

Fall 2018

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Published By

Marin County Area Agency on Aging

County of Marin Seeks Age-Friendly Status

By Jenay Cottrell

Marin County is now seeking acceptance into the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

The WHO and the AARP, its American affiliate, define an age-friendly community as being one that is inclusive and respects residents of every age and ability. It promotes active aging, good health, and quality of life by looking at adequate housing, transportation, safe outdoor spaces and buildings, access to health and social services, and opportunities for civic engagement and participation, with inclusion and respect for all.

As readers of the *Great Age* will know from our last issue, the Marin County Board of Supervisors proclaimed 2018 to be the Year of the Older Adult. This is about celebrating the contributions of older adults while recognizing that more needs to be done to support these members of our community.

Taking this a step further, the Board voted unanimously in August to apply for membership into the Age-Friendly Network. As a member, the county will make a five-year commitment to assess the age friendliness of county departments and unincorporated areas and to create a plan to make Marin more livable for people of all ages.

The Age-Friendly communities movement effort began and continues on the grassroots level in many of Marin’s cities

and towns. Already, since 2014, six cities in Marin have joined this network with Sausalito being the first, followed by Corte Madera, Fairfax, Novato, Mill Valley, and San Rafael. Efforts are currently underway in Belvedere, Tiburon, Larkspur, Ross, and San Anselmo. According to Rafi Nazarians, AARP State Associate Director for Community, “Marin is ahead of the curve with many age-friendly cities already on board. It is a natural extension to have the County of Marin join the network and create a more sustainable, integrated effort throughout the county.”

The first steps of the process are currently underway. We have formed an advisory committee consisting of county department managers as well as representative leadership from other organizations and residents of unincorporated areas. This committee will act as the guide in the assessment and development phases.

“Our aim is for people to live long and live well with a good quality of life,” said Lee Pullen, Marin County Director of Aging and Adult Services. “This is a tremendous step forward in realizing our vision that Marin County be a place where all older adults are included and valued in our community.”

To learn more, please email: agingandadult@marincounty.org.

Jenay Cottrell is the Program Manager of the Area Agency on Aging.

Message from the Commission Chair

By Salamah Locks



Hello Great Age Readers! Did you have a great summer? Again, this year, I spent two days at our County Fair. I went with a plan for the first day to see only the artistic exhibits, textile arts, bonsai, and much more. On the second day my agenda included all things related to animal husbandry. Must see and do were the pig races, goat and cow milking, the mules, the long-legged game fowl, and the llamas. I, like you, am never too young or old to learn new things and meet new people. This year, serendipity was my guide for getting on the giant ferris wheel at the right time for the entire fireworks show! Come and talk to me at a Commission on Aging meeting and I'll share the secret technique.

Are you ready for Fall? Our children, grandchildren, and perhaps you are returning to school this month. Our cooler days and the trees with orange colored leaves are a welcomed sight.

We are continuing with special county events to celebrate the 2018 Marin Year of the Older Adult. Many thanks to those county residents who sent a note with a suggestion or two for our monthly topics. Please check the back page for our Fall 2018 calendar of meeting, topics, and locations. September's theme is "Generations Together," so the Commission on Aging is going to have a special intergenerational presentation in Marin City at the Marguerita C. Johnson Senior Center.

The Marin County Senior Information Fair is the second largest in Northern California. It will be held on Wednesday, October 24, 2018 with a theme of "Connecting Community." Come visit the Commission on Aging booth and meet the Commissioner who represents your city/town or district. Your involvement with your Commissioner is welcomed. For more information, please call 415-457-INFO (4636) and/or check our website at: www.livelonglivewellmarin.org

Book Review: Standing at the Edge

By Girija Brilliant

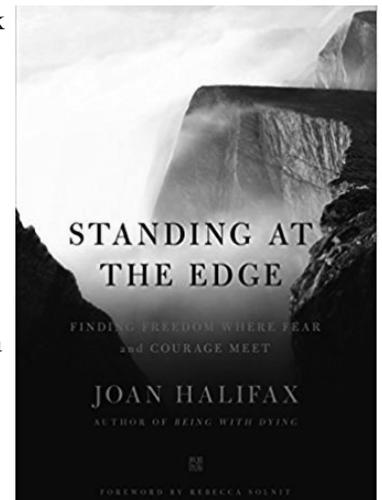
Joan Halifax is a Buddhist teacher, social activist, and anthropologist who explores the interaction between contemplative practice and social transformation. In Standing at the Edge, she focuses on how challenges from our work and personal life can be a source of wisdom. The book's title derives from five psychological experiences (she calls them edge states) that provide the potential for personal change: altruism, empathy, integrity, respect, and engagement.

Altruism and empathy are especially relevant for any of us who are engaged in caring for others. The impulse to help others motivates so many of us, but sometimes the desire to help others can become all-consuming. If we help too much and ignore our own needs, we can become resentful of those we help and then feel guilty about this. Altruism can become what Joan calls "pathological altruism," a compulsion to help that can lead to overwork and fatigue. When we lose objectivity and over-identify with the suffering of those we help, we are vulnerable to what she calls "empathic distress." These extremes of altruism and empathy can lead to burnout. The "bleak experience of fatigue, pessimism... and the sense that our work is of little benefit to anyone, including ourselves." Joan uses her analytic skills to identify these potential problems and draws on her meditation practice and Buddhist studies for the remedy: developing and deepening compassion.

This summary of the main concepts of the book does not reflect the richness of the stories that Joan weaves into her book—

encounters from her work in prison, with the dying, in her travels to Asia and studies with scholars, and teachers. Her tone throughout is conversational, and at the book's end, I felt I had completed a deeply moving conversation with a wise friend.

Girija Brilliant is a Commissioner from the City of Mill Valley.



Long-Term Care Ombudsman

By *Dan Steckline*

What is an Ombudsman? That is a question we get asked a lot in the Marin County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. The short answer is we are advocates for those living in assisted living communities and nursing homes. The long answer is we are a federally mandated and state authorized program administered locally by the Marin County Health and Human Services, Office of Aging and Adult Services. Our program is comprised of state certified staff and volunteers who receive, investigate, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents. These range from cold coffee and food to allegations of physical, psychological, or financial abuse. Our goal is to resolve problems for individual residents and to create change on local and state levels that improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents. For many, we provide a voice for those unable to advocate for themselves.

To achieve these goals, the Ombudsman Program maintains an ongoing presence in assisted living communities and nursing homes by making unannounced visits and interviewing residents or family members about the care being provided. We provide consultations to individuals and facility staff about ways to improve outcomes for residents. We attend resident care meetings and resident council meetings upon request of residents and we provide community education and training for facility staff on topics such as resident rights and mandated reporting. If a resident would like to create an advance health care directive while living in a nursing home in California, an Ombudsman is required to be one of the witnesses.

Ombudsman services are free and confidential. We are a resource to help resolve problems for residents in assisted living communities and nursing homes and for general information about the long-term care setting in Marin. Volunteers play active role in our advocacy efforts. If you are interested in learning about how to become a volunteer certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman, please call 415-473-7446.

Dan Steckline is the Program Coordinator of the Marin County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.



*Connecting
Community*

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Free Admission

www.marinseniorfair.org

**Marin Exhibit Hall
10 Avenue of the Flags,
San Rafael**

Get Out and Vote

By *Kat Braeman*

According to the AARP, for nearly 40 years, the turnout of voters over age 45 has significantly outpaced that of younger Americans. But, historically, far less people show up to vote in mid-term elections. Don't let that be you.

With political polarization at historic highs, one answer is to focus on the power of the vote—both a responsibility and a privilege in a democracy. Women fought for decades for the right to vote, achieved on August 26, 1920. Yet 100 million people failed to vote in the last presidential election. The recent close San Francisco election for mayor illustrates how every vote counts. In California, the ease of a mail-in ballot makes voting effortless. Or put some joy into voting by going to the polls with friends. The General Election is November 6, 2018, and should be starred on the calendar.



Democracy requires constant work. The League of Women Voters of Marin County (LWVMC) strives to ensure that all citizens have access to the democratic process and that the process itself remains transparent. In Marin County, they provide services to voters, including voter registration, sponsoring candidate and issues debates, and performing impartial analyses of ballot measures. They also fight for fair campaigns. Visit www.marinlwg.org to learn more or get involved.

Polling places at precincts require people to staff them. The county pays a stipend of \$125 - \$175. Marin County Elections Department can provide information for opportunities to join those teams for paid and volunteer positions at:

www.marincounty.org/residents/community/voting.

For information about what's on the ballot, where to vote, or to get a mail-in ballot, visit:

www.marinvotes.com.

Kat Braeman worked as an administrative judge in Washington D.C. and now lives at Villa Marin.

Transportation Ballot Measures

By *Allan Bortel*

On November 6, we will be presented with two transportation measures that will affect Marin County and California for many years to come. They include the following:

Measure "A" is an extension of the nearly 15-year old half percent sales tax, which needs two-thirds support and raises \$27 million a year to keep our buses and paratransit vehicles running, school busses and crossing guards, and road projects funded throughout Marin. Paratransit services are specifically geared toward the disabled and elderly. "Since the passage of Measure A in 2004, we've done over one million trips on paratransit and we currently have over 3,000 active users," stated Robert Betts, Director of Operations and Planning for Marin Transit. A local source of funds such as that raised by the half

percent sales tax is particularly valuable for matching grants from federal and state sources. Under the ballot proposal, an extension for 30 years would be effective on April 1, 2019, with reviews every six years.

Proposition 6 is an initiative to repeal SB-1, which passed the State Legislature in 2017, and raised the gasoline tax by 12 cents as well as increased vehicle registration fees. Monies are currently being spent to continue work on a high occupancy lane of Highway 101 to the Sonoma border, a new bus transit center, linkup of Highway 101 with Highway 580 in San Rafael, and a SMART train extension to Windsor. Repealing SB-1 would put a halt to some \$3 billion in Bay Area projects currently underway.

For more information about these measures and Marin transportation services, I encourage you to come to our Commission on Aging meeting on October 4. See the back of this newsletter for information.

Allan Bortel is the Senior Senator in the California Senior Legislature (CSL) from Marin County.

Moving in Marin? You're Not Locked In.

By Allan Bortel

Marin seniors often tell me that they are locked into their current home because:

1. They would have large capital gains taxes if they sell (federal and state);
2. Currently they have much lower property taxes than if they were to move and buy another home or condominium.

The above barriers to moving may be much lower than you think. For example, to determine your capital gains, you have to add to your original purchase price (your basis) all of the improvements you've made since acquiring your property. If you haven't kept a record of receipts for a new roof, landscaping, remodeled kitchen and bathrooms, etc., you need to estimate the amount of those costs when the expenditures were made. In addition, a couple has a \$500,000 deduction from the sale price, thereby reducing the capital gain. The combined effect can be substantial, despite significant appreciation of your home.

The current property tax assessment (determined by Proposition 13) can be transferred to another home in Marin, two years before or after purchase, if it costs less than the home you have sold. You must also be at least 55 years old and both homes must be the owner's principal place of residence. This benefit is due to Proposition 60. For answers to frequently asked questions about Proposition 60, visit the Board of Equalization's website at www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/prop60-90_55over.htm#FAQs.

Another transfer of tax assessment is allowed if a senior becomes disabled after the purchase of a new residence. Proposition 110 allows transfers for any severely and permanently disabled property owners within Marin (mental disabilities are excluded).

Proposition 5, which will appear on the November 6, 2018 ballot, would allow transfers between Marin and other California counties. It would also allow the taxable base (assessment) for any home price, for a home located anywhere in the state, any number of times.

Allan Bortel is the Senior Senator in the CSL from Marin County.

JADUs

By Jim Monson

Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs), hold great promise for helping senior homeowners to age in place while creating affordable rental housing. West Marin County, with its high percentage of seniors and low availability of affordable housing, is well suited for JADUs.

A JADU is a living space less than 500 square feet in size contained within a single family structure. It has a separate outside entrance and an interior entrance to the main living space. Instead of a kitchen, a JADU has a wetbar. This consists of a small sink, suitable for food preparation and clean up, a mini refrigerator, appropriate appliances (none requiring 220 V), and limited kitchen counter and storage space. A JADU does not require an additional parking space. Installing a wetbar does not require permits from the Marin County Planning Division, but permits for other JADU work may be needed.

Recognizing that seniors would need help in working their way through the JADU process, CLAM (Community Land Trust of West Marin), set up a program supported by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael. Ruth Lopez, CLAM's Community Engagement Coordinator, is helping West Marin seniors to create JADUs.

Ruth likes to think of a JADU as a tiny house within a larger house. This approach helps to lay out the interests and needs of the involved parties. For example, it might lead to a double door with sound insulation or an easier access between the "houses" if a caregiver were living in the JADU. Careful planning is key to ensuring flexibility in the use of a JADU as the senior homeowner grows older. At first, the JADU might be a simple rental, then space for a caregiver, or a "flipped home" space, where the owner occupies the JADU, while a younger family lives in the main house.

There are loans and financing tools available, some through Marin Housing Authority, to assist homeowners in creating JADUs. Funding may also be available to help renters make security deposits. Visit www.marinhousing.org for information.

James Monson is a Commissioner from District 4.

Healthy Eating/ Active Living at MCF

By Shirin Vakbaria

For older people, especially those grappling with chronic conditions or financial limitations, determining how to eat well and stay active can be a daunting challenge. A limited income, lack of reliable transportation, isolation, and functional limitations are of some of the factors that impact diet quality and physical activity for older people.

Knowing that older people face many challenges when it comes to eating well and staying active, the Marin Community Foundation (MCF), in partnership with Aging & Adult Services and community stakeholders, created a Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) initiative. By investing in changes to policies, practices and environments, the initiative aims to strengthen the reach and impact of existing senior nutrition and physical activity programs by fostering community norms that are supportive of good nutrition and physical activity, creating environments that reinforce health promoting messages, and ultimately helping to create community conditions whereby the healthy choice is the easier choice.

The organizations funded under this initiative include:

Covia (formerly Episcopal Senior Communities) is expanding its Senior Produce Market to two additional locations outside of the City of Novato, which will accept CalFresh. Covia is also expanding its Home Delivered Grocery Program for low-income seniors.

ExtraFood's mission is to help end hunger and wasted food in Marin through a countywide food recovery program. ExtraFood hopes to increase business community participation by encouraging local jurisdictions to amend their Climate Action Plans to include food recovery as a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative (ISFC) is working with a group of local agencies to increase redemption of Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers. ISFC is also working with congregations and faith-based organizations to develop internal policies that set specific guidelines for including fruits and vegetables as part of all programming.

Marin City Health and Wellness Center (MCHWC) is partnering with local agencies. Through this partner-



ship and with the engagement of an Active Adult Advisory Board, the MCHWC will continue to offer a robust array of nutrition and physical activity programs such as the Sit Fit and Park Prescriptions to Marin City older adults both within the clinic setting and in the community.

Marin Community Clinics (MCC) has been funded to engage in a planning process to help define MCC's efforts to addressing the nutrition and physical activity needs of their older adult patient population through both programmatic and policy, systems, and environmental change approaches.

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Collaborative is a coalition of organizations including the Marin Food Policy Council, SF-Marin Food Bank, Agriculture Institute of Marin, Marin City Community Service District, Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative and the University of California Cooperative Extension. The collaborative is working on advancing a number of key strategies designed to improve nutrition and physical activity outcomes for older adults, such as promoting the adoption of organizational policies that increase access to healthy food and beverages, community gardening and mobile vending, and increasing access to public benefits such as CalFresh.

The collective work of these organizations has the potential to impact the food and physical activity environments in multiple settings that older adults navigate in their daily lives, including: health care provider organizations, places of worship, affordable housing communities, and senior serving organizations.

Shirin Vakbaria is the Director of Health and Aging at the Marin Community Foundation.

Jerry and Bocce

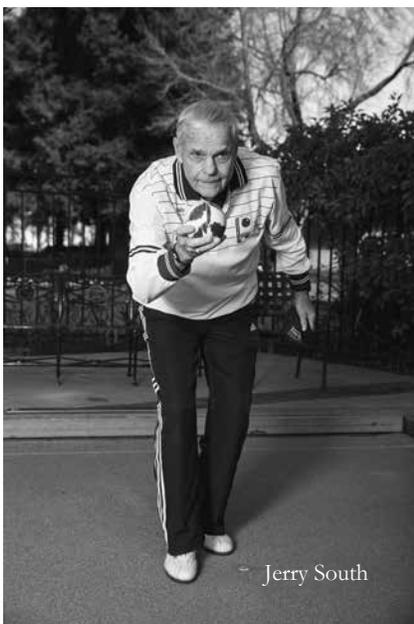
By Kat Braeman

Bocce, sometimes referred to as lawn bowling, is one of the most widely played games in the world, with a history spanning thousands of years. In 1992, the City of San Rafael granted a land-use permit and a small loan to a group of Bocce enthusiasts hoping to upgrade a city-owned dirt field. Passionate about the sport, these volunteers worked to raise funds and engender interest. Their efforts lead to the construction of a beautiful facility that now includes eight exterior and two indoor courts.

The mission of the Marin Bocce Federation is to promote the game to all local citizens to enhance their social and physical well-being. The motto of the club is “*Vive bene. Spresso l’amore. Di rista molto.*” Live well. Love often. Laugh a lot.

This low-cost activity is open to all, with special effort made to meet the needs of the physically challenged and older members of the community. Marin Bocce now has a growing group of 1,500 enthusiastic players on the courts at 550 B Street, San Rafael.

One shining example is Jerry South. At age 70, Jerry’s neighbor introduced him to Bocce and he was immediately hooked. Wanting to enhance his expertise, he traveled to Viareggio, Italy, and joined Migliarina Bocce Club to improve his game. While he learned to play better, he also learned how to be a coach and mentor. Utilizing these skills and his newly discovered innate passion, he went on to manage Team USA in international competitions in Brazil, Italy, and China. Be sure to say hello when you see him at the Bocce Courts.



Kat Braeman worked as an administrative judge in Washington D.C. and now lives at Villa Marin.

Back to School

By Julie Monson

My husband Jim and I encounter lists of advice for seniors on healthy aging almost daily. I am sure anyone reading this article will have had similar experiences. We (seniors) are encouraged to exercise, avoid sugar and alcohol, reduce stress, sleep well, and stimulate our brains. I want to talk about intellectual stimulation and the role of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) in encouraging healthy aging and, not to be discounted, as a possible deterrent to dementia.

Started in 2004, OLLI at Dominican University has grown quickly and last year served 1,425 senior (over 55 years old) “students” in about 15 different college-level courses on a wide range of subjects taught by experienced, talented lecturers, many of them former academics and professionals.

Without required reading lists, tests, or papers, these courses provide intellectually stimulating lectures that promote informed thinking and intelligent discussion. Dominican OLLI also supports workshops, clubs, and tours for seniors. The Bernard Osher Foundation began OLLI in 2000 and now supports 121 OLLI programs throughout the country, including at Sonoma State, San Francisco State, and UC Berkeley.

When I first learned about OLLI, I mourned that all these interesting classes were given at Dominican or at one of several other venues in East Marin, an hour’s drive from our home in Point Reyes. Undaunted, we began discussions with Katherine Henderson, Dominican OLLI’s director, about the possibility of starting OLLI in Point Reyes, and she agreed to help us try it. That was eight years ago! The combination of intellectually challenging courses on subjects ranging from history to science, followed with informal, friendly conversation, is welcomed by everyone, especially those who live alone.

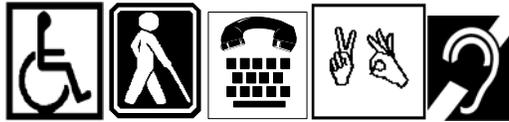
On the list of recommended ways to stay healthy as we age, OLLI experiences have top billing for me. They have opened many windows and doors into history, law, science, politics, art, and the world around us, and at the same time brought together our friends, neighbors, and new faces in a positive way.

Julie Monson is a Master Gardener and the author of Gardening on California’s Coast. She lives in Point Reyes Station.

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 Commission on Aging**
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 Website: [www.marinhhs.org/
 boards/commission-aging](http://www.marinhhs.org/boards/commission-aging)

**Featured in
 This Issue:
 County of Marin
 Seeks Age-Friendly
 Status**



Request for an alternative format of this publication may be requested by calling 473-4381 (voice) ; 711 (TTY) or by e-mail at disabilityaccess@marincounty.org.

Committee meetings are held at the Office of Aging and Adult Services at 10 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. For details call 473-7118.

Month	Topic	Speaker	Place
September 6	Topic: Intergenerational Storytelling in Community Gardens	Speakers: Anita Gail Jones, Storyteller and Lauren Klein, UC Cooperative Extension	Place: Marguerita C. Johnson Senior Center, 640 Drake Ave, Sausalito
October 4	Topic: Making Sense of Transportation Taxes on the Ballot	Speaker: Dianne Steinhäuser, Transportation Authority of Marin	Place: Tiburon Town Hall, 1505 Tiburon Blvd, Tiburon
November 1	Topic: Dia de los Muertos: Latino Perspectives on Death/Dying and Family Caregiving	Speaker: TBD	Place: Albert J Boro Center, (Pickleweed), 50 Canal St, San Rafael
December 6	Topic: Legislative Update for 2019	Speaker: Ca. Senator Mike McGuire	Place: Marin Valley Mobile Country Club, 100 Marin Valley Dr, Novato

The public is invited to participate in all meetings held by the Commission and its Committees. General Commission meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month. Presentations at the Commission meetings typically start at 10:00 a.m., followed by the business meeting at 11:15 a.m. Meeting dates and presentations are as follows:

Fall 2018 Calendar of Meetings

The Marin County Commission on Aging is a federally mandated advisory council. The mission of the Commission is to provide information and advocacy for services that enable older adults to live with dignity. *Great Age* highlights programs, legislative developments, advocacy and news about aging in Marin County.

Call the Information and Assistance line at
415-457-INFO
 (415-457-4636)

**Find the service
 that's right for
 you!**