



Senior Mobility Action Council

A Work Group of the Contra Costa County Advisory Council On Aging

SMAC meets on the
4th Monday of each month
9:00 am - 11:00 am
300 Ellinwood Way
Bodega Bay Room
Pleasant Hill, CA

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- Michael Prilutsky
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- Debbie Toth
- Elaine Welch
- Leslie Young
- Ray Zenoni - Assistant Editor

Invisible by Ray Zenoni—Senior Advocate



Who lives here? Could it be Susan?

You might not know Susan but she lives down the street from you. She is elderly now; but there was a time when she was young, had a family, had friends, and was very active in the community. As the years passed, her children pursued lives of their own and moved away. Her family and friends from the old neighborhood slowly disappeared. Then her spouse passed away, leaving her totally alone. Finally she had to give up her car and her mobility and her connection to the

outside world. With a limited income, she has very few options and now spends her days sitting alone, often without nutritious food or the ability to get to her medical appointments. No one comes to see her; no one cares, and no one knows. Maybe someday someone will visit Susan, give her a call, take her grocery shopping or take her to a medical appointment. Maybe someone you know. Maybe You!

If you can spare a little time, even occasionally to help someone like Susan, contact one of the organizations below. Susan is anxiously waiting. Research has proven that loneliness and isolation often lead to illness and a shortened life.

- John Muir Caring Hands 952-2999
- Lamorinda Spirit Van 283-3534
- Pleasant Hill Senior Van 671-5272
- San Ramon Senior Van 973-3250
- Senior Helpline Services Rides for Seniors 284-6161

“Get Around” Taxi Program by Ben Hornstein

Concord Commission on Aging

The City of Concord is ready to launch an easy-to-use flexible travel option for qualified Concord residents. Up to \$120 of taxi script will be sold per senior per month at 50% of cost at

the Concord Senior Center. 10% is deducted from the meter. The taxi service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Service is provided within Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez,

and Walnut Creek. The driver will help with folding walkers and wheelchairs and packages. An ID card costs \$5. Call 925-671-3320, Select Option 1.

For information about SMAC email Mary Bruns at mbruns@lovelafayette.org

Senior Transportation in East Contra Costa County

By Ken Gray—Tri Delta Transit Board Member

Transportation needs in Eastern Contra Costa County are changing. By 2017, Highway 4 will have more lanes; E-Bart will be providing a newer, faster way to travel; and there are discussions for a ferry service based in Antioch. As our population ages, there will be more seniors in need of transportation. The cur-

rent East County primary provider is Tri Delta Transit which offers a number of services targeted at our seniors. The service begins with "Rider Training" which provides the opportunity for a demonstration and supervised bus ride to get acquainted with the services.

Older adults who ride the bus are never

alone. Courteous drivers are available for assistance with paying the fare using the fare box, seating, lift service, and bus and transfer information to your destination. From senior discounts to Dial-A-Ride for low income and disabled riders, there are a variety of services. Call Tri Delta Transit at 925- 757-6622 to



learn more about how they can support your ability to be independent. Or visit them online at www.trideltatransit.com.

Call the Fall
Prevention
Manager at (925)
937-8311 or email
us at
staff@mowsos.org

Fall Prevention by Ray Zenoni—Senior Advocate

In Contra Costa County, falls are the leading cause of accidental injuries for residents 65 and older. If you're a senior (60 years or older) or an unpaid caregiver to a senior, you can request a free

home safety assessment. A licensed occupational therapist will evaluate your home and make safety recommendations. Then we will work with a licensed contractor to modify your home. For example, we

might install grab bars, a hand-held shower, a shower seat, or bed bars—depending on the assessed need. We're in the office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 925-937-8311

What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults

- "Most older adults want to age in place. They prefer to stay in their current homes and communities.
- The older population is made up of many groups, and while there are some common preferences, there are differences. For example:
 - ◇ Many African Americans make social connections at church.
 - ◇ Personal safety is more of a concern for family caregivers, people with disabilities, non-drivers, and people with lower incomes.
 - ◇ Renters find funding for affordable housing programs to be particularly important.
- These findings...indicate that preferences of older adults are complex, intertwined, and sometimes conflicting..." AARP Public Policy Institute



Older Adults Enjoying Lunch at C.C. Café—Walnut Creek Senior Center

Meet a Few of the Lamorinda Spirit Van Drivers

by Mary Bruns, Program Coordinator and Mauna Wagner, Dispatcher/Driver



Malcolm, who retired in 2005 after 40 years in the world of finance, joined us in the Fall of 2006 as one of our two very first volunteer drivers. With two grown children, four grandchildren, an interest in old cars, gardening, and hiking, you would think Mal would be too busy, but he has volunteered for us for eight years.

Lunch driver, **Eddie**, enjoys taking passengers to the Walnut Creek Senior Center C.C. Café for the congregate lunch program and adds an occasional trip to places like Sausalito and the San Francisco Zoo. Eddie has driven paratransit vans for the past 13 years driving our passengers mid

day and the developmentally disabled in the mornings and late afternoons.

Mauna is both a volunteer driver and one of our three dispatchers. She retired from Pacific Bell after 30 years in telecommunications and is an avid hiker, quilter, and a voracious reader. She also volunteers for John Muir Hospital and the Leshner Center. Mauna and her husband, Jack, recently completed their “visit all 50 states” goal in planes and cars – not in a van.

Attorney, **Holly**, still has young children at home – twin 11-year old boys and an eight-year old daughter. Although they keep her hopping with their activities, hobbies, and school, Holly pursues her interests in design, decorating, and playing tennis when she has a little free time as well as driving for the Lamorinda Spirit.

John retired from PG & E in 2010 where he spent 38 years specializing in labor law. Besides driving for the Lamorinda Spirit Van, John coaches tennis for local high school students in the late summer, early fall. He and his wife, Gale, regularly visit their son who now lives in Amsterdam with his wife and their toddler son, Noah.

Warren came to us with a background in finance. Now that he has retired, he wants to contribute. As with many of our drivers, he has an elderly parent which makes him aware of seniors’ needs. Warren finds it interesting to talk to our passengers, many who lived in this area before it was built up. Warren lives in Orinda and enjoys golf, tennis, yoga, bowling, and working out. We would love to see you join our extraordinary team of volunteer drivers who take Lamorinda older adults to medical appointments, the grocery store, and errands so they can live in their own homes.

Our passengers
appreciate this service
that allows them to
continue to live in their
own homes.



Holly

What are the Requirements to be a Volunteer Driver?

Programs vary in their requirements. Here are some of the usual ones:

- Age 25-75
- Finger printing
- Driver’s License, 10-year DMV Driving Record, DMV Pull Notice
- References, Insurance
- Good health—perhaps a note from your doctor
- Orientation/training
- Supervised practice driving (for van programs such as the Lamorinda Spirit)

SMAC Mission—To address transportation barriers and gaps in service experienced by Contra Costa older adults through education, advocacy and the promotion of effective coordination of services and mobility management that enhances the autonomy and independence of older adults in Contra Costa County.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research

“Over the past two decades, a growing body of research indicates that volunteering provides not just social benefits, but individual health benefits as well. This research has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer....A more comprehensive review of this research can be found in the full report, which can be downloaded at www.nationalservice.org



*Volunteering,
Serenity & Health*

Eating Well for Seniors by Leslie Young, Rossmoor Transportation

Eating well is vital for everyone at all ages. Whatever your age, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health and in how you look and feel. Seniors have very different nutritional needs than teenagers, children, and even middle-aged adults. Some changes that a senior adult may experience are: metabolism slowing down, changes to your digestive system and changes in appetite. Age-related changes can affect how your body processes food, which influences your dietary needs and affects your appetite.

Eating a well-planned, balanced mix of foods every day has many health benefits and can ward off potential health problems. For instance, eating well may reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, bone loss, and anemia. Nutritious foods will also help you maintain a healthy weight and can boost your energy level and may also help you reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and manage diabetes.

To eat healthier, you can start by taking small steps, making one change at a time. For instance, you can switch to whole-grain bread, seafood, or more vegetables and fruits when you shop. Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals — and choose the foods with lower sodium numbers.

The National Institute on Aging suggests two food guide options for seniors:

The USDA Food Guide MyPlate Plan. This plan offers tips for building a healthy, balanced diet, including:

- Half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Half your grains being whole grains.
- Enjoy your food, but eat less.

The DASH Diet. The DASH eating plan includes all the key food groups, but is designed to help reduce blood pressure and emphasizes foods that are heart healthy. Recommended daily serving amounts:

- Grains: 7 to 8 ounces
- Meat and beans: 6 ounces or less of chicken, meat, and fish *plus* 4 to 5 servings of nuts, seeds, and/or dried beans per week
- Milk: 2 to 3 cups
- Vegetables: 2 to 2.5 cups
- Fruit: 2 to 2.5 cups
- Oils: 2 teaspoons

Eating healthier helps keep up your energy level. If you become less physically active as you age, you will probably need fewer calories to stay at the same weight. Choosing mostly nutrient-dense foods which have a lot of nutrients but relatively few calories can give you the nutrients you need while keeping down calorie intake. Be sure to check with your doctor or registered dietitian about foods you should include or avoid in your daily diet.