

Summer 2011

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Reshape Your Destiny

By *Martha Copeland*
 Commissioner, District 2

The Healthy Aging Symposium, held May 12, featured Ysabel Duron, a lively award winning journalist, newscaster, and tireless activist, who spoke about how cancer and menopause changed her career path for the better. The symposium theme was “Pathways to Successful Aging.” Ms. Duron’s fight with cancer in 1998, while tackling menopause, made her a believer that mental calisthenics keep our immune systems alive, and has given her a new opportunity to reshape her destiny. Her 40 year career in television broadcasting is paired with her activity as founder of Latinas Contra Cancer, whose mission is “talking about cancer won’t kill us, but silence will.” She highlighted four axioms for healthy aging: a) value your energy, your driving force; b) growth is food for the spirit and essential to healthy aging; c) Continue to learn anew; grab the opportunity to reshape your destiny and d) the only failure is not trying.

Linda H. Clever, M.D., and her husband James Clever, M.D., spoke on their path to healthy aging with four tips and five practices to age successfully. Their four key tips are: 1) Take care of you. Have a physician who respects you, and has times to listen to your concerns. 2) Don’t take aging by lying down. When life closes a door, sometimes you have to push the next door open.



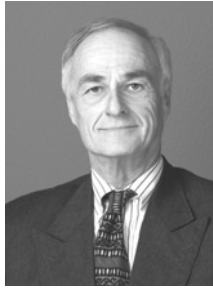
Photo: Linda H. Clever, M.D. and James Clever, M.D.

3) Keep learning; take courses; keep current. 4) Improve your sense of humor. Five practices they endorse are: a) people who feel great have strong relationships b) people age better with a sense of spirituality and religion. c) Take care of yourself (no one else will do it for you). d) Like what you do. e) Have the sense that you can play the hand that is dealt to you.

A panel discussion, led by Commissioner James Monson, featured Joe O’Hehir, CEO, Whistlestop Active Aging Center; Lorraine Harris, Volunteer Coordinator for Senior & Youth Services, Jewish Family & Children Services; Kathy Henderson, Director, Osher Lifelong Institute at Dominican University of California and Susan Kraemer, Program Manager, Experience Corps of Marin on numerous programs for seniors, either as participants or volunteers. They talked about how seniors enrich their lives by tutoring, mentoring, and continuing to learn and grow well into their later years.

During lunch, local entertainer Noah Griffin sang Nat “King” Cole songs, with keyboard player Ross Gualco.

The symposium, attended by a near-capacity group of almost 350, was inspiring, entertaining, thought-provoking and a great success.



A Message from the Commission Chair

By Allan Bortel
Chair, Commission on Aging

This will be my last column. It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Marin County Commission on Aging these last two years. For a right brainer, I had to struggle a bit, but finally grasped the usual parliamentary procedures, as well as getting the timing right so the meetings could end on time. My deepest thanks to past Chair and parliamentarian Dr. Roberta Romeo.

I want to thank the members of the Commission for all their participation in the activities of our committees and the fine debates we had at the Executive Committee meetings. My only regret is that many members do not see themselves as committee chairs or officers of the Commission. I believe that the appointing bodies (County Supervisors, towns and cities) should be aware of the necessity to step up after a year or two to help manage the work of the Commission. This needs to be made explicit with those making appointments to make it known to Commission applicants.

Our staff at the Division of Aging and Adult Services is stretched very thin, but has held up its share of the responsibility for keeping the Commission relevant and effective. Our Commissioners also need to hold up their end of managing the work of their Commission.

Perhaps it is time to promote the idea that commissioners should be paid a small stipend for their meeting attendance. I, personally, am predicting an unexpected jump in state/county tax revenue. As history shows us, the business cycle goes up as well as down. In fact, the upswing has already shown up in transit funding through the passage of Marin's Measure A \$0.05 cent sales tax.

Finally, I urge Commissioners to stay in touch with their constituents and appointing bodies. I urge non-members to get involved in our local aging issues by joining our committees as public members.

If you are interested, contact staff at 415-473-4636 for more information.

New Commissioner

By Nancy Sangster-De Haan
Chair, Public Information Committee

Luanne Mullin has been appointed by the City of Mill Valley as its representative to the Marin Commission on Aging. She has been a resident of Mill Valley for 15 years and a resident of Marin County for about 30 years. She is a Project Manager for the University of California at San Francisco where she is responsible for developing, planning and managing the construction of scientific research laboratories, faculty office suites, clinics and student housing.

She says, "Marin has a thriving aging population that has tremendous talents and resources to contribute to the vitality of this county. By serving on this Commission, I hope to be part of the team that taps and supports this ever growing population."

Luanne has a Master's degree from Harvard University in Administration, Social Policy and Planning and a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from John F. Kennedy University.

Grand Kids are Talking

By Sandy Miller
Commissioner and California Senior Legislature Senator

Question: What do you love about being with your grandparent(s)?

Rory, 3 years: I call them Grammy and Grampy. They read books to me.

Emma, 3 years: I don't have a grandpa. I like to play with my grandma and pet my doggies.

Ryan, 3 years: My grandpa reads to me when I go to sleep and then he kisses me.

Dylan, 4 years: I like when they give me a popsicle and when they take my doggie and we get to go to the playground.

Anaya, 5 years: I like to give my grandma and grandpa hugs and I like to play with my grandma and eat with her.

Cooper, 6 years: They take me fishing.

Ryan, 8 years: I get to do things that I don't usually get to do.

State Award For the Chair of the Commission

By Elizabeth Moody
Commissioner, District 3



Allan Bortel, current chair of Marin County Commission on Aging, has won this year's California State Volunteer Service Award. He received the Volunteer of the Year award on May 3, 2011 in Monterey at the May 2-4, 2011 Aging Services Annual Conference. Allan was appointed to the Marin County Commission on Aging by his town of Tiburon. In addition to chairing the Commission during this year, he chaired its Housing and Transportation Committee over the five previous years. He is retired as a vice president of Tamalpais Bank and has continued soliciting and receiving the banks' generous donations to local causes.

Over the past 12 years, Allan has made himself available to help many of The Redwoods Retirement Community's 330 residents with repair of computers and their Internet problems. He was instrumental in connecting the complex to an Internet provider made free for the residents. He was available when anyone phoned him with a problem, along with regularly signed up on one day a week.

Allan also attends most monthly meetings of Mill Valley Affordable Housing Committee and was instrumental in Marin Housing reestablishing its shared housing program. With his big heart and caring nature, he well deserves recognition for his many years of outstanding service to Commission on Aging, to The Redwoods Retirement Community and to all the seniors of the county of Marin. Congratulations Allan!

From the Director's Desk

By Nick Trunzo, LCSW, MS
Director, Division of Aging & Adult Services



I am very pleased to announce that the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging has awarded an Aging Innovations & Achievement Award to our hospital-to-home transition program, Project Independence. This prestigious award will be presented to us at the annual conference in Washington, DC this July.

Project Independence (PI) is an integral part of the services provided by the Division of Aging and Adult Services, assisting individuals at the time of hospital discharge. Returning home from the hospital after an illness can be very stressful, especially for individuals who are isolated, lacking family support, or who are finding it difficult to manage their hospital discharge plans independently. PI provides assistance to help them follow through with discharge plans and medications orders from the doctor and the hospital. In addition, PI will coordinate and arrange for community services that may be helpful such as home health care, home-delivered meals, public benefit programs, companionship and transportation to follow-up medical appointments. This is all done by a dedicated group of public health nurses, student nurses, community volunteers and support staff.

PI has been very successful in bridging the gap between the participants' discharge from the hospital and the restoration of their independence, autonomy and quality of life at home. I would like to especially acknowledge Rita Widergren, Supervising Public Health Nurse, who manages this program and has nurtured its success from the beginning. For me, it is inspirational to work with the many creative and dedicated staff in Aging and Adult Services. I am proud that Rita has been recognized with a national award for the fine work that she and her team have done in providing assistance to those who need help when they come home from the hospital.

Vial of Life

The Vial of Life is an easy way to keep all your medical information readily available in your home. The Vial of Life is free and available at fire stations in Marin County. Complete the information sheet, place in Vial of Life and keep in your refrigerator.

Keep your information current! The easy-to-do Vial of Life helps paramedics when called to your home at a time of an emergency situation.

Spotlight on Marin Senior Resource

Division Grants \$100,000 to Support Family Caregivers

By Ana Bagtas
Coordinator, Division of Aging & Adult Services

The Division of Aging and Adult Services proudly announces the approval of a \$100,000 grant to support family and informal caregivers in Marin County. Responding to the Request for Proposal issued by the Division in January 2011, the Alzheimer's Association led the submission of a collaborative application that proposes to provide a comprehensive array of services for family caregivers. Family caregivers are defined as individuals providing unpaid care to an older person age 60 or over or someone who has a diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's. Family caregivers do not have to be related by blood to the person needing care and may be a neighbor, friend, partner, or acquaintance.

With this grant, the Alzheimer's Association will work collaboratively with Family Caregiver Alliance, Jewish Family & Children's Services, Lighthouse of Marin, Marin Adult Day Health Center/Lifelong, Senior Access, Spectrum LGBT Center, and West Marin Senior Services to provide case management, counseling, respite care, support group, trainings and other services. The contract will start July 1, 2011.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program was introduced in the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act in 2000. The addition of this program in the Older American Act, which was first enacted in 1965, validates the contributions of millions of individuals who provide uncompensated support to older adults and persons with dementia or Alzheimer's who need care.

For more information about services and resources available for family caregivers in Marin County, call 457-INFO (457-4636) or the Alzheimer's Association at 472-4340.

The "Spotlight on Marin Senior Resource" is a regular column in Great Age that aims to inform older persons and caregivers of programs funded by the Division of Aging and Adult Services as well as other resources available for seniors in the community.

Team of Volunteers Fight Elder Abuse

By Michele McCabe
Coordinator, Division of Aging & Adult Services

The Marin County Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) will celebrate its first anniversary this May 2011. There are 21 Marin volunteers who have logged-in over 225 volunteer hours through March 31, 2011. The average age of a FAST volunteer is 63.6 years old, with seven volunteers over the age of seventy. There is a wealth of expertise on the team with people from accounting, law, business banking to name just a few.

The team has branched out into three main areas:

1) There are seventeen volunteers on the financial expert roster. These experts provide record review and opinions on cases being investigated by the various police departments and adult protective services.

2) There are twelve volunteers on the Community Education sub-committee. These peer educators will be out in the community doing presentations on elder abuse prevention. The presentations will begin this summer in collaboration with our partner Elder Financial Protection Network (EFPN). They will begin doing presentations at places where seniors live i.e.: retirement communities, senior housing, residential care facilities, board & care home and skilled nursing facilities. The group hopes to branch out into organizations and groups all across Marin.

3) The last group is a team of five volunteers who are assisting the Office of the Marin County Public Guardian with reorganizing their representative payee program. These are dedicated persons who work on budgets and financial activities, helping those who are unable to handle their own financial affairs.

At the present time, the FAST volunteer program is closed to new volunteers. However, in the future, if there is a need, the Division will conduct a public recruitment.

Proverb of the Day:

"A word to the wise is not sufficient if it doesn't make sense." ~ James Thurber

Tips for Successful Aging



- Stay True to Yourself
- Keep Friendships Thriving
- Make a Difference by Volunteering
- Keep Your Body Moving
- Keep Your Brain Active
- Learn About Housing Options
- Safety-Proof Your House
- Consolidate Important Papers
- Be Aware of Frauds and Scams
- List and Understand Your Medications
- Complete an Advanced Health Care Directive (AHCD)
- Give Copies of Your AHCD to Your Family & Your M.D.
- Set Up a Vial of Life and Update as Needed
- Eat Well
- Plan for a Crisis
- Change Happens – Don't Fight It!
- Communicate With and Cherish Your Family
- Accept Help Graciously When Needed

Courtesy of the Public Information Committee of the Marin County Commission on Aging

The Intergenerational Communication Project

By Sandy Miller

Commissioner and California Senior Legislature Senator

Dominican University in San Rafael and older adult residents in their neighborhood (you must be over 60 years of age) are participating in a pilot project with pre-med students. Every week, students visit their older neighbors in their homes or the school cafeteria for social interaction and conversation. Since the program started in 2010, 16 older adults and 28 pre-med students have been paired up.

The project provides an opportunity to impress upon future doctors and health care professionals the experience in communicating with the elderly and improving their understanding of the life of older adults. Lessons learned from this project may be shared with organizations serving older persons as well as academic institutions to stimulate discussion about community and academic-based strategies to bridge communication between generations, prevent social isolation of elders, and inspire future healthcare professionals to pursue careers in geriatric care.

Some of the trainings of the students have been in elder abuse detection and reporting, basics of dementia and Alzheimer's, resources for older adults in Marin, human diversity and effective communication. The students are also interns of Marin County Volunteer Program and have been cleared with a criminal background check and fingerprinting.

This program is a collaboration of The Marin County Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Prevention Hub, California State University East Bay, Dominican University in San Rafael, Jewish Family and Children's Services and the National Park Service.

Choices for Living

Choices for Living is a free publication produced by the Marin County Division of Aging and Adult Services. It is a housing resource guide for Marin County older adults that defines housing options in Marin. Differences between retirement residences, residential care homes, skilled nursing facilities and housing assistance agencies and programs are explained. The guide also includes tips on how to choose the right housing option for you or your loved one. Copies are available through the Division and the publication is also on our website: www.co.marin.ca.us/aging.

Don't Let Downsizing Get You Down

By Donna Robbins
Commissioner, District 4

Downsizing! The word strikes terror in the hearts of many who are contemplating a move or just want to clean out the "stuff." The problem most people have is that the word downsizing seems to be a negative. In reality, it is a very positive endeavor. You get a new start, you can let go of things you don't need, you can review what you own, you find things you forgot you had, you can dig out from under, you can give Grandma's hutch to the kids and, last but not least, you feel as though a cement weight has been lifted off your head. By the way, it's never too early to start.

What we must understand about downsizing is that it is a psychological shift. We need to change the perception of real need versus perceived need and understand that the perception of the need is greater than the need itself. We are programmed to believe that bigger is better, that more is better.

I have devised a list of six points which I use in helping decide what to take when making a move.

- **What will fit:** What you will need to determine what will fit is a floor plan of your new home. You can draw one yourself if where you are moving does not offer one. Use a 1/4 inch scale drawing paper to help with the plan. When you measure, make sure to measure all the smaller walls and spaces as you can get much more in an apartment or smaller space than you think without it being too crowded.



- **What you need:** Think about how you live, what rooms you live in and what pieces you use and don't use. You don't have to bring pieces just because you have them. Make smart choices.

- **What you want:** You will be surprised when you compare your lists of fit, need and want. You will be able to bring much more of what you want than you think.

- **Sentimental:** These are the pieces that will make your house a home. Pictures, knickknacks, rugs, items made by loved ones, special gifts and family heirlooms.

- **Functional:** Functional means taking pieces that have storage space versus flat tables etc. It is also choosing pieces that can have a dual function; a dresser that can accommodate a TV on the end, an entry piece that has drawers or a coffee table with a second shelf.
- **Aesthetic:** Whatever you bring you will create an attractive and comfortable space. Don't bring items that may be beautiful but don't fit well or are not pieces that you love.

Getting started is the hardest part. Excuses I hear are: It won't take too long, I don't have much stuff, I have plenty of time and I can get someone to do it for me. Well guess what? Time flies, you have more stuff than you think it will take twice as long as you think it will and there are many decisions only you can make.

Make a plan and stick to it. In the end, be smart about your choices. If you don't love it lose it! A client of mine once told me that downsizing is a good way to keep your grown children from moving back home.



Mark Your Calendars!

The 2011 Marin Senior Information Fair
Wednesday, October 19, 2011
Marin Exhibit Hall, San Rafael, 9:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

This year's Senior Information Fair theme is **"Seize the Day!" – Communicate, Connect, Contribute at the Senior Fair.** To find out more by calling 456.FAIR (3247) or go to www.marinseniorinformationfair.org.

Commission Committees Keep Busy

Housing & Transportation Committee: The committee's focus has been improving senior mobility in Marin County. Working with Marin Transit and Whistlestop Wheels, committee members have made suggestions and discussed various strategies. A major project has been the launching of the Mobility Management Center with a one stop phone number: 454-0902. Speakers at meetings have covered a variety of Committee interests from low income housing, shared housing, assistance for persons with disabilities and transportation safety for older adults. The committee also continues to monitor progress on housing elements and Marin Village. Sue Beittel serves as committee chairperson.

Legislative Committee: The Legislative Committee looks at legislation both written by our elected legislature as well as members of the California Senior Legislature (CSL). Ellie Bloch serves as the committee chairperson, and she has been a member for six years of the CSL. Sandy Miller, another member of the committee also serves on the CSL. The committee reviews legislation that effects the senior population of our county. They meet about eight or nine months out of the year to discuss and make recommendation to the Marin County Commission on Aging on legislation which should be supported, watched or opposed. Members have supported and advocated for several elder abuse bills this year, as well as key legislation important to the well being of older adults and disable persons. Members of the public are welcome to attend committee meetings and may call 457-INFO (4636) for more information.

Nutrition Committee: The primary focus of the Nutrition Committee is to insure quality meals for the Home-Delivered and Congregate Meal Programs. Committee members visit congregate meal sites to sample meals and interview both participants and providers. Victor Buick, director of Marin Meals on Wheels, the provider of nutritious home-delivered meals to Marin's frail older adults, updates the committee at its quarterly meetings. Marin Meals on Wheels, at the end of fiscal year 2010-11, will have served at least 7,000 more meals than its contracted 68,513 meals. Support for the Elderly Nutrition Programs comes from federal and state funding, as well as community donations. These programs are essential to older adults and deserve increased community support. Roberta Michels

serves as committee chairperson.

Planning Committee: The Planning Committee had three large projects this year, making this a very active committee. The Commission on Aging was engaged in finding information on family caregiving in November, which was useful in preparing the January Request-for-Proposal for the Family Caregiver Support Program. The contract was awarded in February 2011 to the Alzheimer's Association and 7 co-applicant non-profit agencies working together. The "Healthy Caregiving" educational program for the February Commission meeting was planned by this committee. Finally, the Area Plan Update FY 2011-2012 was completed for presentation to the public at the April Commission meeting. The Planning Committee is charged with helping to develop a new four-year Area Plan this fall. The committee meets quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 1:30pm. Roberta Romeo is the chairperson of the Planning Committee. Please join us!

Public Information Committee: This year, the Planning Committee coordinated three issues of the *Great Age* newsletter; planned and presented a public education program to the June Commission on Aging about "Downsizing Without A Breakdown"; created the Commission booth for the Senior Fair; developed a list, "Tips for Successful Aging," distributed at the Healthy Aging Symposium and hosted a table at the Symposium featuring information about many programs for older adults in Marin County. The Public Information Committee is chaired by Nancy Sangster-De Haan.

The Health Committee: The Health Committee, led by a new chairperson, Commissioner Pat Lewis, completed their two major objectives this year. An article was published in *Great Age* regarding the inherent dangers of mixing prescription drugs with alcohol. The Committee planned a well-received presentation at the March Commission on Aging meeting entitled "Facts, Myths and Perceptions About Mixing Prescription Drugs with Alcohol." The group also had presentations regarding pole walking and Marin's new relationship with Partnership Health Plan of California. The committee is currently updating the *Fall Prevention Resource Guide* as well as participating in long-term strategic planning for fall prevention activities with a group of community stakeholders. The goal is to establish sustainable and coordinated fall prevention programs in Marin.

Marin County Commission on Aging

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www.co.marin.ca.us/aging

Featured in This Issue

Reshape Your Destiny

We welcome your comments, questions and feedback! Please call 499-7185 or send an e-mail to agingandadult@co.marin.ca.us

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Committee Meetings are held at the Division of Aging's facilities at 10 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. For details call 499-7396.

<p>Topic: <i>GenSient</i>, Film Viewing and Panel Discussion</p> <p>Speakers: Stu Maddux, Filmmaker, Director, and Producer; special guests.</p> <p>Place: Margaret Todd Senior Center, Hill Community Room, 1560 Hill Road, Novato</p>	<p>Topic: Cultural Diversity Training</p> <p>Commission Recess: No meeting</p>	<p>Speaker: David Escobar, Aide to Supervisor Steve Kinsey; and Rocio Hernandez, Marin County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health</p> <p>Place: Marguerita Johnson Senior Center, 640 Drake Avenue, Marin City</p>
<p>September 8</p>	<p>August</p>	<p>July 14</p>

The public is invited to participate in all meetings held by the Commission and its Committees. Commission meetings are held on the second 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:

Summer 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.

Also, check out the *Network of Care*, Marin's comprehensive online search tool at www.marin.networkofcare.org/aging.

Call the Marin Adult Information and Referral Line at 457-INFO (457-4636).

Find the service that's right for you!