



**Commission  
on  
Aging**

# Senior Update

*...The Eyes & Ears of Alameda County Seniors*  
**Senior Information & Assistance: 1-800-510-2020**

*Senior Update*

*April/May/June 2007*

## Senior Injury Prevention Conference



By Colleen M. Campbell  
Senior Injury Prevention  
Program Coordinator

On May 10, 2007 the Senior Injury Prevention Partnership will host the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Senior Injury Prevention Conference at Samuel

Merritt College. This year the conference will focus on the role of medications on injury risk. The use/misuse and mixing of over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies, prescription and alternative medications can have a major impact on the safety of older adults and is a significant cause of hospitalizations. In 2003 there were nearly 3000 older adults in California admitted to the hospital for poisoning due to medication mishaps.

Conference speakers will explore medication related topics including: common mistakes, problems with mixing medications, and issues that arise when older adults are discharged from hospital to home and experience confusion about pre-hospital and post-hospital medications. Attendees will learn about the effect of medications on fall risk, driving safety, suicides, and general health and safety. There will be breakout sessions on: Evaluation Tools for Senior Injury Prevention Programs, Effective Communication between Medical and Non-medical Providers, and a session focused on Creating Tools for Non-medical Senior Service Providers to raise their awareness about circumstances that could indicate potential medication problems. The cost of the conference is \$65, which includes a Continental Breakfast and Lunch. There are limited scholarships for student nurses, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. For more information about this year's conference contact Colleen Campbell at (510) 577-3535 or go online to:

[http://www.acgov.org/ems/SIPP\\_conference.htm](http://www.acgov.org/ems/SIPP_conference.htm)

## Have You Seen These Seniors?



By Barbara Faulkner

Executive Director, Lavender Seniors

Many of today's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) elders are isolated from their families because they come from a generation when homophobia was the norm in

American society. A large percentage of this population lived their lives in the closet. Many of those who made it out of the closet have gone back in again as they become frail and dependent on possibly homophobic caregivers or are placed in nursing homes where they fear bigotry. Because of this, many LGBT seniors who live in compromised health and living situations find themselves totally isolated from their community and lonely.

Given the circumstances, these isolated and homebound LGBT seniors are hard to find in order to let them know of the services that Lavender Seniors of the East Bay can provide. This is where you come in. Do you come across any of these seniors in the course of your work? Are they neighbors of yours? Family members?

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay has a Friendly Visitor program for these seniors. The Friendly Visitor may help with doctor visits and shopping or go for walks or for other entertainment with the senior, or the visitor may just visit and converse with the senior. Regardless of the activity, the Friendly Visitor provides company and a connection to the LGBT community.

Would you spend a few minutes thinking about any LGBT seniors you may know who may be living at home or in residential care facilities and who might appreciate a friendly face and a regular visitor? If you can think of someone, please contact Pat Cull at Lavender Seniors by phone at 510-667-9655 or by email at [pat@lavenderseniors.org](mailto:pat@lavenderseniors.org).

## Dream Comes True

By Christine Steiner  
Commissioner, Pleasanton

On January 17, 2007 a dream came true for a group of committed Pleasanton residents. For over 10 years they worked on providing an assisted living facility with 105 units of which 31 are affordable and 20 comprise the dementia wing.

The Parkview assisted living community proves that persistence and patience pays off. This could not have happened without the unfailing commitment of past and current city council members, housing and planning commissions and the task force assigned to making it happen. The city's commitment to providing 3.5 acres of city owned land next door to the Pleasanton Senior Center was critical for the project.

City staff worked closely with the task force to guide them through numerous interviews to find a developer equally committed to the concept of providing market rate and affordable units. Tours of existing facilities were an invaluable learning experience, helping the members of the task force to define what they wanted to see in the Pleasanton project.

Why did it take so long to bring it to fruition? First, partners in the project fell by the wayside for various reasons. Second, banks were uneasy about lending to projects that have affordable units. Fortunately, the selection of Bridge Housing and the management team of ESKATON proved a winner. What better way to realize the dream than two non-profit organizations equally committed to providing quality care to seniors.

As our population ages, many seniors face declining health. Providing assisted living for seniors lacking the financial resources needed to pay for market rate units is an unaddressed challenge. Many families face a harsh reality as dementia, in its many forms, strikes their loved ones. The financial burden can be overwhelming. Note: The Parkview monthly rent for market rate units is \$4,700-\$5,900 and for affordable units it is \$978 and \$1,957.

Hopefully, the success of The Parkview will encourage banking institutions to finance new assisted living facilities so our seniors can age with the dignity they so richly deserve.

For information on The Parkview, please call 925-461-3042.

## Do you or anyone you know have difficulty using a standard telephone?

By Sharif Frink,  
CTAP/CRS

If you answered yes to the above question, you can benefit from the services provided by California Telephone Access Program



(CTAP) and the California Relay Service (CRS).

The California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) provides **free** specialized telephone equipment to California residents with difficulty hearing, seeing, moving, speaking, or remembering. The California Relay Service (CRS) provides a **free** service that enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and speech-disabled to communicate on the telephone. When an individual dials 711, specially trained operators voice or re-voice (for speech-disabled callers) to hearing callers and type to Deaf or hard of hearing callers. CTAP and CRS are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and are funded by a small surcharge on all California telephone bills (California Relay Services and Communication Devices Funds), which covers equipment, services, the shipping of equipment, and the repair of the equipment.

In order to qualify for the program, potential participants must live in California, have telephone service where they live, and be certified by a medical doctor or other authorized agent listed in the CTAP Certification Form brochure. Impairments can be permanent or temporary.

For more information or to schedule a presentation, please call 510-501-9226 (Voice), 510-302-1179 (TTY), or email Sharif Frink at [sharif@ddtp.org](mailto:sharif@ddtp.org).

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## A Book Review

By Frank Howell  
Commissioner, Hayward

### How to Live Well Without A Car

By Chris Balish

Ten Speed Press, Berkeley –paperback, \$12.95

Chris Balish has certainly stimulated our thought processes regarding the issue of transportation in today's high-pressure society. He lays out a wealth of facts and figures proving that owning an automobile is not a cheap investment. There is the cost of purchase, gas, oil, repair, and insurance. Driving a car consumes one fifth of our daily budget. Owning a home is the only item that is more expensive.

He also warns us of the dangers of resulting air pollution, the risk of accidents, and driving as an alternative to walking.

This is all well meant and handy to know. But the real meat of the book is in parts two and three which deal with how to function without an automobile when you are a senior who can no longer drive.

Balish offers much useful information about the use of public transportation: buses and subway systems like BART. He also argues for the joys of walking, bicycling, motorcycling, and car-pooling. The San Francisco Bay Area is cited as one of the top American cities for helping people get around.

There is some room for compromise here. One approach is to keep the car, but reduce one's dependence on it. I've done this myself by using BART. But there are many places and situations that BART can't cover, like traveling to residential areas at night. Some seniors are unable to go out at night.

The author recommends having groceries delivered and shopping online. He also refers to car sharing services that allow individuals to reserve cars on an hourly basis to run errands.

**How To Live Well Without A Car** can be worth reading even though it can't provide comprehensive answers. Senior driving is an issue that won't be resolved anytime soon.

*Note: For information about Driver Safety and mobility discussion groups, contact Colleen Campbell, Senior Injury Prevention Program, 510-577-3535.*

## TipBits

### News That Will Do Your Heart Good

By Sylvia Stadmire  
Commissioner, San Leandro

Even if your doctor gave you a clean bill of health at your last checkup, you may want to check it again. Doctors are rethinking heart-health indicators, such as blood pressure and cholesterol readings, and in the case of the former, they've devised a new standard for what's healthy and what is not.

#### Blood Pressure Drop

Adults with a blood pressure reading of 120/80, a reading long considered to be within the limits of normal, stand a chance of developing heart disease, according to a review of more than 30 studies. The new standard now classifies 120/80 as pre-hypertensive, a condition that can lead to stroke, heart attack, and kidney failure. "Now 120/80 serves as a wake-up call for people to start making lifestyle changes," says Sheldon G. Sheps, M.D., who serves on the National Institutes of Health Committee that drafted the new guidelines.

#### **BLOOD PRESSURE**

**Old Normal:** 120/80 to 139/89

**New Normal:** less than 120/80

**Prehypertensive:** 120/80 to 139/89

**Hypertensive:** more than 140/90

#### What You Should Do

If your blood pressure is 120/80 or higher, get tested every year (get tested once every two years if your blood pressure is less than 120/80). Blood pressure monitors can be purchased. For an accurate reading, sit (don't lie down, doing so can skew the reading by causing blood pressure to drop) and don't talk (talking can trigger a rise in blood pressure), says Dr. Sheps. In addition, being anxious about being in a doctor's office may cause blood pressure to spike, so if you're feeling nervous, ask your physician to do the reading at the end of the visit when you're calmer.

For more information, see the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website:

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/).

**Senior Update**

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 Advisory Commission on Aging  
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**SENIOR INFORMATION****Older Americans Month 2007**

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy's meeting with the National Council of Senior Citizens served as a prelude to designating May as "Senior Citizens Month." Following President Jimmy Carter's 1980 designation, the celebration is now called "Older Americans Month." The theme for 2007 is "*Older Americans: Making Choices for a Healthier Future.*" For more information see the U.S. Administration on Aging website, [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov).

Local senior agencies carry out the Older Americans Month theme year-round. Some upcoming events include:

**Nutrition for Older Adults** featuring speaker Mary Louise Zernicke, MS,MPH,RD. April 17-June 20, programs at Alameda County Library branches. For details see [www.aclibrary.org](http://www.aclibrary.org) or call 510-745-1499.

**Step Out for Senior Center Day Walk** presented by Union City Senior Center, Saturday, May 12, 8:30 a.m.. For information call 510-489-6629.

**Dublin Senior Center presents "Dare to Prepare"**, Saturday, May 19, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., featuring information about emergency preparedness. For details call 925-556-4511.

**Second Annual Recreation for Life** presented by Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, Saturday, May 19, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Kennedy Park for details call 510-881-6766.

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Older Americans Month Celebration** presented by The City of Oakland, Wednesday, May 23, Frank H. Ogawa Plaza. For details call 510-238-3121.

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Healthy Living Festival**, Friday, July 20, Lake Merritt. Presented by United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County. For details see [www.usoac.org](http://www.usoac.org) or call 510-729-0852.

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual Healthy Aging Fair** sponsored by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging will be held on Wednesday, September 12, 2007 at Centennial Hall located at 22292 Foothill Blvd., Hayward, CA. For details call 510-577-3532.

**California Senior Leaders Awards**

Congratulations to three members of the Oakland Mayor's Commission on Aging who received the prestigious California Senior Leaders Award. The award is given to 30 seniors each year. The Commissioners who received awards are Chairperson Brenda Crawford, Vice Chair Bobbi Bond, and former Chair Frank Rose. In addition, the former chair of the Alameda Advisory Council on Aging, Joanna Selby, was also a recipient.

Funded by The California Wellness Foundation through a grant to UC Berkeley's School of Public Health, the California Senior Leaders Program brings visibility to older California volunteers who have made real and lasting contributions to healthy aging and community building.