

# SONOMA SENIORS



COUNCIL ON AGING

Today

FEBRUARY 2010

## Staying Fit at Home

An interview with Alec Isabeau, D.C.

by Bonnie Allen

Can you stand on one foot? Can you squat and get up again? Can you pick something up off the floor and raise it above your head?

These are essential human activities that can become a challenge as we age, says Dr. Alec Isabeau, chiropractor and exercise specialist at Santa Rosa's True North Health. In our last issue, we summarized Dr. Isabeau's guidelines on how many hours of exercises per week people need to get in four categories: aerobic, strength, flexibility (stretching) and balance.

Because the guidelines were rather daunting, I asked Dr. Isabeau what people could do at home to meet these requirements. What changes can we make in our daily lives to maintain our fitness?

"There's a misconception that we can achieve fitness by doing more puttering around the house and garden," replied Dr. Isabeau. "Previous guidelines on fitness have suggested that's all you have to do. That's not true. The science says if you really want to be fit, you have to do devoted fitness activities."

"That said, the older we get, if we already have pre-existing conditions, just getting more active is good. The foundation for physical fitness is walking. Walk more and sit less. Those are the simple kinds of things people can do and they do help, if we're thinking about the fundamentals of independent living as we get older."

In the past, said Dr. Isabeau, exercise programs stressed aerobic or cardiovascular exercise—the kind of exercise that gets you huffing and puffing and raises your heart rate and stamina. But the big push now is to embrace strength-training activities. As we get older, strength is crucial, even life-saving if it helps us avoid falls. "One of the best determinants of functional independence is strength."

Another crucial element of fitness as we age is balance. Falls are a leading cause of injury and death in elders. The keys to avoiding falls are strength and balance. The best way to improve your balance is to simply practice standing on one leg. You can do this while standing at the sink, or anywhere



Dr. Alex Isabeau, exercise specialist

where there is a surface you can hold onto if you start to lose your balance.

"Disasters strike most often when one foot is off the ground."

In an earlier time, people chopped wood, mowed the grass by hand or washed clothes by hand.

Now, says Dr. Isabeau, "we don't have to do demanding physical activities in order to earn a dollar, get food, shelter. So our overall level of physical activity has gone down."

We can recover some of that activity by using a rake and broom instead of a leaf mower, and walking to the store whenever possible. "The problem is most of us don't do that regularly enough to call it a fitness program."

Dr. Isabeau recommends setting aside a dedicated period of time for strength training a few times a week. Often the local YMCA or senior center has exercise programs specially designed for elders (see the Wii program in "Save the Date," page 8); they are a way to exercise in a social setting where people encourage each other.

You don't have to go to a gym to achieve fitness; exercise videos and books on such activities as yoga, step aerobics and Tai Chi are excellent ways to follow a plan. Used faithfully, a pair of dumbbells or elastic cords are good substitutes for going to a gym for strength training.

The risk-benefit ratio of exercise is huge, and studies show that people in their nineties improve at the same rate as people in their twenties.

The goal is orthopedic durability: Making our bodies resilient and hard to break. Elastic

Dumbbells and elastic exercise bands are perfect for home exercise



bands and tubes are very user friendly. Basic strength training isn't complicated. The basic movements are pulling, pushing, raising something over our heads, squatting.

"When we can no longer squat, that's a disability. It's as important as standing on one foot.

In addition to strength training, "maintain a strong pump," advises Dr. Isabeau. "Walk whenever you can." Supplement walking with other forms of heart-strengthening aerobic exercise.

If you can't walk, try a recumbent stationary bike, he recommends. It's more stable than a standard stationary bike. Go swimming. The YMCA has pool classes. These are great exercises for seniors.

Don't forget that dancing is one of the best aerobic exercises you can do. Some people practice a daily dance routine tailored to their own sense of enjoyment.

Aerobic exercise helps us get through the day without getting tired. "What human bodies hate is rigid immobility."

So the key points are balance, strength-training, aerobic-cardio exercise and stretching. We get the best benefits by doing exercise that is demanding, not necessarily easy to do. Little bits of exercise done devotedly have a cumulative effect. When it gets easy, says Dr. Isabeau, bump it up. Make it challenging.

Finally, says Dr. Isabeau, "exercise is an incredible fertilizer for the brain." Hardly a week goes by without breaking news about how keeping physically active keeps those precious brain cells working well. It's just another way in which exercise is crucial to maintaining our independence as we get older.



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# Ask Kate

by Kate Maxwell,  
Ph.D., MFT  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Council on Aging

*Dear Kate,*

I live in a senior complex where my neighbors are very catty. One neighbor is always peeking out her curtain every time I walk past, and then she tells some of the other women how badly I dress. This gets back to me, of course. I don't know why she is picking on me. She even reports it when I go out to get my newspaper in my robe.

I've noticed that sometimes people stop talking and look me up and down when I come into the community room. This one neighbor is usually there. I'm feeling like I can't do anything right, so I'm avoiding activities, staying in my apartment a lot and feeling really lonely. What can I do? —A.V.

*Dear A.V.,*

It seems that you are dealing with a bully. We usually don't anticipate this kind of childish behavior in older people. In fact, when a person is beyond their teen years we kindly (or irresponsibly) re-label the behavior, calling it "gossip." But, in truth, it is bullying and should be defined as such.

People who engage in this kind of immature behavior are basically very insecure and use a putdown in order to elevate their own social standing. They use bullying to boost their self-esteem, believing that bullying behavior is the only, or easiest, means they have of gaining attention from their peers. Bullies typically seek control and domination through intimidation, as they lack the social skills to keep friends without this manipulation.

Bullying behavior is a problem in schools, the military and in the workplace. It can involve verbal abuse, cyberbullying, harassment and hazing. As you can attest, it can also show up in residential settings.

Those who tolerate or participate in the bullying and gossip do so in order to be part of the "gang" and either harbor a lot of spite themselves, or are also insecure and may even be grateful that your neighbor's spite is focused on someone other than themselves. It takes a lot of self-confidence to tell someone you don't want to listen to their gossip or participate in their bullying, so not all the other residents will be able to distance themselves from a bully. People often don't realize how destructive this behavior is.

In all social situations "cliques" may result as group's way of attempting to elevate their social standing, convincing themselves and others of their special standing. Healthy social groups don't use bullying behaviors.

As you can see from your experience, bullying behavior is not uncommon, although it may be unexpected among mature people. What can you do about it?

I'm hoping your complex has a social director who could use his or her function and skills to discourage bullying behaviors and promote a real sense of community. I would recommend you schedule an appointment to speak with her about your situation and request her assistance. All the research on bullying indicates that ignoring the behavior is *not* helpful. If you don't have a staff member available I would recommend that you pick up an appropriate number of this issue of *Sonoma Seniors Today* and distribute them about the complex: TV room, laundry room, exercise room, and community room. Perhaps a little education will help the residents realize their behavior is inappropriate for mature people.

The victims of bullying often experience loneliness, depression and anxiety. Withdrawing into isolation is a common response to rejection. In young people the isolation and social rejection can be so devastating as to result in suicidal behaviors. We all need to feel a part of our community. We don't survive well in isolation as feelings of loneliness actually depress our immune function, making us more susceptible to serious illnesses. If you are experiencing depression or anxiety, please seek out the services of a professional therapist. If you can't afford professional assistance, Council on Aging's **Senior Peer Support** program may be appropriate for you. Give me a call at 525-0143 x125 and we can discuss your options.

*Have a question about aging issues or family dynamics? Send it to Kate Maxwell at Council on Aging, 30 Kawana Springs Rd., Santa Rosa, or email to [kmaxwell@councilonaging.com](mailto:kmaxwell@councilonaging.com).*

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# The Physical Move

After making the decision to move to a senior facility

by Sylvia Bailin

In the January issue of *Sonoma Seniors Today*, I wrote about our need to accept our limits and change. Maybe the process is similar to finally using a cane or giving up car keys. Understandably, these decisions are often put off for too long making the change harder. Now, after a year, Len and I feel the move was timely, wise and eased our kids' anxieties.

Some readers have asked for a follow-up about the actual move with tips for us seniors.

Let me say these are merely suggestions not chiseled in stone. People find their own way. Also, our children helped. Some elders aren't that lucky. If so, professional movers of good reputation may be looked into.

By no means was this our first move, but it struck me that details were harder to remember, let alone execute this time around. I said to my daughter, "I'm so overwhelmed."

## "Make lists," she said.

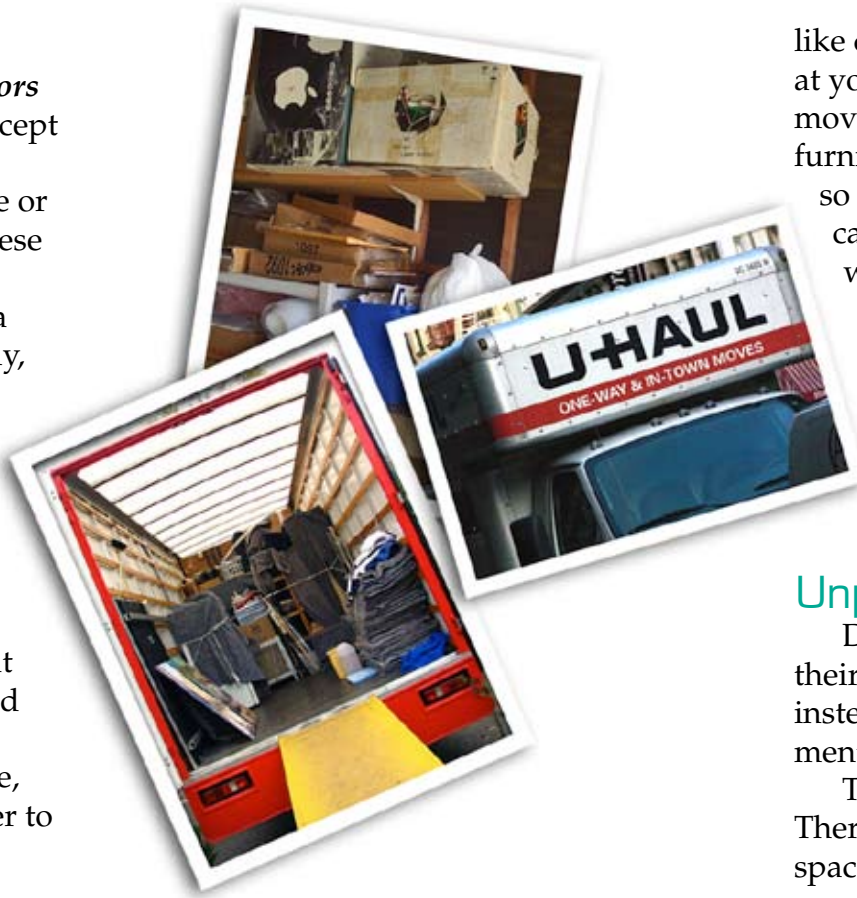
Great advice. I found an old loose-leaf binder with pockets for labels, tapes and markers. All in one place. I designated the only place for the binder. If not in my hand, it had to be in that place. One page for phone numbers to notify utilities, newspaper, post office, family and friends. On another page, I listed movers to interview, chores, ideas, questions that popped into my head.

## Measure/Record in the Binder

Because we moved into a smaller space, we measured the rooms and our furniture to decide what to cast off and where to place the essentials.

A small strip of colored tape on each piece of furniture signaled the movers—green to load, red to stay. At the new place, notes taped on the walls cued them: couch here, chair, dining table, etc.

Collect many boxes in varying sizes. If you buy them from the moving company, especially wardrobes, you may get some refund upon return. (The bottoms of



wardrobes can hold pillows and blankets.) If you "scrounge" boxes from stores, be careful that they're clean. Cartons with hand-grip holes are best. The heavier the items you pack, the smaller the box should be.

## Pack/Label/Write

I numbered each box before I packed it, then in my binder, I wrote the box number, the items I packed and its destination: #1, Brass table lamp, shade, Living Room.

We packed few kitchen utensils. (I was delirious with joy to have three meals a day served.) If you do take dishes, use butcher paper, not newsprint. It'll save you dishwashing when you unpack.

Some decisions roused lifetime memories. Could we squeeze in this cozy wing chair I'd curled up in with a green apple and a book? Or the cherished Singer Mom used to lovingly sew my little dresses? Time to say goodbye.

Soon a kind of heartlessness took over. This raft must cast stuff adrift for people with greater need—dishes, side tables, chests, the jetsam of a larger space.

We set aside boxes for last minute items

like clothing and bedding, so you can sleep at your new address that night. And the movers should load your bedroom furniture, lamps, and wardrobe boxes last so that they'll be unloaded first and you can work in the bedroom out of their way.

After a couple of phone interviews, we decided on the company that had a reputable record with our new residence. They did well: Shawn, who sweated doing paper work, Danny, tall and smiley, Mike who loved the notes on the walls.

## Unpack slowly.

Don't expect to empty boxes and place their contents in one day. Go to a movie instead. This is the part that takes adjustments over time. Don't hurry big changes.

The last phase: hanging our pictures. There's a ratio here. The more "right" the space, the greater the pleasure. Is this how museum people feel when they hang art? Do they also enjoy a sense of completion?

Our kids stayed tuned to see how we settled in. For Len and me, it's "so far, so good." Of course, there are bumps, a leaky faucet, an ill-placed doorstop, but we work them out and enjoy what we hope is the last move.

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# Senior Legal Department Survey:

## How can the Council on Aging Legal Department serve you best?

In an effort to improve the legal services that we provide in the Senior Legal Services Department at the Council on Aging, we would like to get your feedback. We provide educational programs and legal services to seniors in Sonoma County and would be interested in knowing the following:

What legal issues are important to you?

Do you have legal concerns that you would like to receive more information about?

Does your community or group have a need for a legal presentation on a particular legal issue?

In what areas would you be willing to pay discounted fees for legal advice, advocacy and services?

We would appreciate your taking the time to respond to the questions below so that we can respond to legal needs of our seniors by providing these services based on community needs. In addition, we would like to develop in person presentations to address your specific legal concerns.

### 1. Physical/Financial/Emotional

Elder Abuse\_\_\_\_  
 Restraining orders\_\_\_\_

### 2. Housing Issues:

Landlord/Tenant \_\_\_\_  
 Subsidized Housing \_\_\_\_  
 Mobile Home Park Issues\_\_\_\_  
 Evictions \_\_\_\_

### 3. Consumer Issues and advice about:

Marketing Scams\_\_\_\_  
 Small Claims Court\_\_\_\_  
 Bankruptcy Filing\_\_\_\_  
 Judgment Liens\_\_\_\_

### 4. Medical and Medicare Issues\_\_\_\_

5. Social Security and SSI Issues\_\_\_\_  
 Disability\_\_\_\_

### 6. Estate Planning Issues

Wills\_\_\_\_  
 Durable Powers of Attorney\_\_\_\_  
 Advanced Health Care Directives\_\_\_\_  
 Trusts\_\_\_\_, Deeds\_\_\_\_  
 Affidavit of Death\_\_\_\_.

### 7. Probate \_\_\_\_

Guardianship\_\_\_\_  
 Conservatorship\_\_\_\_

### 8. Real Property Issues

Construction Defects\_\_\_\_  
 Permit Process\_\_\_\_  
 Contract Disputes\_\_\_\_

### 9. Business Issues

Contract Review\_\_\_\_  
 Incorporation\_\_\_\_

### 10. Lawyer Referral\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Attorney\_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you be willing to pay for legal advice, advocacy or legal services based on either:

Sliding scale fee based on income \_\_\_\_  
 Flat rate fee \_\_\_\_  
 Hourly fee \_\_\_\_

12. Your additional comments are appreciated.

Thank you in advance for participating!  
 Please clip this survey and mail it to

Legal Department  
 Council on Aging  
 30 Kawana Springs Rd.  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404

For more information, call 525-0143 or email Maria Keene: [mkeene@councilonaging.com](mailto:mkeene@councilonaging.com). The survey can also be downloaded at [www.councilonaging.com](http://www.councilonaging.com). Click on "Legal Services" for a link to our survey.

Barbara J. Swary, Attorney At Law,  
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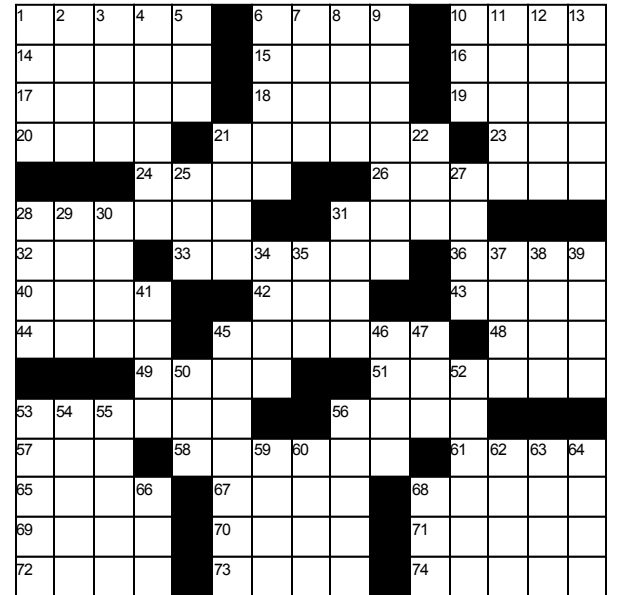
## February Crossword Puzzle

### Across

- 1 Some Middle Easterners
- 6 Strike
- 10 Qualified
- 14 Wireless of yore
- 15 Antacid brand
- 16 Wheat fiber
- 17 Odds' opposites
- 18 Mind
- 19 Make smooth
- 20 Email button
- 21 Twist
- 23 Winter road hazard
- 24 Dutch cheese
- 26 Like the devil
- 28 Baseball's Strawberry
- 31 Departs
- 32 Chicken \_\_\_ King
- 33 Fastest growing U.S. demographic
- 36 Wind pointer
- 40 A place for senior exercise classes
- 42 Promissory note
- 43 Snob
- 44 Utters
- 45 Bore
- 48 Microgram, for short
- 49 Aretha's music
- 51 Issues vulgar language
- 53 Wine bottle or gun
- 56 Rope fiber
- 57 Communications union, for short
- 58 14-legged crustacean
- 61 File
- 65 Early dwelling
- 67 Angel's instrument
- 68 Sheer, triangular scarf
- 69 Bauxite and cinnabar
- 70 One of 7.5 billion eaten each year
- 71 "\_\_\_ of Old Smokey"
- 72 Complain loudly
- 73 Sports channel
- 74 Quaint exclamation

### Down

- 1 War god
- 2 Declaim wildly
- 3 City in Yemen
- 4 Where to keep moving lists
- 5 Distress call
- 6 Rain heavily
- 7 Lubricate
- 8 Prayer ending
- 9 Slang for crazy people
- 10 Core muscles, for short
- 11 Exercise makes it stronger
- 12 First name in Tour de France
- 13 Ceased
- 21 Facebook tab
- 22 Garden tool
- 25 Tinge
- 27 Invitation abbreviaton
- 28 "\_\_\_ of Our Lives"
- 29 \_\_\_ mater
- 30 Risqué
- 31 Chow
- 34 Watch face
- 35 Dawn goddess
- 37 Weapons
- 38 Mediterranean city
- 39 Chicken precursors
- 41 Type of org.
- 45 Detective
- 46 Completed to perfection
- 47 Eucalyptus
- 50 Michel's yes
- 52 Coiled wire
- 53 Star Trek Dr.
- 54 In the know
- 55 Mallet
- 56 "\_\_\_ Pop", Dr. Seuss book
- 59 Rowers needs
- 60 Chef's chore
- 62 Ancient Roman texts
- 63 Not barefoot
- 64 Baby seals
- 66 Sixth sense
- 68 Enemy



[www.CrosswordWeaver.com](http://www.CrosswordWeaver.com)

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To keep track of healthcare reform as it moves through Congress, visit this frequently updated site from the Kaiser Foundation that compares current bills in the House and Senate:  
[tinyurl.com/HealthcareLegislation](http://tinyurl.com/HealthcareLegislation)

### Have you had your Social Security benefits denied because of an outstanding arrest warrant?

A recent federal court settlement has suspended this practice. Under the agreement, SSA has stopped, as of April 1, 2009, suspending or denying benefits due to the mere existence of a warrant—unless the

warrant is issued in a criminal proceeding on a charge such as flight or escape. For more information, call the Council on Aging Legal Services Department at 525-0142, ext. 142. Or visit [tinyurl.com/MartinezSettlement](http://tinyurl.com/MartinezSettlement) online.

**Note:** Did you find last month's crossword puzzle a little too puzzling? Don't worry—it's not your brain that's slipping. The margins of the puzzle grid "got" cut off by a "marginally" incompetent layout person (your editor!). The error is corrected in our online version, or you can send me a self-addressed envelope and I'll mail you the corrected puzzle. —Editor

## SUDOKU A logic puzzle

Supply the missing numbers so that every row, column and 9-digit square contain only one of each number. No math skills are required, and no guesswork. For hints on doing Sudoku puzzles, visit [www.websudoku.com](http://www.websudoku.com), or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Sonoma Seniors Today, 30 Kawana Springs Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404. (Solution on page 8.)

	3	2	5	9				1
	8	1	3					
				2	1	8		5
1		5					8	9
		7				1		
8	4					6		2
7		4	2	5				
					4	2	1	
9				7	3	5	6	

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### Senior Financial Services:

Our bonded and insured counselors assist seniors who are unable to handle bill paying, checkbook reconciliation, eligibility documentation for retirement programs, and other financial needs relative to their daily money management. This program is especially designed for the forgetful senior or the senior with poor vision and often protects them from financial abuse and late fees associated with forgetting to pay their bills. For peace of mind, call Connie Aust, Director, today at 525-0143, ext. 108.

### Senior Peer Support:

This program is to help seniors struggling with serious mental illness access services and programs that help them develop skills and social support, leading to a more constructive and satisfying life. After an assessment visit by CoA case managers and a licensed marriage and family therapist, clients are matched with trained volunteers for 12 weekly support sessions to develop a care plan solution with the client's approval, then follow-up with progress notes. Sponsored by the Department of Mental Health Services. Call Michele Leonard, Director of Volunteers, 525-0143, ext. 147, for information.

### Lawyer Referral Service:

If you are 60 years old or older and need an attorney, you will be referred to a panel of elder law attorneys experienced in working with seniors. An initial half-hour consultation is \$30. If you retain the attorney for further services, fees will be at the attorney's usual rate. The service is certified by the California State Bar, Certification #0111. Call 525-1146.

### Senior Meals:

Meals on Wheels delivers hot meals to temporarily home-bound or chronically ill seniors. Ten dining sites provide meals and companionship. Therapeutic meals and nutritional counseling are available for special needs. Call 525-0383 for information on home delivery or dining site locations.

### Senior Day Services:

This service has helped hundreds of people to reconnect with others through our Senior Day Activities program, offering the opportunity to gather for meals, exercise, entertainment, companionship, and arts and crafts. The programs are held in Healdsburg, Sonoma, and Sebastopol. Call Connie Aust at 525-0143, ext. 108

### Senior Helper List:

Our referral list includes caregivers in the county pre-screened with DMV/criminal background checks, employer references and interviews. Their services include some light housework, driving, cooking, and personal care. They charge approximately \$15-\$18 per hour. The cost of the list is \$100. Call Caroline Edillor, 525-0143, ext. 104.

### Senior Legal Services:

Legal consultation and representation in matters of housing, consumer fraud, Social Security and SSI, Medi-Cal and Medicare, and elder abuse are provided. Also available are simple trusts, wills and durable powers of attorney for health care and finance. Call 525-0143, ext. 142.

#### Council on Aging Mission Statement:

To provide services that support the independence and well-being of older adults in Sonoma County, and to be a strong advocate for the quality of life of elders locally and nationally.

**Save the date...** ✓ [Events are free unless otherwise indicated]

◆ **Sebastopol Senior Center.** N. Highland St., Sebastopol. Call Emily Webster at 829-2440 for information on the following programs and other events.

• **Feb. 5: Bilingual Exchange.** Practice your Spanish and help others with their English at this monthly tea-and-pastries social. 3 PM.

• **Feb. 19: Festival of Sonoma County Wildlife.** Slide Show by photographer and naturalist Brandon Hutchinson. Close ups of everyday life in the wilds of our county: Pt. Reyes, Petaluma Marsh and Anadel. 3 pm. Refreshments will be served.

◆ **LandPaths Outings.** Bring the grandchildren to these FREE winter outings. To reserve space and for outing details, call 524-9318, or email outings@landpaths.org. FREE, reservation required:

• **Feb. 6: Mushroom Madness.** 10 AM-2 PM. Discover the magnificent, moldy world of fungi. Easy saunter on protected property near Santa Rosa, highlighting edible, medicinal & common mushrooms and how to find them.

• **Feb. 13: Birds of the Petaluma Marsh.** 10 AM-1:30 PM. Bring the whole family for an easy walk to see feathered friends at the Petaluma Marsh along the Petaluma River, hoping to spot some of the 150 bird species there. Bring: binoculars, picnic lunch.

◆ **Feb. 12: What's Up in Aging Policy.** 10:30 AM-12 NOON, Council on Aging, 30 Kawana Springs Rd., Santa Rosa. Latest info from Washington, with Dr. Carroll Estes

and Katie Johnson. Presented by National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. See ad on page 4 for details.

◆ **Tuesdays in January & February: Wii Get Fit.** Learn how to get fit through a video game. Girl Scouts will be teaching bowling, golf and tennis with the Wii. Rohnert Park Senior Center, 6800 Hunter Dr., Ste. A., Rohnert Park, 3-4 PM. For information, call the Rohnert Park Senior Center at 585-6780.

◆ **First Thursdays: Free Movies for Seniors.** Thursdays through June. Third Street Cinemas, 620 Third, Santa Rosa, 10 AM (doors open at 9:30). For movie titles, call 522-0330, ext. 3. Sponsored by Santa Rosa Memorial Park & Mortuary/Eggen & Lance Chapel; Kobrin Financial Services; Synergy Medical Group. For info: 523-1586, ext. 21.

◆ **Wednesdays: NEW! Toastmasters Club at Council on Aging.** The new chapter meets Wednesdays at 8 AM, and all are welcome. Come develop your public speaking skills in a supportive environment! Location: 30 Kawana Springs Rd., Santa Rosa. For more information, call 525-0143.

**Notice:** Last month we announced that the January issue would be in full color, and that readers could access it online.

Some readers expressed a concern that **Sonoma Seniors Today** might be planning to discontinue the print edition.

Nothing could be further from our intentions. We will continue to provide a print edition for those who prefer to hold the paper in their hands.

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