobook**
*Tuesday, Jan 8, 10am-Noon (1 class)*

**Fee:** $35 Maximum 8 people

Learn how to store and organize your photos into books or prints to preserve your memories. Get hands-on practice using photo book software. Get tips for selecting photos, layout techniques, and simple photo editing. Take away several pages of your book. Bring your laptop (Windows or Mac) or use one of ours. Bring photos on a thumb drive. This is a great follow-up to the Managing Your Photos class, but that is not a prerequisite!

---

**Android Basics 2: Maps, Photos, Apps & More**
*Tuesdays, Jan 15 & 22, 10am-Noon (2 classes)*

**Fee:** $48 Maximum 8 people

This course will review some of the basics of using your device and show you some of the apps that come built in that you might have missed, including photo editing, storing and retrieving photos, calendar, email, texting, and maps/GPS. Learn how to find and install new apps, and how to update, delete and organize them. (For Androids including Samsung, LG, Motorola, Nokia)

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**ONGOING**

Open Lab | No Fee
*Every Monday and Wednesday, 10am-Noon*

Use our Apple and PC computers to access the Internet. Volunteers are available for advice on problems with your laptops and tablets.

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### WHISTLESTOP WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Please view our most recent class schedule at [www.whistlestop.org/classes/calendar/](http://www.whistlestop.org/classes/calendar/) or call 415-456-9062 x100 or 101 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 Gold</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$6/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00AM–NOON</td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM-NOON</td>
<td>German Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM-NOON</td>
<td>Persian Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00AM-NOON</td>
<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45PM-1:45PM</td>
<td>Age Reversing Essentrics</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$6/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30PM-1:45PM</td>
<td>Russian Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00PM-3:30PM</td>
<td>ESL 100, 150, 250 Ends 12/5</td>
<td>Register</td>
<td>$40/45</td>
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<td>9:30–10:30AM</td>
<td>Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00AM–NOON</td>
<td>Mah-Jongg</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30AM–12:30PM</td>
<td>French All Levels No class 12/18</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM–2:00PM</td>
<td>French Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM–3:00PM</td>
<td>Spanish 2</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00PM-4:00PM</td>
<td>Spanish 1</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00PM-4:00PM</td>
<td>Too Much Stuff?</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00AM-10:00AM</td>
<td>Rollin’Root Farmers’ Market</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30AM-10:30AM</td>
<td>Zumba Gold</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$6/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00AM-NOON</td>
<td>Whistlesizers</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$4/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30PM-1:30PM</td>
<td>Italian 3</td>
<td>Register</td>
<td>$30/35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM-2:00PM</td>
<td>Italian Study Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00PM–2:30PM</td>
<td>Adv.Write Your Life Stories Prerequisite required</td>
<td>Register</td>
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<td>Italian 2</td>
<td>Register</td>
<td>$30/35</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00AM</td>
<td>Community Breakfast 12/7</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$3/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM-NOON</td>
<td>CalFresh 12/7 &amp; 12/21</td>
<td>Reg. 415-697-7411</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30AM-NOON</td>
<td>BrightStar Health Ck 12/14 &amp; 12/28</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00AM–NOON</td>
<td>Brown Bag Pantry</td>
<td>Register at 11:30 am</td>
<td>free</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Movie Club</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30PM-3:00PM</td>
<td>Spanish Social Group</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>free</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00PM–4:00PM</td>
<td>Ping-Pong</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00PM-4:00PM</td>
<td>Yoga with Kelly</td>
<td>Drop-in</td>
<td>$3/5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*No classes from Monday, December 24 to Monday, December 31

We will be closing early on Monday, December 24 and Monday, December 31

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**Getting Technology Advice from a 7 year old?**

You don’t have to wait for your child or grandchild to teach you how to use your computer, tablet or smartphone. We have volunteers available each Monday and Wednesday from 9am-noon in our Open Computer Lab.
The Marin Symphony Association is one of the longest-running, most prestigious, cultural organizations in Marin County and the Bay Area. The orchestra was the inspiration of a small group of professional and amateur musicians who wished to bring classical music, performed by local artists, to the residents of Marin. Originally chartered as the Symphony Guild of Marin, the new organization also committed to providing programs to give young people in Marin an incentive for musical study and accomplishment.

**Highlights**

The Marin Symphony’s first official concert was held on December 14, 1952 at Marin County Catholic High School. The Symphony’s performances remained there through the succeeding 13 seasons. The Symphony’s second home through 1970 was the auditorium at the College of Marin. In 1971, the Symphony moved to its permanent home in the newly opened, 2,000-seat Marin Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium where it remained until October 1989, when seismic reinforcement to the hall necessitated a two-year hiatus. During this brief interval, the Symphony performances moved to Angelico Hall at Dominican University. On the occasion of the auditorium’s 20th Anniversary on November 17, 1991, the Symphony returned to its home in the Marin Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium, where it performs to this day.

Today, the orchestra has grown to include approximately 85 musicians, 70% union players and 30% non-union community players. A majority of these musicians come from throughout the Bay Area and represent all the major performing arts organizations.

Since 1954, the organization has supported a variety of youth programs. Today these include the Marin Symphony Youth Orchestra (ages 12-19), Crescendo/Overture (ages 8-15), and Symphony@Schools programs.

Each season, the Marin Symphony orchestra presents Masterworks classical concerts in the Marin Veterans’ Memorial Auditorium from October through May. Specialty concerts and events such as the Holiday Concerts by Candlelight, Holiday Pops, and Family Concert are proudly offered in addition to the traditional classical works.
You Can Make a Difference

Join the Whistlestop Family by making a gift

I want to become a monthly supporter with a gift of:

☐ $10  ☐ $15  ☐ $20  ☐ $50  _____/month

Or make a single donation in the amount of:

☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $125  ☐ $100  ____

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Exp Date _____________  3 Digit Code _____________

Mail to:
930 Tamalpais Ave, San Rafael 94901

Thank You!

GETTING AROUND

CarePool Coordinator
Looking for New Drivers

By Kat Filley, CarePool Coordinator

I joined Whistlestop as CarePool Coordinator in October. I am excited to go out into the community and let people know that this type of volunteer opportunity exists. To be able to provide older adults with easier access to food shopping and medical appointments and to volunteer with a flexible schedule is a huge incentive for many people. This program is important for older adults because it contributes to their independence, but it is equally important for the volunteers, who get so much out of the connections they make with their riders. Most of our volunteer drivers are older adults themselves. I look forward to going out into the community and actively recruiting more volunteer drivers.

I have lived in Marin County for the past 20 years. I am an open water swimmer and last night, I kayaked across Tomales Bay with some friends and swam in the dark bioluminescent waters. That may have been the most beautiful thing I have ever experienced.

Kat Filley joined Whistlestop as CarePool Coordinator in October. Born and raised in San Francisco, she has been a Marin County resident for the past 20 years, where she celebrates the beauty of nature.
Group coordinator, shared that her family traditions are nature centric. Yalda Night is the longest night of the year, the winter solstice on Dec. 21. Yalda means the birth of the Mitra, the mythological goddess of light. This celebration on the last night of autumn honors the renewal of the sun and the victory of light over darkness. Families and friends gather together to eat nuts, watermelon and pomegranates, reading Hafiz poems, making good wishes and giving a warm welcome to winter and a fair farewell to autumn.

The biggest celebration is Nowruz, the Persian New Year, which begins around March 21. People of all religions celebrate this ancient holiday, which goes back 5,000 years. The New Year lasts for 13 days and celebrates enduring the hard winter. During Nowruz, people visit family members and exchange gifts. Within the New Year celebrations are the Chaharshanbe Suri, the Festival of Fire, and Haft-Seen, celebrated with food representing spring and new beginnings. Thirteen days later, Sidzeh Bedar is called Nature Day, where friends and family picnic by a stream.

**Traditions in Columbia**

Edith says Christmas is her favorite holiday and she has fond memories of living in a small town with twelve children in her family. They would make delicious, large tamales filled with chicken and potatoes. The holiday tree was a custom her family adopted in her teenage years. Every Christmas Eve, all her family members would get dressed up – no hand-me-downs or matching dresses, except for the twins, who would wear matching attire. Edith smiles as she talks about how fancy her dresses were and her favorite gifts, dolls.

**Swedish Traditions**

Eleanor lived on the East Coast, in Massachusetts. She was an only child, but she had 25 cousins. She would visit her Swedish, paternal grandparents on Christmas Eve. They had a very large house and presents piled as high as the large Christmas tree. Since she had so many cousins and her grandparents had large curtains and a stage-like room, the children would prepare a show every year to entertain the elders. There was one Swedish holiday tradition she did not like - lutefisk, a stinky dried codfish, so instead she ate more meatballs and a rice pudding dessert.

**Celebrating Hanukkah**

Jacqueline, lived in Casablanca, Morocco, when she was young. She is Jewish and would celebrate Hanukkah for seven nights with her three sisters and brother. They received no presents. The family made Safganiyah, little round doughnuts filled with jam or custard and topped with powdered sugar, every day for eight days. It is custom to eat fried foods to commemorate the miracle associated with the Temple oil.
As we approach the holiday season, please consider making a year-end gift to Whistlestop. These can be challenging times for some older members in our community, especially those dealing with isolation, loneliness and depression. **But with your help we can enrich their lives!**

Your monetary donation to Whistlestop will provide meals, safe transport options, and create social connections for thousands of vulnerable older adults. What a beautiful way to share your blessings!

Following are some ways to make your charitable gift to Whistlestop. To receive allowable tax benefits, please make your gift before December 31.

- **Cash gifts, including checks, or online credit card payment.** Please mail checks to Whistlestop: 930 Tamalpais Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901, attn: Anastasia Kellow. Or make an online donation at www.whistlestop.org.
- **Gifts of publicly traded securities such as appreciated stock and mutual funds** are an excellent way to support Whistlestop. You avoid capital gains taxes if you have owned the stocks more than a year.
- **If you are over 70½, you can make charitable contributions up to $100,000 per year ($200,000 per couple)** from retirement plans such as a 401(k) or 403(b) directly through your administrator on a tax-free basis. These gifts count toward your Annual Required Minimum Distributions.

Please also consider how you wish to express your values and caring beyond your lifetime by including Whistlestop in your estate plans with a gift in your will. Leaving a gift to Whistlestop in your will ensures that Whistlestop will be here tomorrow to assist the frailest members of our community. You can make Whistlestop a beneficiary of any of your assets, including insurance policies and retirement plans.

If you have included Whistlestop in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and include you in our honored Whistlestop Legacy Society. All of us at Whistlestop are grateful for our wonderful donors, sponsors, volunteers, and partners, who together further our mission of helping older adults in Marin live healthy and engaged lives. Thank you!

Wishing you a joyful holiday season.

To learn more about making charitable gifts to Whistlestop, please contact Serena D’Arcy-Fisher, CFRE at sfisher@whistlestop.org, or 415-456-9062, ext. 138.