



Successful Aging



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SUMMER 2023

Vol. 13, No. 2 6,000 copies circulated to seniors, businesses and community residents in greater Santa Barbara

NatureTrack Volunteer Docents Hit the Trail

Dennis Beebe and Margurite Tibben are two volunteer docents with the non-profit organization NatureTrack. This ingenious multi-generational educational program provides opportunities for young people to go out on the trail with volunteers to learn about nature, and beyond that, to develop a life-long appreciation for the natural world.

Dennis and Margurite kindly offered to share some of their thoughts on the experience.

How long have you been volunteering with NatureTrack?

DB: Over 12 years... I'm the first volunteer.
MT: I have been with NatureTrack since 2013.

What first drew you to volunteering with NatureTrack?

DB: The Executive Director, my friend Sue Eisaguirre... we had worked together with similar programs for visiting students at the UC Sedgwick Reserve.

MT: Sue had a field trip at an organic farm, and I was there to pick carrots as a representative from Veggie Rescue. After spending the day with NatureTrack and the kids, I just had to be a part of it.

How does this volunteering keep you young?

DB: Being outdoors, the exercise, and the children.
MT: It keeps my mind sharp and my body moving.

What do you believe the youthful participants in the program get out of it?

DB: Hopefully, an increased knowledge and appreciation of the natural world which may lead to a desire to protect it.
MT: Kids are like sponges and I believe they are taking it all in. They love going on the field trips provided by NatureTrack because there is so much to touch, smell, feel, and learn.

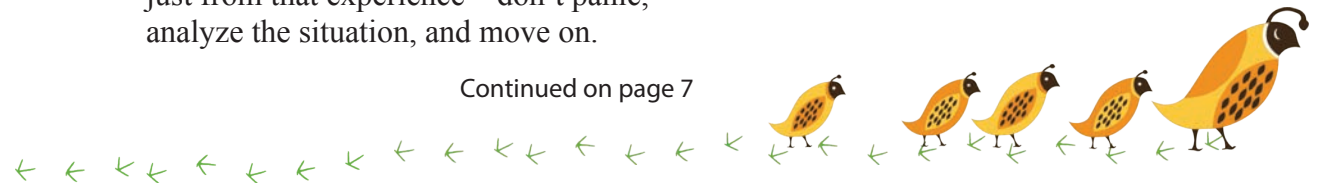
Any stand-out moments with the kids and/or wildlife on the trails?

DB: A disappointing realization that many of the kids have been deprived of the experience up to this point.
MT: There was a snake across the trail on one hike... we stopped, watched it, then walked around it and went on with our hike. I know the kids learned a lot just from that experience—don't panic, analyze the situation, and move on.



Margurite Tibben and Dennis Beebe

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A publication of the
Center for Successful Aging
Santa Barbara, California
(805) 898-8080

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



By Justine Sutton

We see a lot of advice, including in this issue, about getting out and taking walks in nature now that we're heading into the

warmer months. And if that's something you can do, go forth and enjoy!

However, as someone whose mobility is limited and can't just go take a walk, I want to talk about the benefits of just being in nature. Sometimes I neglect to get outside because I think, I can't walk around, so what's the point?

But when I do go sit at a beach or park, I remember... being in the natural world is truly soul-nourishing and spirit-replenishing for me, just to be there and enjoy the surroundings.

When I spend time outdoors, I feel more connected to the outer world and pay more attention to seasonal changes. This helps me embrace the cyclical nature of life in general—changes in weather, length of days, my own moods—knowing there is always change, but balance will always return.

Last January when we had those massive storms, our local beaches changed, the sand mostly swept away. I heard from a friend, a sailor with a boat docked there, that all that sand had been deposited at the mouth of the harbor. He said at low tide you could practically walk across the sandbar from the breakwater to the wharf!

Shortly after that, the harbor was dredged and opened again—not exactly the same as it was, but functional. Balance will always be restored.

So whether it's for a hike or a sit, get out in nature... it's good for your body and spirit.

Enjoy!

To Your Health

By Gary Linker, Ph.D., Clinical Director, CSA

In discussing your health, you might think of your medical care, the medications you are taking, and even the condition of your vital organs. But research has shown that it is also crucial to bring attention to your everyday lifestyle. So, let me ask a few questions and provide some perspective.

How much exercise do you get each day?

Aging advocates are calling sitting the new smoking. Apparently, lying around and watching too much TV isn't healthy—who knew? So it is very important to get as much exercise as possible each day.

How much? Many believe that 10,000 steps, or about four miles a day, is needed to maintain a healthy routine. That may seem like a long way but walking a total of 20 blocks each day would get you there. Many phones have apps that can track your steps, and they are free! I use Pacer but you can use Heart or others. Make walks around your home or your neighborhood part of your regular routine.

For those with less mobility, you can exercise while sitting! There are countless videos available free on YouTube—try searching “seated exercise.” It's just important to get your body moving.

What kind of social contacts do you maintain?

Social scientists tell us that having people you talk with on a regular basis translates into better physical health. Of course, we are social animals, but the Covid crisis sent us into isolation and now we need to break out and renew social activities, even rebuild our social networks. We don't need to be social butterflies, but we do need two or three trusted friends, neighbors, or acquaintances to maintain a positive outlook on life and feel connected to our community.

How is your sleep?

Sleep replenishes your brain so it is vitally important. Six to eight hours per night is optimal, but if you sleep less than that at night, try to take a short nap or period of rest each day. Sleep become easier when you have a regular bedtime routine and sleep in a cool room that is dark with no visible clocks. If you are not able to fall asleep within 15 minutes of going to bed, get up, rest in a chair, drink some warm milk, or even take a something mild like melatonin or other non-addictive sleep aid. If you have serious sleep issues, be sure to discuss them with your doctor.

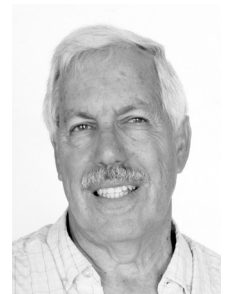
Do you exercise your brain as well as your body?

It is important that you read, engage in conversation with others, do some brain exercises, wear a hearing aid if you need one, and find new things to learn about. In this case, variety is that important spice of life. I'm told that singing is very effective for brain stimulation. Don't worry if you sing off-key... enjoy belting out those tunes in your shower, your car, or just around the house.

Obviously, there are other important things to consider when it comes to your health—limit alcohol intake, eat nutritious meals, see your doctor on a regular basis, take prescribed medications correctly, and avoid falls. But I believe the four things I described above are also noteworthy.

Let me know how you are doing, and here's to your health!

Gary Linker, Ph.D. has worked for the past 40+ years as a Marriage, Family Therapist. Contact Dr. Linker at (805) 898-8080 or by e-mail at info@csasb.org



The Journey

by Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice --
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voice behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do --
determined to save
the only life that you could save.

Mary Jane Oliver (1935 - 2019) was a National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize winning American poet. Her work is inspired by nature, rather than the human world, stemming from her lifelong passion for solitary walks in the wild.

I See Life As A Balance

By Sissy Taran

Considering writing an article on health, I thought I needed to find someone in the health field. Then in thinking about it further, a question came to me: WHAT IS MY STATE OF HEALTH? I made a list of ideas.....



MY SENIOR WAY OF LIVING

- Meditation
- Whole 30 Food Program
- Bible Study
- Attending Religious Services
- Mah Jongg
- News only on Sunday/daily phone app
- Physical Therapy/Swimming
- Following/ Walking
- Small Lunch Groups
- Book Club
- No violent movies or television

For weeks I looked at the list and finally it came to me—it was a BALANCE SHEET, a view of elements in my life... components of my mental/physical/spiritual being.

After realizing that, I put the items into categories:

MENTAL/EMOTIONAL

- Fellowship
- Lunch Groups
- Book Group
- Mah Jongg

PHYSICAL

- Whole 30 Program
- Physical Therapy
- Swimming
- Walking

SPIRITUAL

- Meditation
- Bible Study
- Praying

Then I realized FELLOWSHIP was also physical and spiritual. PRAYING was emotional as well as spiritual. In fact, the PHYSICAL was all tied to emotional!

What was happening? A CONVERGENCE. They were not separate categories, but a coming together... A BALANCE. In fact, the more they converged, the brighter the vision became.

For example, the Whole 30 Eating Program is not just physical, it is mindful too. I choose not to eat sugar and it is spiritual because my body is a Temple of God.

This is my list, I challenge you to create your own... things you do out of habit or obligation or that bring you joy. Visualize who you are and where your ideas fit in. Do they converge in more than one category?

This is also my approach to good health. Yours may be very different. However, I hope my way of approaching life will be beneficial to you.

Remember, people with an upbeat take on aging live an average of 7.5 years longer!

VISUALIZE

CONVERGE

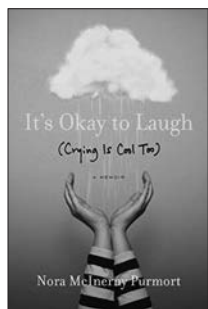
BALANCE

Sissy Taran, who lives her best life in Santa Barbara, is a passionate volunteer and a devoted and loving mother with three daughters and seven grandchildren. Author of *The Sun Will Shine Again... Life Lessons from a Year of Grieving*, she is currently writing her second book on resilience.

Oprah's List: Best Books to Comfort a Grieving Friend

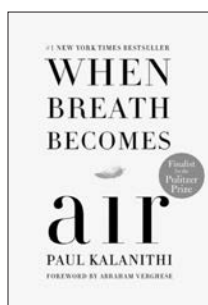
It can be hard to know how to comfort a grieving friend—particularly when grief is so *uncomfortable* for so many of us. Grief is long, intense, unexpected, and sometimes impenetrable—it has its way with you, not the other way around. One salve is to find words that mirror your own experience and normalize your pain. There's every type of read below, from memoirs about loss written by both the dying and the bereaved to guidance from those who have helped innumerable people go (and talked to them on the other side).

It's Okay to Laugh, by Nora McInerney Purmort



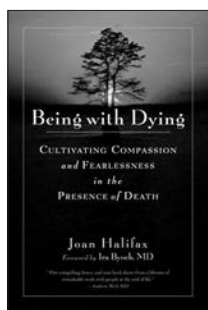
In the span of a few months, McInerney miscarried her second child, lost her father to cancer, and then buried her husband, Aaron, who died from brain cancer. *It's Okay to Laugh* is McInerney's first book, a memoir of those early years as she attempted to put her life back together and parent her young child. In time, she founded the "Hot Young Widow's Club" and launched a podcast called *Terrible, Thanks for Asking*. She has become a life-raft for other young widows, shepherding them through the early years as they find a way to keep going.

When Breath Becomes Air, by Paul Kalanithi



This stunning memoir, now a classic, was finished posthumously by Kalanithi's wife, Lucy. It's the story of a young neurosurgeon who dies of metastatic lung cancer at the age of 37, leaving a baby daughter behind. He writes of grappling with his diagnosis and treatment, and the quality of time itself—along with his remorse that after spending most of his life in school, he had barely begun to live. The great gift of this book, whether you're grieving in parallel or not, is that it's a testament to engage with life—and it's also a reminder that short lives can still yield lasting, impenetrable legacies.

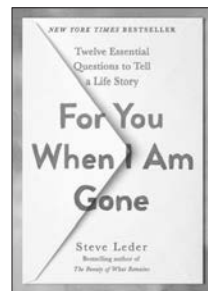
Being with Dying, by Joan Halifax



As one of the forces of the palliative care movement, Roshi Joan Halifax came to her Buddhism through hard-won experience—helping thousands and thousands and thousands of people die. While this is an essential guide for anyone who is going through the dying process with a loved one, it's also a critical read for anyone who feels undone by a loved one's death. Every short chapter in this book includes a meditation or practice, many of which are powerful for those of us who might still be decades away from death. One practice is to write down your wishes for your own death; another, an invitation to ponder

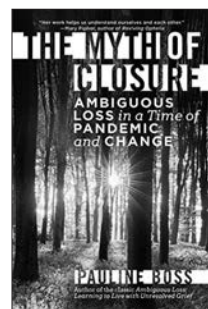
"The Nine Contemplations," including facts like: "1. All of us will die sooner or later." "2. My life span is ever-decreasing." "3. Death comes whether or not I am prepared." "7. My material resources will be of no use to me." And "8. My loved ones cannot save me."

For You When I Am Gone, by Steve Leder



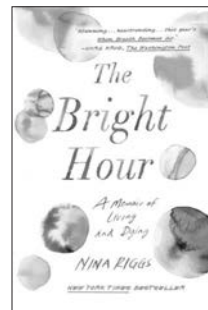
Rabbi Steve Leder has helped thousands of people die, and he's helped thousands of families in the aftermath as they navigate their grief. He's written several books packed with advice that is both clarifying and reassuring. On the flip side, Leder acknowledges how hard it can be for those left behind. "We lose so much to death," he says, "Half our memory is gone with the death of the only person on earth who shared that incredible trip, the pizza from that little place down that alley in Rome, the babies' first stumbles across the room, that old white Ford we took cross-country when we were young and had no money. We lose so much love to death, and if that love was real and deep, the grief is real and deep. Grief is not a race to be won or an illness to be cured. To deny grief its due is to deny love." Though these books work for anyone of any denomination, Leder does weave in elements of the Jewish faith.

The Myth of Closure, by Pauline Boss



The COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us haunted by feelings of anxiety, despair, and even anger. In this book, pioneering therapist Pauline Boss identifies these vague feelings of distress as caused by ambiguous loss, losses that remain unclear and hard to pin down and thus have no closure. Collectively the world is grieving as the pandemic continues to change our everyday lives. With a loss of trust in the world as a safe place, a loss of certainty about health care, education, and employment, lingering anxieties plague many of us even as parts of the world are opening up again. This book provides many strategies for coping, encouraging us to increase our tolerance of ambiguity and acknowledging our resilience as we express a normal grief, while still looking to the future with hope.

The Bright Hour, by Nina Riggs



"A retired rabbi—the friend of a friend—writes me an email out of the blue about how he lost his mother when he was nine years old. In the message, he lists all the things he remembers about his mom and all the ways she remains in his life: her favorite flower, the books she read him, her sense of humor. 'She is far from a hole in my life. She is an enormous presence that can never be replaced.' His words are a gift that I pull out some nights and let swirl through the room, brush over my skin like a tincture." So writes the late Nina Riggs, the great-great-great-granddaughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who passed in 2017 after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She was the mother to two sons, and much of her memoir focuses on how to parent her children from the grave, how to indelibly impress herself into their lives despite the short shrift of time. In many ways, it speaks into a truth we all know but struggle to articulate—those who die stay with us, particularly when we continue to speak their names.

👉 Watch for the rest of Oprah's list in a future issue!

Braille Institute—High Hopes for Low Vision

“Many people think Braille Institute is just for people who are totally blind,” said Gina Cosio, Regional Manager of Braille Institute Santa Barbara. “But the reality is that the majority of those we serve have some degree of vision.”

Braille Institute, near downtown Santa Barbara at 2031 De La Vina Street, provides a comprehensive array of direct services by meeting a range of physical, social, and emotional needs. Year-round classes, programs, and services are available to individuals at all stages of vision loss free of charge, and no proof of insurance is required.

The agency serves the whole person by designing a customized plan to address specific visual needs and personal objectives, including one-on-one or group instruction as frequently as needed to reach individual objectives. Classes are also accessible by computer or phone from the comfort of home, taught by a live instructor so students can ask questions and have discussion.

“The Braille Institute staff have been so helpful to me. The support I’ve received, from the librarian to the technology instructor, has been extremely valuable, especially for someone like me who is newly blind. I’ve learned about household techniques, obtaining audio books, and using accessibility features on my cell phone. It was comforting to work with Skylar, the technology instructor, who is blind himself. And it was nice to bond as we had both worked at UCSB!” – Darwin Holter, Braille Institute student

Services include low-vision rehabilitation, helping to make the most of clients’ remaining vision by finding alternative ways to perform day-to-day activities, such as cooking, getting around, reading, and writing. Also offered are arts and healthy living classes, orientation and mobility training, daily living skills, technology training and library services.

“Without the magnification device that Caitlin at the Braille Institute loaned me, I would have no life at all. I would be lost without it for paperwork and independence.”

– Joan Englander, Braille Institute Low-Vision client

Braille Institute’s focus is to help those with vision loss regain independence and confidence and to remain active.

“You don’t have to give up on the things you love doing, you just need to find a new way of doing them,” said Ms. Cosio. “We work with your ophthalmologist or optometrist to better understand your eye condition. Many eye doctors refer their patients to Braille Institute to help with day-to-day tasks.”

For more information, please call Braille Institute Santa Barbara at (805) 682-6222 or visit www.brailleinstitute.org/santabarbara.

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Spring Has Sprung, Make Your Workouts Fun!

By Leslie Sokol

No matter your age, it's never too late to start an exercise program. As we age, our muscle function can decline, our energy can decrease, and our attention span can become limited. The best way to counteract these and build up your confidence and enthusiasm is to be active both physically and mentally.

Want a healthy and fun way to do that? Join a group dance or fitness class. It's fun to be with your peers and it's a great opportunity to be active and social. You will feel like you belong to something and are with people who enjoy similar interests. Workout classes help build your confidence and self-esteem, create a positive attitude, and keep you motivated. As I say to my students, "We are all in this together."

You will want to find a class that incorporates the three essential components of total fitness: stretching, strengthening, and aerobics. However, you don't need to wait for a class to get started!

Here are some sample exercises for each component:

Stretching: Warm-up and cool-down exercises help reduce muscle soreness and lessen your risk of injury. A simple way to get started is either standing or sitting in a chair and bending your waist side to side along with moving your arms side to side. Do this for 1 to 2 minutes.

Continued on page 9

Cliff Drive Care Center
SENIOR LUNCH
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fmcsb.org/senior-programs

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NatureTrack Volunteer Docents

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What was your career or professional experience in your earlier life?

DB: A career in the USAF as engineer/manager in the missiles and space fields, a second career as an aerospace management consultant. I am in the midst of my third career, volunteering and giving back.

MT: I retired in 2012 after working over 20 years in the business/financial world. But my heart was always outdoors.

What is it about nature and volunteering you enjoy, and what do they bring to your life?

DB: I was fortunate to be raised within walking distance of an undeveloped woods, complete with a creek. My boyhood friends and I spent untold adventurous hours there in the

summer. This experience formed the basis of my love of nature. Perhaps I'm trying to return to that world? I'm in the phase of my life where I feel I should be giving back, and volunteering is one way to do that.

MT: I love volunteering, it gives me a great feeling of joy. I have always just wanted to help and now I have time. And to combine that with being outdoors and playing with the children is the greatest joy of all.

For information on volunteering with NatureTrack, visit <https://naturetrack.org/>

PS--Keep an eye out for information in our next issue on the NatureTrack Film Festival this fall!



Margurite Tibben with a group of students



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Your Dementia Questions: Can I prevent Alzheimer's?

Contributed by Alzheimer's Association, California Central Coast Chapter

Research shows that there is not one single cause of Alzheimer's disease. Instead, it likely develops from multiple factors, including age, genetics, environment, lifestyle, and coexisting medical conditions.

The greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's and other dementias is increasing age, but these disorders are not a normal part of aging. Growing old does not inherently cause dementia.

Other risk factors to consider are family history and genetics. In most cases, having a family history of Alzheimer's and/or having Alzheimer's risk genes increases the likelihood for someone to get the disease, but it is not guaranteed. Less than 1% of Alzheimer's cases are caused by deterministic genes, which are genes that cause the disease instead of simply increasing risk for it.

While age, genes, and family history cannot be changed, there are factors within your control to help reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and other dementias.

General lifestyle and wellness choices, as well as effective management of other health conditions, are extremely important to maintain cognitive functioning.

Research has shown that maintaining good heart health through diet and exercise can lessen your risk for developing Alzheimer's or vascular dementia earlier in life. The risk appears to increase from many conditions that damage the heart and blood vessels, including heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Work with your doctor to monitor your heart health and treat any problems that arise.



Research also shows that older Latinos are about one-and-a-half times as likely as older white people to have Alzheimer's and other dementias, while older African-Americans are about twice as likely to have the disease as older white people. The reason for these differences is not well understood, but researchers believe that higher rates of vascular disease in some groups may also put them at greater risk for developing Alzheimer's.

Other ways to keep the brain healthy include avoiding head injury by always wearing helmets or seatbelts when traveling by bike or car, getting good sleep, staying socially engaged, taking care of your mental health, quitting smoking, continuing education, and challenging your mind through strategic or artistic activities.

While there is no proven way to completely prevent Alzheimer's and other dementias, evidence is strong that people can reduce their risk by making key lifestyle changes.

The Alzheimer's Association California Central Coast Chapter offers free care consultations, education classes, and support groups in both English and Spanish.

Visit alz.org/cacentral or call 800.272.3900 for around-the-clock support and information.

An advertisement for the Alzheimer's Association. It features a close-up, yellow-tinted photograph of an elderly woman's face. Overlaid on the image is a white box with the text: "I TRIED MAKING MY FAMOUS CHICKEN RECIPE, BUT CONFUSED THE STEPS." Below this, in bold purple text, it says: "KNOW WHERE ALZHEIMER'S AND ALL DEMENTIA HIDE." At the bottom left is the Alzheimer's Association logo. At the bottom right, it says: "Difficulty planning and completing familiar tasks are warning signs of Alzheimer's. Learn more & get free local support at alz.org/cacentral."

Spring Has Sprung, Make Your Workouts Fun!

Continued from page 6

Strengthening: Many simple exercises can help you build muscle mass, firming and toning your body. One of the easiest is simple bicep curls. Hold light dumbbells or filled water bottles in each hand. While standing or seated, extend both arms along your side with a slight bend in your elbow, keeping your wrists straight and your palms facing toward you. Keeping your arms at your sides, slowly curl the weights up, exhaling as you do so. Then inhale as you slowly lower the weights back down. This is one rep. Aim for 8-12 reps, rest for one minute and then do a second set.

Aerobic: This is any type of exercise that utilizes your heart and lungs. Walking is the most basic aerobic exercise. If you're just getting started, concentrate on walking for a few minutes, gradually increasing your distance and speed as you grow stronger. Other forms of aerobic exercise include hiking, dancing, jogging, jumping jacks, and marching. Don't be afraid to mix it up!

Keep in mind that the best exercise is the one you enjoy most. Be healthy and happy and remember—age is just a number!

Leslie Sokol is the creator and founder of the adult dance and fitness program, *For the Young at Heart*, available on her YouTube Channel or TVSB. She has been teaching adults and children for 45 years and currently teaches in retirement communities throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. For more information, contact Leslie: Dancekidsfun@gmail.com 805-312-8089 www.lesliesokoldance.com



Leslie Sokol and Friends

Laughter Is Exercise Too!



The Elephant

by Anonymous

An elephant slept in his bunk,
And in slumber his chest rose and sunk.
But he snored—how he snored!
All the other beasts roared,
So his wife tied a knot in his trunk.

Funny Young Fellow

by Anonymous

A funny young fellow named Perkins
Was terribly fond of small gherkins.
One day after tea
He ate ninety-three
And pickled his internal workings.

Do You Carrot All for Me?

(author unknown)

Do you carrot all for me?
My heart beets for you,
With your turnip nose
And your radish face,
You are a peach.
If we cantaloupe,
Lettuce marry:
Weed make a swell pear.

Symposium: *Living Well with Parkinson's Disease*



The **Parkinson's Association of Santa Barbara (PASB)** presented their 14th annual symposium, "Living Well with Parkinson's Disease" on April 1st at the Elks Lodge in Goleta.

The first since 2019, this well-attended event featured informative programs by experts in the many complexities of Parkinson's Disease. The keynote speakers, Dr. Adrienne Keener of UCLA and Dr. Michele Tagliati of Cedars Sinai Medical Center, shared uplifting messages of advances in research that are allowing more to "live well with Parkinson's." Dr. Sharon Basham, Medical Director at Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital, moderated a panel with the two keynote speakers and the highly regarded local neurologist, Dr. Philip Delio.

After lunch Maria Allen, Physical Therapist, and her colleagues led a vigorous exercise session from the stage. Everyone participated, no matter their abilities. In fact, even the sponsors and representatives from local non-profit organizations were spotted joining in. Maria's program invigorated everyone, helping them to settle in for the afternoon session with the panel.

We thank the companies who sponsored the symposium and offered information on newer drugs and programs for the treatment of PD. We also thank the many local non-profits in attendance, providing vital information on exercise programs, agencies like Center for Successful Aging who provide support groups for caregivers impacted by PD, and organizations assisting in finding home health providers and other services.

One attendee remarked, "It was heartwarming to bring our Parkinson's community together for the symposium. We were blessed to hear speakers who are not only experts on Parkinson's, but also kind and good people who are trying to make the world a better place."

If you missed the symposium, there is good news... go to www.mypasb.org and you can view the symposium presentations and find out about the many programs offered by PASB.

EXCITING
NEWS

Parkinson's Breakthrough

There is exciting news on the Parkinson's front—a recent article in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* announced that researchers have isolated a specific protein found in spinal fluid that can accurately determine if a person is prone to having or developing Parkinson's disease.

The test is so accurate that even without symptoms, it has a 93% accuracy rate in predicting whether an individual will develop Parkinson's. The most important aspect of this discovery is that by isolating it, scientists and researchers can begin working on how to block this protein from causing Parkinson's. While we aren't there yet, this discovery is a big step forward in putting an end to this heartbreaking disease.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

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Need Some Help? Dial 988

We are pleased to announce that the federal government has streamlined the suicide and crisis hotline to just three digits: 988. If you are distressed and need to talk with someone, or if you know someone who is in crisis, reach out. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, every day, to help you or someone you care about get the help they need.

Not sure how to tell if someone needs help? Here are signs of distress to watch for:

- Talking about wanting to die
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Expressing hopelessness, showing depression, seeming to give up on life
- Erratic behavior, seeking revenge, or wanting to hurt themselves or others
- Abusing alcohol and/or drugs, experiencing mood swings

Death Café Celebrates 10th Anniversary

By Lynn Holzman

Imagine a birthday party celebrating ten years of Death Café – on March 1st that's exactly what happened. But what *is* Death Café, you ask?

Since 2013, Lynn Holzman, Liz Bauer, and Peggy Levine, in cooperation with the Center for Successful Aging, have been offering this safe space for community members to have simple conversations about all things associated with death and dying. It's part of an international trend, with Santa Barbara on the cutting edge.



Death Café (www.deathcafe.org) was started in 2010 by Jon Underwood in East London to provide a place for people to have conversations about death. Currently there are more than 11,000 Death Cafés in 72 countries.

The initial Santa Barbara meetings were held at the Carrillo Adobe, folks gathering with tea in china cups, cookies, and lemon cake—all part of the “café” setting. After a brief introduction to the concept and sharing first names, folks broke off into groups of four or five for conversations about a topic often considered taboo in “polite” company.

The pandemic stopped the in-person meetings, but through the perseverance of Lynn, Liz, and Peggy and the technology of Zoom, members were still able to connect and have these meaningful conversations. Once we could meet in person again, the Death Café had to find a new home. Currently we gather at the First Congregational Church at 2101 State Street, Santa Barbara.

When we realized we had hit a decade of dialogues, we decided to celebrate and honor Lynn, Liz, and Peggy for their commitment to continuing this group no matter what. A birthday cake complete with a “10” in candles was lit and presented, we sang, and all enjoyed the celebration.

Death Café meets once every six weeks on a Wednesday afternoon from 3:30 to 5pm. It is free and all are welcome. There is no set agenda or guest speakers. Each small group goes with the flow of conversation, and members are always respected, heard, and grateful to be together.

If you would like to attend the next Death Café or have any questions, contact Lynn Holzman: cominghomesb@gmail.com.



OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Center for Successful Aging is to promote the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of seniors and their families.

CSA is a Non-Profit Organization that depends on the financial support of donations from readers like you. To make a donation to support our work, please visit www.CSASB.org

Successful Aging

is a quarterly publication of the Center for Successful Aging, located at 228 East Anapamu Street, Suite 203 Santa Barbara, CA 93101 (805) 898-8080 info@csasb.org
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Circulation: 6,000
Advertising rates and current and past issues of *Successful Aging* are posted online at www.csasb.org

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| June 6th | <i>Experts Untangle The Confusing
World Of Medicare</i> |
| July 11th | <i>The Clearing House: Tips And
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| August 1st | <i>Reverse Mortgage:
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| September 5th | <i>Healthy Habits:
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