



# Senior Update

Commission  
on  
Aging

*Published by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging*

**September/October 2003**

## ***C.A.R.E. Provides Free Services***

by Larry Epstein

Citizens Aiding Residents and Elderly (CARE) is a new volunteer program sponsored by the Union City Police Department. On a shoestring budget of \$1,000 – from police funds – the program began making visits in July, 2003. Teams of two volunteers provide free in-home visits and referral information to elderly, shut-ins and dependent adults living in Union City. CARE is designed to reach the estimated 5,000 adults older than 65 living in the city, some of whom may live alone or may not have social companions.

CARE is a non-medical program and volunteers hope regular visits will provide an "emotional and social life line" for seniors, according to Volunteer Coordinator Rene Nunzir. The first 14 volunteers have received approximately 40 hours of extensive training in such areas as CPR, nutrition, communicable diseases, elder abuse, medicine management, scams and fraud prevention. Among the 14 volunteers, 10-12 languages are spoken.

If you are a senior living in Union City, or know someone who might benefit from a friendly visitor, please call **510-675-5254**. People of all ages are invited to become a volunteer and must complete the training before visiting the seniors. Trainings will be scheduled quarterly throughout the year. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Rene Nunzir **510-675-5243**.

## ***Caregiving 101 Classes Now Available***

by Frank Howell

Many seniors know well the challenges of caring for someone who is seriously ill or in a weakened condition. Where do you turn? Doctors? Social workers? Nurses?

Celi Adams, R.N. ONC, a nationally recognized leader in the caregiver training movement, knows the system well. The Center for Caregivers offers comprehensive, in depth free classes on a wide range of topics. Some examples: how to control symptoms and side

*Continued, Caregiver 101....page 3*

## ***Life without an Automobile***

by Joanna Selby

Life without an automobile was beyond my imagination, yet recently I have had to begin depending on the public transportation for my daily living. The automobile is not only a means of transportation but a luxury second home and a storage unit! Having an automobile is a status symbol, too.

In the past I got in the car, stepped on the gas and went to shop, run errands, and attend meetings. I had a fairly good idea how long it would take to get to the destination. Via public transportation I have to watch carefully the bus schedules and learn the connections between the bus lines. Some places are almost impossible to get to with any kind of public transportation. Often I have to walk because no bus lines are available. Normally it takes 30 minutes to get to a meeting place by automobile but by bus it can take two hours or more.

I thought my condition might last more than one month so I applied for a bus pass. An application had to be filled out and my picture was taken at the AC Transit office. So I now have a bus pass hanging around my neck and I buy a monthly pass. Whenever I wait for a bus – standing or sitting if there is a bench – how much I am envious of those drivers! I felt driving was a long, long memory.

For instance, I have to take my carry-on bag everywhere for shopping, walking, meeting as though I were forever traveling or a homeless person carrying all my worldly possessions with me. My shopping habits have changed as I have to think about the weight and size of goods, whether they will fit in my carry-on bag, plus walking distance or bus schedules.

I was really depressed with my life without a car. How convenient the automobile was!! I can imagine how people's life changed from a buggy to a first automobile. Their life improved but mine went the other way. Without an automobile I became a second-class citizen in the land of opportunity and consumption.

*Continued, Life....page 3*

## Louis Labat



Louis began working for Alameda County in July 1964, in the Coroner-Public Administrator's office, upon discharge from the U.S. Air Force. He attended the U. of San Francisco, and after graduation became a Social Worker in the AFDC program (1969-70). To pursue his dream of working with elders, Louis received his M.S.W., from U. of California, Berkeley, specializing in gerontology in 1972.

Heading a call to teach and establish a gerontology program at the U. of Nevada, Las Vegas, Louis was there from 1972-76. After leaving Nevada (too hot!), Louis spent over three rewarding years with the Senior Coordinating Council of Palo Alto and helped develop the downtown Palo Alto senior center.

In January 1980 Louis returned to the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging. He said, "The past 23 years with the AAA have enabled me to associate with some of the most fascinating folks in my professional career. I enjoyed helping plan the 1980 local and state White House Conference on Aging and attending the 1981 White House Conference on Aging as an official observer. It has been an exciting 31 years!" Louis attended the very first Senior Rally—in 1971!—and continued working on the Senior Rally each May.

On behalf of the aging network we wish to thank him in particular for his tireless efforts on behalf of both providers (Roundtable) and seniors (Information and Assistance) over the past 23 years.

We will miss him – *Farewell, Louis!*

## John Ellefsen is Appreciated

by Frank Howel

John has retired from his position on the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging and was recently honored with a certificate of appreciation.

John was very active in the community and served on the Board, and as President, of the Lavender Seniors of Alameda County. As a member of the Commission, John was exposed to the full range of services and needs of seniors and this gave him the opportunity to use this information in a liaison position to the Lavender Seniors.

He was also instrumental in the development of a Friendly Visitor Program that receives ongoing funding from the Area Agency on Aging.

John now plans to devote his leisure time to writing. His quiet strength and loving concern will be missed. During his four years on the Commission he was very active on the Public Relations Committee and contributed many an article for the *Senior Update*. We wish him well!

## Searching online for health information?

The Seattle post recommends the following to start: U.S. Library of Medicine: [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov); Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); Healthfinder: [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov); National Cancer Institute: [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

## Ruth Witherspoon – Farewell

Ruth Witherspoon, a Berkeley resident, joined the Advisory Commission on Aging in 1994 and has been extremely active during her eight-year term. She has been an advocate for seniors at both the local and state level and was a delegate to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging.

Ruth has been instrumental in working to educate women on the realities of breast cancer and was successful in convincing Safeway to print a picture of a woman promoting September as Cancer Awareness Month. Although she will no longer be a Commissioner we are certain this will not keep her from continuing to give to her community!

**The Friendly Visiting Program**, provided by the Senior Services Foundation in San Leandro, is seeking loving volunteers to meet "one on one" with a senior for one to three hours per week in the senior's home. All volunteers will be professionally trained and subject to background screening. If you are interested in volunteering or know of a homebound senior who would benefit from this program, please call Barbara Gerber-Jones, at 510-347-4620.

**Case Management** services in Central County (Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley areas) will now be provided by Bay Area Community Services. For additional information, please call Susan Anderson at 510-271-6077.

## Welcome, Christine Steiner

by Joanna Selby

Christine was born and raised in Yorkshire, England. She came to California in 1964 and settled in Pleasanton in 1967. After she stayed home and raised children she went back to California State University, Hayward, majoring in Political Science and specializing in housing laws. She became a U.S. citizen in 1975.

Christine has been extremely active as a housing advocate—her passion. Among other activities, she has served on the Alameda County Housing Commission; the Housing and Human Services Commission, Pleasanton; the Mayor's Housing Task Force, and the Board of Eden Lodge, San Leandro. She was appointed to the Advisory Commission by the Alameda County Mayor's Conference and is the widow of former Commissioner, John Steiner.

Christine's major goal as a Commissioner for the next four years is to educate the community on low-income housing needs for seniors and try to make their life a little easier. Her willingness to serve and her expertise in this arena is most welcome!

## Continued, Caregiving 101 classes...

effects, managing medications, how to find and use medical equipment and pain control.

The classes are free and consist of five or six sessions. The Center is willing to expand these classes into Alameda County, and can create sessions on other topics as well such as AIDS, cancer, congestive heart failure, aging, nutrition, and brain tumors.

For information call The Center for Caregiving at 1320 Divisadero, San Francisco, **415-563-9286**.

## **Second Annual Health & Safety Senior Wellness Fair**

sponsored by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging, will be held on Thursday, October 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Oakland Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Drive in Oakland. The free event will provide information focusing on vital benefits and services available to seniors, their families and caregivers. Health screenings will be available, in addition to benefits analysis, nutritional information, Social Security and MediCal information and application assistance. For more information call **510-567-8051** or **510-530-2257**.

## Frank Howell – Hello

by Joanna Selby

We welcome Frank Howell, a new Commissioner of the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Commission, appointed by Gail Steele. He was born in Tehama County in California. He and his partner, who died in 1998, were united in Holy Union at the Metropolitan Community Church in 1972. He received his B.A. from Chico State and his M.S. in Library Science from San Jose State. He worked at the Hayward Library for 35 years and retired about 3 years ago.

Frank belongs to the Lavender Seniors of the East Bay that serves the gay, lesbian and transgender community in southern Alameda County. He is the chairman of the Program Committee for the Lighthouse Community Center

He is an ardent advocate for domestic partner laws, working at a state-by-state level, and at the federal level, particularly regarding Social Security benefits.

We look forward to his contributions on the Commission.

## Continued, Life...

I knew eventually I had to relinquish the driving privileges and I had to prepare for my old age. When I applied for my paratransit pass, I applied only for the Medical Conditional Paratransit Pass. This is available to someone who may not be eligible for a regular pass, and I wanted to have it if I need to go to a hospital and using the public transportation is not feasible. But this is very important! If anyone is anticipating a surgery, hospitalization, or medically necessary trips, they should make sure to get this Medical Conditional Paratransit pass in advance. Since I am ambulatory I can also use the taxi program available through the City of Albany. This is funded by Measure B money and when appropriate they reimburse me for part of my expenses. Many other cities have taxi or van services available to seniors, and you should check at your local senior center to find out what is available to you.

For information about senior programs and resources in Alameda County, call the Senior Information and Assistance office at **1-800-510-2020**.

**Senior Update Editorial Board:** B. Mulholland, D. Brown, C. McLain, D. Nelson, J. Selby, L. Epstein, F. Rose, N. Hartschen; K. Peterson; J. Davis, T. Santos, Q. Campbell. F. Howell, M. Kaufmann & Lisa Ho, Staff and Desktop Publishing; B. Williams, M. Wakeman, Volunteers.

## ***Senior Update***

**Alameda County Area Agency on  
Aging & Advisory Commission on  
Aging  
8000 Edgewater Drive, First Floor  
Oakland, CA 94621  
(510) 567-8040**

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SAN LEANDRO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 45

## ***Senior Update***

**September/October 2003**

### ***SENIOR INFORMATION***

**by Louis Labat, MSW**

#### ***Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)***

Due to action by the State Legislature persons receiving CAPI benefits (criteria: legal non-citizens in financial need who are over the age of 65, blind or disabled and not eligible for SSI due to their immigrant status, who have little or no income and assets not to exceed \$2,000 if single or \$3,000 if married, AND who have lived in the US on or before Aug. 21, 1996), have been granted an increase in benefits effective June 1, 2003. Thus single persons are now eligible for up to \$768 per month, while married couples are entitled to \$1,362 per month. Allowances are slightly higher for those who are legally blind. For more information regarding the CAPI program, call: 1-800-648-0954.

#### ***Supplemental Security Income (SSI)***

As was the case with the CAPI program, persons receiving SSI have been granted an increase in benefits as well. The increase is effective Sept. 2003, and recipients will see an increase in their Oct. SSI checks. Single persons with "other" income (e.g. pensions, Social Security, etc.) will receive up to \$798 if single, and \$1,402 for married couples. Those without other income receive \$778 per month for singles and \$1,382 if a couple. Persons who are blind receive a slightly higher benefit. Those persons residing in "out of home

care facilities" (e.g., board and care homes) receive \$972 per month if they have other income, while couples in like settings can receive \$1,924 per month. Rates vary for those living in the homes of others and for those who need restaurant meals. To be eligible for SSI, one must be aged 65 or older, blind, or disabled, and cannot have income in excess of the amounts listed above. They also cannot have assets in excess of those for CAPI recipients. Also, SSI applicants may have up to \$1500 set aside (in a separate account!) for burial needs. Call Social Security's toll free number if you wish to apply for SSI: 1-800-772-1213.

**Falls among seniors and seniors who are seriously overweight** will be the topic at the Lavender Seniors of the East Bay's monthly potluck on Saturday, September 13 at 12:00 noon at the San Leandro Community Church, 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro. The program, led by Tina Scott of the Alameda County Health Department, will begin at 1:00 p.m. Call Frank Howell at **510-667-9655** for information.

#### ***IT'S IMPORTANT!!!***

Plan now to attend next year's Senior Rally in Sacramento on Wednesday, May 12, 2004, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.