



Senior Update

Commission
on
Aging

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March/April 2004

VOTE



by Doug Brown

“It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms tried from time to time.” Winston Churchill

When many bemoan that no one participates any more in our democracy, seniors are on a different page. Seniors know that countless Americans sacrificed and even died to ensure that all people have the right to vote. In recent elections, up to 80% of registered seniors do, in fact, make the effort to vote. Politicians at all levels know this and the result is that senior issues are always at the forefront of political debate and interest. Alameda County seniors also vote in large numbers and thereby heavily influence local, state and national politics.

Alameda County makes it easy for you to exercise your rights. Many people enjoy the physical act of going to the polling place to cast a vote. Your mailed sample ballot shows you where to go. If that place is not accessible, you can request an alternate place. Also, “curbside voting” is available, where a poll worker will bring a paper ballot out to your car. Our county now uses touch screen computerized voting (no hanging chads for us). Voting materials are available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

If you cannot get out of the house, your sample ballot tells you how to vote by absentee ballot. Your mailed in ballot counts as long as it is received one week before the election. You can even request that you be a permanent absentee voter. For those who want to be paid for participating, call 510-272-6971, to sign up to be a poll worker on any election day. You will receive at least \$80.00 for this necessary work.

March 2 is the date for the California Primary election when we will be nominating candidates for President and many other elective offices. There will also be many important initiative measures. Even more decisive is the Presidential election in November.

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Seniors Use Prayer to Feel Better and Maintain Health in General

by Quincy Campbell, M.D.

A new study, reported by Christian Fellowship, found that 96 percent of older Americans use prayer to ward off or cope with stress. In addition, researchers found that prayer is the most frequently reported alternative treatment used by seniors to feel better or maintain health in general.

The average age of the people in the study was 74. The study reported that 84 percent of the respondents were using prayer more than any other alternative remedies i.e., more than exercise, heat, relaxation techniques, humor or herbal remedies, to maintain overall health. The study included men and women of differing races. But, contrary to some beliefs, there were few differences among these groups in the use of prayer as a coping strategy.

The next step in the research will be to examine the actual effects of prayer on mental and physical outcomes. Clearly the study shows that prayer helps to minimize the negative effects of stress and helps seniors maintain an optimum level of health.

The study pointed out that older adults are at high risk for stress, particularly because of deteriorating health, chronic illness, pain and multiple losses from the death of friends and family. Seniors who prayed or used other spiritual treatments were also found to use more positive and self-reliant coping strategies.

Many seniors have events in their lives that cause stress. So it is important that people have more than one way to manage that stress when it occurs; prayer seems to be one important way for many older adults.

SAIF – Seniors Against Investment Fraud warns that you should be watchful of individuals standing near you in public places who are holding cell phones. With the new camera cell phones, they can take a picture of your credit card, which gives them your name, number and expiration date. Identification theft is one of the fastest growing scams today, and this is just another example of the means that are being used

Personal Safety Tips

IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.....and better paranoid than dead.

- 1) The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough to use it, do!
- 2) If a robber asks for your wallet and/or purse, **DO NOT HAND IT TO HIM.** Toss it away from you.... chances are he is more interested in your wallet and/or purse than you and he will go after it. **RUN LIKE MAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!**
- 3) If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights and stick your arm out the hole and start waving like crazy. The driver won't see you but everybody else will. This has saved lives.
- 4) Women have a tendency to get into their cars after shopping, eating, working, etc., and just sit for awhile. **DON'T DO THIS!** The predator will be watching you, and this is the perfect opportunity for him to get in on the passenger side and overpower you. **AS SOON AS YOU GET INTO YOUR CAR, LOCK THE DOORS AND LEAVE.**
- 5) When getting into your car: a) Look around you, look into your car, at the passenger side floor, and in the back seat; b) If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Most serial killers attack their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars; c) Look at the cars parked next to you. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to leave and get a guard/policeman to walk with you.
- 6) **ALWAYS** take the **ELEVATOR** instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and the perfect crime spot.
- 7) If the predator has a gun and you are not under his control, **ALWAYS RUN!** Chances are only 4 in 100 that he will be able to hit a running target even then, it most likely **WILL NOT** be a vital organ. **RUN!**
- 8) As women, we are always trying to be sympathetic. **STOP IT!** It may get you raped, or killed. Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a good-looking, well educated man, who **ALWAYS** played on the sympathies of unsuspecting women. He walked with a cane, or a limp, and often asked "for help" into his vehicle or with his vehicle, which is when he abducted his victims.

Welcome, Dr. Chialin Tsao

by Joanna Selby

Dr. Chialin Carrie Tsao our new commissioner was appointed by Supervisor Carson. Born in China, she lived in Saigon for seven years. She studied zoology at National Taiwan University. She came to the U.S. in 1967 and finished her Master's in biology in New Jersey. After receiving an M.D. degree in Spain, she completed an internship in Internal Medicine and a fellowship in Oncology at Mt Sinai Medical Center in New York. She has been in private practice since moving to Berkeley in 1993. She has volunteered her time at Lifelong Free Clinic for the past four years for the underprivileged people in Berkeley.

Dr. Tsao is a fiercely independent professional woman and was a caregiver to her mother for 10 years. She believes we need a viable support system, such as In-Home Supportive Services, that saves government money in providing care for the elderly and prevents premature entry into a nursing home.

We welcome her and the wealth of health care expertise she brings to the Commission!

Welcome, George Tucker

by Doug Brown

We welcome George Tucker as a new Alameda County Commissioner on Aging, appointed by the Mayor's Conference, South County. Mr. Tucker is a long-time resident of San Leandro. After graduating from UC Berkeley, he had a varied career in business and government. He held finance positions in companies such as Levi Strauss and was Controller for many years of the East Bay Regional Park District. More recently, Mr. Tucker has done financial consulting for various cities and school districts.

He has been active in senior issues in San Leandro. He is active in the Senior Services Foundation and is one of the founding members of the San Leandro Senior Commission. He is an instructor for AARP's "55 Alive" driving program. Mr. Tucker is interested in a wide range of senior issues but he particularly strives for good transportation facilities and a senior center for San Leandro.

Continued. Vote....

For more information about voting or registering, call the county Registrar of Voters at 510-663-8683, or visit www.co.alameda.ca.us/rov, and support our democracy.

Senior Outreach Project by Frank Howell

The Lavender Seniors of the East Bay have received a one year \$32,000 grant from the City of Oakland Mayor's Commission on Aging. Peggy Moore, an outreach worker for the organization, will survey the ethnic minorities in Oakland to learn the extent of the problems they face in such areas as discrimination in rest homes, isolation from others in the community, and lack of education in the community at large.

At a recent meeting at the Oakland City Hall, several oldsters told their life stories and suggested solutions such as the friendly visitor program offered by the Lavender Seniors organization.

Members of the panel painted a grim picture of family rejection when revealing sexual orientation and the isolation that ensues. A Brookdale Center on Aging study (Hunter College, New York City), revealed 66 percent of gays and lesbians live alone versus 33 percent of heterosexuals.

Seniors who wish to be contacted for the study should call Ms. Moore at Lavender Seniors (510) 667-9655 or visit the web site at lavenderseniors@email.msn.com

Domestic Partners Legislation Takes Effect in 2005 by Frank Howell

Many of the benefits now enjoyed by the heterosexual community will be available to gay and lesbian seniors. AB-205 has been passed and Secretary of State Kevin Shelley is now mailing out material to all those who registered as domestic partners under the Domestic Partners Rights and Responsibilities Act. January 1, 2005 is the red letter day. Do take advantage of it!

Farewell to Commissioner Joanna Selby

Joanna Selby was appointed to the Commission on Aging in 1996, by the Mayor's Conference, North County, following her attendance as a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging.

In 1999 she was elected to serve as the Chair of this Commission. In December 2000 Governor Davis appointed her to the State Commission on Aging.

Most recently she was honored for her services to the American and Korean communities by the Republic of Korea. She received the Presidential Medal of Honor (Pomegranate Honor) from the Consul General of San Francisco on January 16, 2004. The Korean President also awarded her with a beautiful gold wristwatch.

As an immigrant herself, Joanna became an expert on the constant changes and rules and regulations for immigrants and advocated on their behalf. She wishes to acknowledge the Alameda County staff, providers, and seniors who constantly helped her and taught her many things. She will miss her many friends here as she continues her efforts in Contra Costa County.

Thank you, Joanna.

Farewell to Keith "Pete" Peterson

"Pete" Peterson was appointed to the Alameda County Commission on Aging by the Mayors' Conference, South County, in March of 2002.

Pete was extremely effective as the liaison between this Commission and the San Leandro Senior Commission, of which he was also a member. He served on the Public Relations/Senior Update Committee as well as on the Executive Committee.

Thanks, Pete, for your years of service on the Commission on Aging!

It's painful to replace ID's so be careful in travels

by Larry Epstein

If you should lose your driver's license or photo ID card when traveling or flying away from home, you will not be able to continue your travels without a replacement.

Since September 11, 2001 if you are stranded out-of-state, you should immediately call the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) (1-800-777-0133) and say your card has been lost or stolen. The DMV can verify your identity by using data from your record. You will be asked to send a written request by express mail with the pertinent information: name, driver's license number, Social Security number, travel dates and flight numbers. A \$20 processing fee will be needed and an express-mail return envelope.

If you are at the airport ready to board a plane and you have lost your license or ID, you will need to FAX a written request from an airport FAX machine detailing the same information as above. The DMV would then FAX back the photo ID. A letter would accompany the photo advising customers that the photo is a certified copy and valid for travel only. The letter would also remind the customer to visit their local DMV office to apply for a duplicate immediately upon return. A \$20 fee is required, so guard your driver's license or photo ID like you would your other valuables.

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SENIOR INFORMATION by Mary Kaufmann

SeniorNet, a non-profit organization located in San Francisco, offers an Online Tutorial On Using the Internet. This is a free, self-paced tutorial that contains, in four lessons, information about the Web, explanations about how information is collected and organized and tips for how to find things on the Internet. Give it a try! www.seniornet.org

Health Access/Life Span offers the following presentations. RSVP to 510-869-6737.

“I'm too tired to count more sheep!” Not getting enough sleep is not only frustrating, but it can keep us from functioning at our best. Sleep specialist Andrew Greenberg, MD will discuss some of the treatment options for insomnia.

Thursday, March 4, 2004, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm, Summit Providence South Pavilion, Cafeteria Conference Room, 3100 Summit Street, Oakland

Hypertension Management Workshop. Did you know that the National Institute of Health has changed the definition of "normal" blood pressure? Come to a Free Hypertension Workshop with national expert Bessanderson McNeil, MPH. Participants are given an opportunity to benefit from expertise as well as learn practical tips from each other.

Thursday, March 25, 2004, 11:00 am to 12:00 noon, Summit Providence South Pavilion, Cafeteria Conference Room, 3100 Summit Street, Oakland.

****Free blood pressure screening immediately following the presentation.****

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!

The 4th Annual **SIPP (Senior Injury Prevention Project)** will be held at the Waterfront Plaza Hotel in Oakland on May 13-14. For information contact Colleen Campbell at 510-577-3535.

Participation at the **Senior Rally** in Sacramento on May 12, from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m., is extremely important in this election year. Check at your local senior center for information regarding attending, or call Senior Information at 1-800-510-2020.

It's TAX Time....

Once again we ask you to support the California Senior Legislature through a donation on your Form 540 Income Tax Return. This year the CA Fund for Senior Citizens is located on side 2, **Line 54**. Any excess not required by CSL is distributed to senior citizen service organizations throughout California. In these critical times, please be generous in your support of senior services.

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