

Successful Aging



FREE!

WINTER 2022 - 2023

Vol. 12, No. 2

8,000 copies circulated to seniors, businesses and community residents in greater Santa Barbara

How Are You Aging?

As we are coming out of the pandemic, the issue of health and well-being is on just about everyone's mind. The big question is: How can we age well? A team of local professionals took on this issue recently during a two-part presentation at Temple B'nai Brith.



Dr. Michael Bordofsky



Dr. Gary Linker



Mikah Dusetette



Cathy Austin

The following professionals presented on the topics of aging well, planning for the future, community resources, and caregiving concerns at this forum:

Dr. Michael Bordofsky,

Doctor of Internal Medicine

Dr. Gary Linker, Clinical Director

of the Center for Successful Aging

Mikah Dusetette, VNA Health

Community Liaison

Cathy Austin, RN Educator

from VNA Health

Dr. Bordofsky kicked off the series with his **Top Ten Tips for Aging**. These tips are so important we gave them their own article in this issue (see page 7). They range from guidance on how to interact with the health care system to substances and activities to be avoided.

Ms. Dusetette, Ms. Austin, and Dr. Linker then offered information on community resources and how to best plan for inevitable future events, including important conversations with loved ones

and completing your Advanced Care Planning documents.

These knowledgeable professionals laid out important precautions we can all take to handle a crisis if it occurs. These include an estate plan, your POLST document posted on your refrigerator or another prominent place in your home, and the Five Wishes/My Care document completed. They also discussed the importance of designating someone as your power of attorney and health advocate. The delicate yet crucial subject of living arrangements was also discussed. Most people tell us they wish

AVAILABLE NOW

South Coast Resource Directory of Senior Services

Visit www.csasb.org or call the CSA office at 805-898-8080 to get your free copy.

Continued on page 7

When The Need Arises, We Are There

The Center for Successful Aging has supported low-income seniors now for 25 years. A few years ago, when many seniors told us they were lonely and believed if they had a health incident they may not be found for days, we started the CareLine Telephone Reassurance Program.

When the pandemic hit and low-income seniors couldn't go to senior centers for meals, we swung into action and developed the Hot Meals program, delivering to over 130 seniors each day.

Please support the Center for Successful Aging in the coming months so we can continue to be there for seniors on the South Coast.

Donate on our website, www.csasb.org/donate or mail your contribution to:

Center for Successful Aging
228 E. Anapamu St., Suite 203
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Thank you from all of us at CSA, and have a great holiday season!

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(805) 898-8080

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By Justine Sutton

Hello, and glad to be here!

I'm Justine Sutton, the new editor of the CSA newsletter. Let me tell you a little about myself.

I grew up in the Southern California sprawl and graduated from UCSB in 1988, adopting Santa Barbara as my hometown. I have been a freelance journalist since my editorial internship at the SB Independent in 1991, over the years writing for a variety of additional local media outlets, including the News-Press, Noozhawk, Seasons, Cannabis by The Sea, and the UCSB alumni magazine.

After some time in the SF Bay Area, where among other pursuits, I performed with a belly dance troupe, worked for the Berkeley Fire Department, and taught English to international students, I returned to my beloved seaside town in 2005. After a hiatus from journalism, I felt the itch again and for the next ten years I covered mostly theater and dance for local media, writing countless reviews.

For over 12 years I worked at Friendship Center Adult Day Care in Montecito, which is where I first became familiar with CSA and the good work they do. I handled development, event planning, marketing, and communications, and got to know the non-profit community here in Santa Barbara.

I write fiction and memoir and am currently working on my first novel. I have dabbled in improv, spoken word, storytelling, and stand-up comedy, and am realizing a longtime dream by training as a voice actor. In 2020, I became a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant®, creating heartfelt and uplifting ceremonies to mark all important milestones in life.

Thanks for stopping by! Enjoy this issue, and I look forward to more.

~ *Justine*

Living with Dementia

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



I knew it would happen sooner or later. And now it has—I have a family member with full-blown dementia, in this case Alzheimer's. She is a wonderful person. I love her to pieces and yet she does not now seem like the person who I have come to love these past 30 plus years. She tells me she has a terrible memory. She is disgusted with herself that she can't remember things and must now write everything down.

What she doesn't realize is that she repeats herself continually. Every moment is a new moment, and she has little recall that she just asked that question or made that statement two minutes ago. In fact, if we wait around, she will say the same thing probably four or five times in the next ten minutes. How frustrating! And even more so for her partner of over 65 years. So, I ask myself, "Where can I find the patience, acceptance and understanding to deal with this difficult situation?" I want to share with you my thoughts about that.

First, we must accept that she has a disease. Fortunately, it is not cancer, but it is still painful and difficult. And where sometimes a person can recover from cancer, from this disease we know she won't. Alzheimer's is progressive and so I must enjoy and value each day I have with her because the day will come when she will be more impaired.

Second, we tend to treat people with dementia as if they can do something about their situation. Sorry to tell you, but they can't. So, we need to be even more patient and understand that this is something they neither want nor deserve—they are as stuck in the situation as we are.

Third, when dealing with those with dementia, I want to suggest that honesty is not the best policy. We need to be creative and sometimes even a bit deceptive in our responses—think "little white lies." Telling them, "You just said that three minutes ago" or "We've already talked about this and made a decision" are not helpful. We need to de-escalate conversations, and confronting, correcting, or trying to convince this person about the topic are not productive, so don't go there. Instead, let me suggest that you deflect, appease, and avoid conflict. Try a response like, "Let's talk about this later," or "You are right, I'll attend to this," (even if you won't). Whenever possible, keep things calm, hold to a routine, and go along with the person's need or desire.

Fourth, my previous advice doesn't include every situation. A person with advanced Alzheimer's or any dementia should not be driving, or cooking (alone), or even be left alone in the house for an extended period. It's important to be realistic in determining what the person can and cannot do. Don't expect them to make these decisions. You, other family members, and professionals need to make that determination. Common sense and caution ought to be the guideposts here. When in doubt, choose the safest route, and whenever possible, help them avoid falls, accidents, and situations where they could cause harm to themselves or others.

Good luck and hang in there!

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



A Walk with Fran



By Heidi Hutton Rigoli



I'm not sure what made me stop the car as I was pulling out of the carport, but something inside told me to slow down.

Having talked my husband into going to Costco with the goal of looking at new television sets, I was surprised at my sudden lack of wanting to go.

Fran and I have been married 24 years, and he is 24 years my senior. These later years have shown the difference in age a lot more than before, which anyone would say should be expected. However, I am often ill-prepared for the realities that impose themselves upon my expectations.

My husband remains the calm, loving, attentive husband he has always been, but age has brought the nuances of Parkinson's-type tremors, forgetting things, and fatigue. He's often tired and he sleeps a lot. Chronic leukemia and past heart surgeries add to this. He's not one to complain, though, and carries on with the same calm, Jesus-loving mentation and aura he had when I met him over 35 years ago.

My life is often in sharp contrast to his, full of being busy, even when there is no reason. I do a lot of rushing around, setting goals, writing lists, and running instead of walking.

Today, however, despite my addiction to shopping and wanting something "new" to give me that momentary good feeling, I paused.

Fran was most certainly glad to be untethered from an unwanted shopping trip, though he said nothing. We got out of the car and headed back toward our small one-bedroom apartment. Fran stood outside the door instead of coming in.

"Going for a walk?" I asked. Fran nodded.

We have a beautiful park one block from our home, and Fran loves to walk there, later telling me about the myriad of flowers and seasonal birds he has seen.

"Can I come with you?" I asked, feeling myself slow down as I said it. A walk with Fran was not going to be my usual fast-paced fevered march.

"Sure."

So we headed to the park. We walked as we often walk, arm in arm, in stride, like one human with four legs and two heads. I love walking this way with him.

When we reached the park, just inside the gate Fran pointed to a large bush a few feet away.

"See the goldfinches?" he asked.

I couldn't see them. I squinted and bent down. I looked and looked but I couldn't see the damn birds!

"There's one there, at the top, eating from that brown seed pod," Fran pointed.

I began to see some movement in the bush. Then a couple of shadows, and finally, I saw golden-breasted little birds dancing branch to branch, nibbling at the brown seed pods.

"Oh my God, there are so many!" How could I have missed them?

One came closer, to a nearby bush, and we watched for several minutes as it pecked at a seed pod. I noticed the bird had a tow-like black head. We were completely ignored as the little guy enjoyed his meal.

*I never would have seen you,
I thought, had I not
slowed down and looked.*

Slowly, I took on Fran's eyes as we walked. He pointed to two separate bushes of hibiscus, showing

me how different the two kinds of flowers were. One was white with wispy petals, and the other bush had huge salmon-colored flowers, stamens red with bulbs on the end, raising fully to the sun.

"The sun is kissing them," my husband commented.

Fran took a small red tube-like flower into his palm, just holding it without picking it from its stem. It was bright red with several small golden stamens exploding out of it. He asked, "See why they call these Firecrackers?"

I don't know if that's what they are called, but they looked just like firecrackers, all right!

We continued to walk, while Fran made this whishing sound he often makes, to call the birds. We saw towhees, woodpeckers, warblers, and more. Countless colors, sounds, and types. We walked slowly, exclaiming at the multitude of purples available amongst the varieties of foliage.

"We love purple," Fran said, and I knew what he meant, because his mind is always on things like the kingdom of God, which he says is right here, right now. He pointed out the golden colors of various flowers, which also speak of God, according to him. But then, everything does!

To see holiness in all things, to walk in that, sit in that sight, all the time, good and bad. That's how Fran's eyes are. I rush around, often going nowhere, while he sits calmly, or does small things around the house, singing his songs, loving God, loving me.

What more could anyone ask for?

Heidi Hutton Rigoli is a freelance writer. Having recently retired from psychiatric nursing, her interests now are writing, people, psychology and spirituality. She lives in Santa Barbara with her husband, Francis. She is currently enrolled in writing classes at Santa Barbara City College.



HOW ILRC CAN HELP...

The mission of the **Independent Living Resource Center, Inc. (ILRC)** is to promote independent living and full access for individuals with disabilities through advocacy, education, and action in our communities.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE NEXT PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF?

We support people with disabilities and older adults during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events and other emergencies by enabling them to remain safe while independent in their residences and communities, provided through back-up batteries for medical devices.

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE CARE

Connection to the assistance needed to be more independent; cleaning, cooking, bathing, etc.

OLDER INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND (OIB)

This program is designed to provide services to individuals experiencing vision loss or blindness who are 55 or older.

DISABILITY ADVOCACY

Advocacy is the backbone of the Independent Living Movement. ILRC is here to provide self-advocacy training as well as community organizing/advocacy leading to systems change.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Devices can be a huge help to increasing or improving the independence of an individual with a disability. ILRC can help you find devices and equipment to assist you with everyday tasks; including wheelchairs, walkers, canes, speech devices, laptops, software, etc. Advocates can help assess need, locate technology to try, and search for funding to purchase.



**GIVE US A CALL
OR SEND US AN EMAIL:**

(805) 963-0595 (Voice/TTY)

(805) 354-5948 (Video Phone)

info@ilrc-trico.org



Love The Outdoors? Become a NatureTrack Volunteer



One of NatureTrack's longtime docents, Jacqueline, showing students a mugwort plant from the trail. Courtesy Photo



Senior residents of Mission Villa at Leadbetter Beach
Photo: Mo McFadden

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NatureTrack will provide Freedom Trax for participants free of charge. Freedom Trax transforms a manual wheelchair into a battery-powered, all-terrain vehicle.

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- First come, first served.
- Reservation required

www.naturetrack.org
805-886-2047

NatureTrack is seeking docents to share their enthusiasm of nature with K-12 students and/or wheelchair users of any age on the beaches and trails in Santa Barbara County. Docents work in small groups (1:5 ratio) so students receive individualized attention. No special natural history knowledge is required, only a love of the natural world.

Sue Eisaguirre, founder of the 12-year-old non-profit said, "NatureTrack gives participants the opportunity to learn outdoors, where learning comes alive. But even more than that, students and wheelchair users receive the health benefits nature offers. Participants and NatureTrack volunteers return from the trips happier and healthier!"

To get involved, contact Sue: Sue@naturetrack.org 805-886-2047 <https://naturetrack.org>





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Growing Old

By Sissy Taran

Old age is not your choice, but “Growing Old” can be.

I’m Sissy Taran and I have a purpose in life. That purpose is to flood the holes in my heart with positive actions. In other words, I fill those holes by reaching out to others.

I believe in what I can control. I cannot control earthquakes. I cannot control death. I cannot control the political discourse. I can control my actions and reactions. I can control my response to worrisome things. “Easier said than done,” I often hear. So, let me tell you how I do it so you can too!

Do something for someone else! As people say, “Just Do It.” Simply do something. And do something with positivity and care.

Here are a few tips...

If you are lonely, unhappy, or depressed, call a friend, make a date to brighten their day and yours. Text a smiling emoji to someone who needs a smile.

Send the same greeting card back and forth, putting on a new sticker each



time. Invite someone for a cup of tea or coffee and always serve chocolate. Cook together. Watch “Dancing With the Stars” or “The Voice” and discuss the clothes, or lack thereof, on each show. And always, look a person in the eyes and listen with your heart.

Enjoy the beauty of this world—the ocean, the mountains, the sky. Listen to music, or view art. Exercise! If you can’t run, then walk, even with a cane. If you can’t dance, then dance with your walker. Think about what you can do, not about what you can’t. Don’t take life so seriously. If need be, laugh at your memory loss.

I choose to live, and like Auntie Mame said, “Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death.”

Choose to have a voracious appetite...

And always remember... a giggle, alone or with someone, each day keeps the gloomies away.

Sissy Taran, who lives her best life in Santa Barbara, is a passionate volunteer. She is a devoted and loving mother of three daughters and seven grandchildren. Fifteen years ago she authored the book, *The Sun Will Shine Again... Life Lessons from a Year of Grieving*, after her husband of 30 years passed. Currently she is writing her second book on resilience.

Want to Meet New People?

Center for Successful Aging has a very special support group that meets twice a month at the Center’s office. It is called “Caring and Sharing,” and it provides a great opportunity for seniors to meet new people, learn about themselves, and gain valuable insights from others. Led by two experienced CSA peer counselors, this group focuses on interests, concerns, thoughts, and feelings of its members week to week.

If you have an interest in joining this group, call CSA at 805-898-8080.



Bordofsky's Top Ten Tips For Aging

By Dr. Michael Bordofsky, Doctor of Internal Medicine



1. **Avoid or limit exposure to hazardous substances—alcohol, tobacco, sleeping pills, tranquilizers, and pain medications.**



2. **Take the right medicines—only what you need, at the doses prescribed. Have a friend help if necessary, and ask your doctor if any can be eliminated.**



3. **Prepare for your doctor's visits—take your medication list with you, prioritize your questions, and make sure you understand their instructions. Consider taking an advocate with you.**



4. **Make sure your wishes are followed—know what is important to you, tell your family so they know, and share it with your doctor. Complete an Advanced Directive/POLST.**

5. **Stay out of the hospital—get out of bed, know your discharge instructions (include an advocate if necessary), follow up with your primary doctor. Take your med list with you.**



6. **Get better sleep—keep a regular bedtime and waking time, limit naps, avoid alcohol, get exercise, get out of bed if you don't fall asleep within 15 minutes, sleep in a dark, cool room with no visible clocks, get morning bright light where possible.**

7. **Don't fall down—create a safe space at home free of obstacles, get your eyes checked, wear good shoes, use your assist devices. If you do fall, tell your doctor... see if meds are contributing to falling and enroll in a PT balance program.**



8. **Exercise your body—make it a routine, make it enjoyable... make a goal and write it down, count it... get a streak going.**

9. **Exercise your brain—read, be social, get and wear hearing aids if needed, do brain exercises, and don't give up on learning new things.**

10. **Get the help you need—don't wait for a crisis, avoid social isolation, get help and look for resources like Visiting Nurses, Meals on Wheels, and Friendship Center for support.**

How Are You Aging?

Continued from page 1

to stay in their own home but what does that mean when help is needed? Will you recognize when it's time for help? Will you and/or your partner accept help? Caregivers are costly and not typically covered by insurance.

Leaving home was also discussed—where do you want to be and who do you want caring for you if you are no longer independent and self-sufficient? The three presenters not only offered information on the important topic of caregivers and community resources, but also addressed the pros and cons of hiring a caregiving agency versus employing a private, independent caregiver. Services for lower-income seniors include Real Help and In-Home Support Services (IHSS). It is important to properly vet not only an agency but any individual hired to care for yourself or a loved one. The panel also offered suggestions for caring for loved ones with dementia and discussed some key differences between dementia and the brain's normal aging process. Healthcare terminology was also clarified, i.e. "ADLs"—Activities of Daily Living.

Lastly, it was acknowledged how very emotionally and physically taxing it is to care for a loved one. Self-care is hugely important and since this work can be very taxing, it is crucial to find help and support. This may include participating in appropriate support groups. VNA Health, Coastal Caregivers, Family Service Agency, the Center for Successful Aging, the Alzheimer's Association, and the Parkinson's Association all offer groups for caregivers needing support.

Dr. Linker distributed a resource directory of senior services offered on the South Coast. Visit www.csasb.org or call the CSA office at 805-898-8080 to get a free copy.

Ms. Dusette and Ms. Austin reminded the group of the valuable services provided by longtime local non-profit VNA Health, from the Loan Closet for free loans of durable medical equipment to home health, palliative, community, and hospice services. For further information or specific questions, do not hesitate to reach out to VNA Community Liaison, Mikah Dusette: 805-698-7066.

We are all in this together. Live well!



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.

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