

Fall 2017

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Editor

Amy Dietz, MPH

Editorial Board

Allan Bortel
Girija Brilliant
Marianne Gontarz York
Jim Monson
Sylvia Landman

Published By

Marin County Area
Agency on Aging
Lee Pullen, Director

SMART Train

By *Allan Bortel*

For a number of years, the SMART (Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit) Commission has promoted the usage of existing former train "right of way" for a new sleek, fast, and comfortable commuter service. A quarter percent Sonoma and Marin sales tax was approved in 2008 to fund the endeavor. After years of construction, the public was invited aboard for free rides in Summer 2017.

For safety, but mostly reassurance, SMART trains are operated by a human engineer, and will also have a conductor on board. Other friendly features are onboard restroom facilities and Wi-Fi. SMART's initial 43 miles of rail corridor includes 10 stations, from the Sonoma County Airport to Downtown San Rafael. Future extensions include Larkspur, which is scheduled to be completed in 2019.

What does SMART do for the Senior Demographic?

First, all stations and trains are senior and disabled "friendly". Building the train from scratch assured compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. (By the way, all of Marin Transit's busses are similarly configured.)

Public transportation is a wonderful option for seniors who have given up their car keys. Taking the train to shopping and medical appointments could be a SMART benefit, especially as fares for those over 65 are half priced.

Purchasing a plastic "Clipper Card" will be the means of payment for riders, good for travel on nearly every SF Bay Area transit option, including busses and the ferries. The card stores money and is used to pay your fare by scanning it when boarding and getting off. The "senior/disabled" labeled Clipper card (with the 50% discount) is available without a service fee if you order your card online (www.clippercard.com) and sign up for "autoload" from your credit card or bank account. Clipper Cards can also be purchased at the San Rafael (bus) transit center near the downtown SMART station.

While most seniors will not be commuting to work themselves on SMART, the new service, connected to bus schedules, should enable Marin's seniors to tap into Sonoma's caregiver workforce. Most of those helpers cannot afford to live in Marin on a caregiver's wages due to cost of living. But Sonoma's cost of housing is cheaper. Hopefully, the new SMART train will bring in needed workers.

Finally, recreational trips to northern towns on the SMART line will be possible without driving. According to some, the passing scenery is superior to travel on Highway 101.

Regular service will begin on August 25. All aboard!

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

Message from the Commission Chair

By Salamah Locks



Hellooo Great Age readers! My name is Salamah Locks and I am the new Chair of our Commission on Aging (CoA). I'm hoping that many of you enjoyed the festive activities and outstanding music venues for the young and not so young at our July County Fair. For me, probably like some of you, I reviewed the schedule and was very selective with my activity choices and time. Two half-day trips to the Fair and I still forgot to line up to try the giant Ferris wheel, but I always remember to attend the after-the-fair plant sale to select special vegetable or perennial plants to add to my garden.

I would like for each of you to know and understand the CoA's involvement in advocacy and activities for the 60 + year old residents of Marin County. For starters, come visit our booth at the Marin County Senior Fair (see pg. 4). We provide monthly educational topics prior to our business meetings on the 1st Thursday of the month. Please look on the back page for our Fall 2017 calendar of meetings, topics, and locations. The selected topic speaker begins at 10:00 am and at 11:15 am the CoA business meeting begins; both sessions are open to the public and FREE! Come and meet the appointed Commissioner that represents your city and neighborhood. During the business meeting, we include time for you to share a business interest, and/or address an issue. We also have committees that you are welcome to join on issues such as Legislation, Health and Nutrition, and Housing and Transportation.

We invite your passion and involvement with the Commission as we continue to support all activities that promote making Marin an inclusive age friendly place to live long and live well.

For more information, please call 415 457-INFO (4636) and/or check out our website at: www.livelonglivewellmarin.org

New Commissioners

By James Monson

Michael Hagerty: District 5



Michael Hagerty, Ph.D. is professor emeritus at University of California, Davis. He has lectured all over the world and consulted for multiple governments on how to improve quality of life for citizens. He is a specialist in the new field of Happiness Research and the study of positive emotions.

After moving to the senior community Marin Valley Mobile Country Club in 2011, Michael quickly engaged in issues related to the quality of life for seniors. As a member of the Board of Directors, he encountered community members developing dementia, coping with end of life issues, and struggling with financial security. As a Commissioner, Michael wants to work on senior housing issues – addressing problems of 80 year olds facing eviction because they can't afford Marin County rent increases or the many seniors who are "house rich, cash poor".

Lenore McDonald: District 2



Lenore is a long time resident of Marin County – having moved here from New Orleans in 1983. She enrolled her children in the Dixie School District and herself in Dominican University, where she earned a degree in Business Administration. She loves Marin's independent spirit, rugged terrain, and pastoral beauty. She is an avid cyclist, riding all over Marin County and beyond.

Since 2011, Lenore has been working as Director of Development and Government Relations for the Center for Elders' Independence in Oakland, which provides health care to Medicare and MediCal beneficiaries through the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE). She regularly updates East Bay local governments on a wide range of senior concerns and issues. In her work as a Commissioner, Lenore wants to help communities become "age friendly" and to advocate for seniors with our local, state, and federal legislators.

James Monson is a Commissioner from District 4.

Feeling Blue

By Marianne Gontarz York

Everyone has days when she feels downhearted or blue. Depression is more than just feeling down for a few days or even months, but may last for years if untreated. A number of factors can contribute to its onset: grief, stress, health challenges, moving/ downsizing, or any other major life change.

Depression does not discriminate. Men and women of every age, educational level, race, and income can suffer from depression at some point in their lives. But, as we age, losses become more common. From moving from a long time home and downsizing to the loss of loved ones and pets. Also, some of us may suffer depression after a loss of independence due to onset of medical illness.

Julia Chu, PhD who works with the Jewish Family Children's Services BOOST Program lists these as common symptoms of depression:

- Change in sleep patterns;
- Change in eating habits, low energy or fatigue;
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate;
- Feeling worthless or guilty;
- Restlessness or slowed down movements; and
- Thoughts of suicide.

The good news is that depression is treatable. What can you do yourself?

- Engage in meaningful and enjoyable activities;
- Socialize and meet new people;
- Don't turn to drugs and alcohol for relief, it will only worsen the condition; and
- Exercise.

If you try to manage depression on your own, or with the help of family and friends, and you don't feel you're making any progress, there are resources to help you.

Talk to your doctor about how you're feeling. You may benefit from medication or counseling. You can also call one of the phone numbers below:

- Friendship Line (for Seniors): 800-971-0016 (24 hours)
- BOOST: 415-419-3656
- Senior Peer Counseling Program: 415-473-4358
- AAA Info and Referral Hot Line: 415-457-INFO (4636)

Marianne Gontarz York is a Commissioner for the City of Novato.

Trash or Treasure?

By Amy Dietz

Driving down the street on a Saturday, you are bound to see a sign for a Garage Sale. You might think that the Judy Collins record on sale for a quarter is a treasure, while others may deem it trash. But that's the fun of it.

Beth Livoti, a Commissioner for the City of Novato, is a self described rummage sale junkie. Every weekend, you can find her combing through trinkets at Marin's garage and estate sales. "Even in rain, snow, or sleet". While she does collect some of these items for her home (including a full-size Egyptian sarcophagus), most of the items she purchases are for the annual rummage sale benefitting St. Anthony's in Novato.

Throughout the year, she and other volunteers pick up left over items at consignment stores and estate sales, and house them in a warehouse until the last weekend in July. Items include everything from World War 2 memorabilia, gold filigree clocks, costume jewelry, and over 700 pairs of shoes.

The month before the event is spent in preparation. The majority of the volunteers are between 50-85 years old and spend hours sorting through the various objects Beth has collected over the year.

"People come from everywhere, all the way from Sacramento, it has a tremendous reputation in the rummage sale world", says Beth.

The four day sale generates almost \$80,000, in large part due to the efforts of Commissioner Livoti.

Amy Dietz is a Senior Program Coordinator in Aging and Adult Services.



Beth Livoti and her stepdaughters sorting clothes

10 Ways to Love Your Brain

Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body. It's never too late or too early.

Hit the books

Formal education will help to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Take a class at College of Marin, Dominican, a community center, or online. What have you always wanted to know?

Break a Sweat

Engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates the heart rate and increases blood flow. You don't have to run a marathon; go for a walk in one of Marin's many outdoor spaces or spend time gardening.

Stump Yourself

Challenge your mind. Build something. Play a game of strategy, like bridge or mah jong. Or download "Words with Friends" on your smartphone to play with your grandkids.

Buddy Up

Speaking of mah jong, find some people to play with at the San Geronimo Valley Community Center. Staying socially engaged can support your brain health. Find ways to be part of your local community. Go to

one of the Congregate Senior meal lunches around the county. There is a suggested donation of \$3, the meals from Good Earth are delicious and nutritious, and you can meet new people. For a schedule, go to www.marinhhs.org/nutrition-services-older-adults and call 457-INFO (4636) to make a reservation.

Butt Out

If you smoke, everyone tells you to quit for numerous health reasons. But smoking also increases your risk of cognitive decline. If you're ready to quit, talk to your doctor. You can also call (800) NO-BUTTS (662-8887) to make a plan.

Follow Your Heart

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke (obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes) also negatively impact your cognitive health.

Heads Up!

Brain injury can raise the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt. Practice tips for fall prevention.

Fuel Up Right

Eat a well balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. You should talk to your healthcare provider about making dietary changes that may affect your medications or personal health.

Catch some ZZZs

Not getting enough sleep may result in problems with memory and thinking.

Adapted with permission from the Alzheimer's Association.

Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 9:00 - 3:00

Free Admission

www.marinseniorinformationfair.org

Marin Exhibit Hall

10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael



Nextdoor

By Marianne Gontarz York

If you remember the days when you knocked on your neighbor's door to ask for a cup of sugar, you might want to know about nextdoor.com.

Nextdoor is a free and private social network that is neighborhood-based. The purpose of it is to connect to the people around you. The founder of Nextdoor started the social network because he believed that a big part of our social identity is based on where we live. Nextdoor was founded on the premise that technology is a powerful tool for making neighborhoods stronger, safer places to call home.

The website allows you to start 'threads' to talk to your neighbors. There are 'threads' on everything from ride sharing to good plumbers to reports of wild raccoons. The site also has a Craigslist-like function that allows you to list products that you are selling or that your neighbors are giving away.

Here are some examples of postings:

- I lost my dog, (description or photo)Please message me if you see him
- My roof is leaking, I need a repairman, any suggestions?
- I need a ride to the bus stop at 9:00 tomorrow. Anyone going my way?
- I saw a coyote in the field today. Keep your cats indoors.
- Found diamond earring at a picnic table. Send me a message with a description.
- Available for dog walking and babysitting.
- Getting rid of my new couch because it doesn't match the carpet. Yours free for pick-up.

Additionally, some neighborhood police and fire departments provide timely information and some are actively working with neighbors to create safer neighborhoods.

Go to nextdoor.com and enter your name and zip code. It's that easy to find and give your neighbors that cup of sugar.

Marianne Gontarz York is a Commissioner for the City of Novato.

What is Hospice?

By Jayne Schabel

The best time to learn about what hospice is and how to utilize it for yourself or a loved one is before you need it. Hospice is specialized end-of-life care that attends to patient's needs in order to enhance their quality of life. To be eligible for hospice, a doctor must verify a prognosis of less than six months life expectancy. Hospice may be recommended for patients with an incurable illness for whom the focus of care is primarily comfort. Medicare, Medi-Cal, and private insurance covers nearly all costs— so out-of-pocket costs for the patient are minimal.

The patient's wishes, values, and beliefs are taken into account and become the basis of the hospice model. Care is designed to maximize the quality of relationships and experience at the end of one's life. It includes not only medical care but social, psychosocial and spiritual support as well.

Our hospice team makes every effort to honor the patient's wishes for where they want to receive care - at home, a nursing or residential care facility, or a hospital. Most hospice care is provided during regular visits and nurses are also available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The hospice team helps family members and caregivers cope emotionally while providing the education they may need to best respond to the patient's needs. Hospice offers grief counseling support before and after a loved one's death.

Some people think that hospice means giving up hope, but actually it can help people clarify what they may hope for. Hospice focuses on maximizing the quality of life so that person can live life as fully as possible for as long as possible.

I encourage people to call Hospice by the Bay at any time if they have questions (415-927-2273). By taking the time to learn about hospice care now, you will be better educated about the choices available to you and your loved ones. Choosing hospice sooner can give you and your loved ones more time to focus on what is important to you.

Jayne Schabel has worked in the Hospice field for 31 years.



ExtraFood Volunteers delivering to a Senior Housing Facility

ExtraFood

By *Amy Dietz*

What do you do when frustrated at seeing your neighbors go hungry and also watching perfectly good food get tossed in the dumpster?

Enter Marv Zauderer. A longtime Marin resident, Marv Zauderer started his career in technology, later being a psychotherapist. He wanted to create a solution that could address both problems of food waste and hunger. In 2013, he founded ExtraFood, a county-wide food recovery program, which complements the work done by the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank.

“Currently, 40% of edible food is wasted in the U.S. Food waste in our landfills creates an enormous environmental problem: If global food waste were a country, it would rank 3rd in greenhouse gas production after the U.S. and China. However, many residents, including older adults, in Marin worry about where their next meal will come from...while tons upon tons of some of the best food in the world from restaurants, supermarkets, and farms is thrown away”, Marv stated.

Representatives from ExtraFood stay up-to-date on the food needs of nonprofit programs in the county that serve vulnerable children, adults, and families. They then find donations of excess food from businesses, restaurants, schools, etc. that match — prepared food, fresh produce, dairy products, eggs, meat, packaged goods, and baked goods. “We only accept food that meets ExtraFood’s and our donors’ strict standards for food safety and usability”, says Zauderer. In 3.5 years, they have recovered over 1,200,000 pounds of food — 1,000,000 meals — and delivered to 92 recipient sites across Marin. Volunteers, dispatched by text or email, pick up and

make deliveries seven days a week. Today, ExtraFood serves approximately 5,000 vulnerable people every month, approximately one third of which are older adults.

One recipient of the program said, “In 2009 I lost my house in the mortgage crisis and lost my faith in my community. Being part of this food program has restored my faith in my community”.

In describing the program, Marv stated, “Systemic problems require systemic solutions, and the connections we’re creating among ExtraFood staff, 250+ volunteers, food donors, recipient partners, funders, and community advocates are building a living ecosystem, a renewable resource for our community that operates 365 days a year and will, we trust, outlive all of us”.

For information on how to become involved, visit: extrafood.org or call 415-997-9830.

Amy Dietz is a Senior Program Coordinator in Aging and Adult Services.

Can't come to the
Commission on
Aging presentation ?



**All Commission on Aging
presentations are filmed, so you
watch them at home or on the go.**

Watch them on the Government Channel (Comcast 27 and AT & T U-verse 99) on Saturdays at 1:00 or online at livelonglivewellmarin.org by clicking on “Commission Videos”

Food Safety

By Natalie Krelle-Zepponi, R.D.

Most food poisoning could be prevented if people handled food properly. Food poisoning can be severe or even life-threatening for young children and infants, pregnant women, older adults, and people with chronic diseases like diabetes— so read on for some tips on decreasing your risk for foodborne illness.

Wash Your Hands

Hand washing has the potential to save more lives than any single vaccine or medical intervention. Wash hands well in warm, soapy water for 20 seconds.

Safely Store Leftovers

Perishable food should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours of serving or throw them out. Use a thermometer to check that the refrigerator is cooling to 40°F or below & the freezer to 0°F or below.

Buy and Use a Food Thermometer

The only way to determine if harmful bacteria has been eliminated is to cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature. Always use a food thermometer to ensure food is fully cooked. Don't rely upon sight, smell or taste. For leftovers, if a thermometer is not possible, re-heat items until they are hot, steamy and bubbly.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES as measured with a food thermometer

Beef, pork, veal and lamb (roast, steaks and chops)	145 ° F with a three-minute “rest time after removal from the heat source
Ground meats	160 ° F
Poultry (whole, parts or ground)	165 ° F
Eggs and egg dishes	160 ° F, but cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm; scrambled eggs should not be runny
Leftovers	165 ° F
Finfish	145 ° F

Keep It Clean

Use hot, soapy water to wash countertops and surfaces, cutting boards, refrigerator door handles and utensils. Start by washing hands well after handling raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs. Use a separate cutting board for raw meat and poultry from the cutting board you use for ready-to-eat foods like bread and produce. Wrap raw meat and poultry in sealed containers or plastic bags and place on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to prevent raw meat juices from dripping onto other foods/ surfaces. And don't rinse chicken before cooking – bacteria splashes!

Practice Kitchen Sponge Safety

- **Don't Wipe up meat juices.** Cleaning up spills from ground beef or poultry with a sponge can increase your chances of spreading harmful foodborne pathogens. Instead, use a soapy paper towel or disinfectant wipes to clean up meat juices.
- **Don't Use Sponges on Countertops.** Germs and bacteria can spread from the sponge to your countertop, so use a paper towel or disinfectant wipes to clean counter tops instead.
- **Do Store in a dry location.** It's important to wring out your sponge completely after each use and wash off any loose food or debris, and also store it in a location where it's not wet.
- **Do Clean sponges or dishcloths daily.** Toss porous sponges in the dish washer with a drying cycle. While less porous than sponges, you should still replace dishcloths daily since they can harbor bacteria. Launder dishcloths in hot water and dry them on high heat in the dryer.
- **Do Replace Sponges Frequently.** Even if you clean your kitchen sponge daily, remember to replace it frequently. If your sponge starts to smell at any time, toss it out immediately.

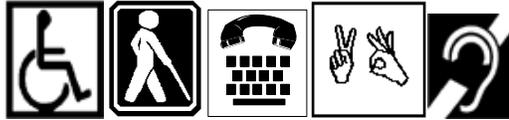
For more simple steps to safely handle food at home and reduce your risk of food poisoning, visit www.HomeFoodSafety.org.

Natalie Krelle-Zepponi is a Registered Dietician working with the Area Agency on Aging.

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**Featured in
 This Issue:
 SMART Train**



Request for an alternative format of this publication may be requested by calling 473-4381 (voice)/473-3232 (TTY) or by e-mail at disabilityaccess@marincounty.org.

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

September 7	Topic: Update to the California Commission on Aging	Speakers: Marin County Commission on Aging	Place: Embassy Suites, 101 McInnis Parkway, San Rafael
October 5	Topic: Social Connection and Isolation	Speaker: Mary McCall, PhD	Place: Tiburon Town Hall, 1505 Tiburon Blvd, Tiburon
November 2	Topic: Green and Healthy Homes	Speaker: TBD	Place: Larkspur Police Authority, 250 Doherty Dr, Larkspur
December 7	Topic: Legislative Update for 2018	Speaker: TBD	Place: The Redwoods, 40 Camino Alto, Mill Valley

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 2017 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!