

SENIOR DIGEST

The following are offered at the Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador St. For information, call 643-1044 or visit www.vallejoseniorcenter.com. Anyone 50 or older may participate.

News:

- Entering and Reentering the New Job Market. Four-week course starting March 2. Classes are 10 a.m. to noon. Learn tools and strategies needed for competitive job search. \$20 per person.

- Free Internet service Monday from noon to 2 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to noon.

- St. Patty's Day Dinner. Friday, March 12. Seating 4:30 p.m., dinner 5 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for members, \$12 for non-members. Prepared by Ray Martin's Catering and center volunteers. Entertainment: "Jammin with Gary." Menu includes corned beef w/cabbage, carrots and potatoes, beverage and dessert. Advanced ticket sales only.

- Disaster preparedness

training by the American Red Cross. Class set for 2 p.m., March 4. Training will focus on knowledge, skills and action s needed for personal preparedness for disasters such as earthquakes, home fires, wildfires, floods, heat emergencies and terrorism. Free disaster preparedness kits for participants. Offered by Area Agency on Aging serving Napa and Solano. Make reservations at front desk or call 643-1044.

- Florence Douglas Senior Center. New office hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon, and 12:30 to 2 p.m. Closed between noon and 12:30 p.m. for lunch. Fridays open 8 a.m. to noon.

Ongoing activities:

- Free 2009 tax help by AARP volunteers who will do your income taxes and they will be re-filed. Mondays and Wednesdays only. Starting Feb. 3 to April 7, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To make appointments call (707) 643-1044, or come to front office. Tax-

payers must bring a current ID, copy of their 2008 tax forms, W2 Form and Form 1099 showing interest and dividends and documentation showing original purchase price of sold assets. For taxpayers with incomes of \$50,000 or less, with special attention to those 60 or older.

- Computer classes.

Basics: 10-wk course starting Jan. 19. 10 a.m. to noon, Tuesdays. Basics & Beyond: 10-wk course starting Jan. 21, 10 a.m. to noon, Thursdays. Cost \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. Sign up at office. Space limited.

- Bingo: Fridays, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, 2 to 5:30 p.m. \$10 (one pack)

- Family History Writing Group, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., second and fourth Monday of each month. Fee: \$1.

- Travel and Thrift/Gift Shop: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday 9 a.m. to noon. Public welcome. Donated goods accepted Mondays and Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Weekly activities:

- New, Wednesday art

classes start Wednesday, Jan. 20. Will meet from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., in the Carl Manner Room. Cost: \$10 per class, payable to instructor. Learn at your own pace. Personalized guidance by instructor Ignacio Sandoval. Learn how to draw three-dimensional subjects in a three-step process using chalk and charcoal. Sign up in lobby during open hours.

- Monday: Line dancing (intermediate/ advance), 10 to 11:15 a.m., \$6 per session, coupons available; Jazzercise lite, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.; yoga, 11 a.m. to noon, \$3 per session, bring a towel or mat.

- Tuesday: Line dancing (beginning/intermediate), 10 to 11:30 a.m., \$6 per session, coupons available; Tai chi, 9 to 10 a.m., \$10 per month; Jazzercise lite, 10:15 a.m. to 1 to 1:15 p.m., \$2.50 per class, 12 classes for \$25; line dance (beginners), 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., \$6 per session, coupons available.

- Thursday: Beginners' line dancing, 10 to 10:30 a.m., free; Basic-beginners' line dancing, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., \$6; tai chi (no third Thursday,

SENIOR MENU

Meals on Wheels of Solano County provides meals to homebound seniors 60 and older and at congregating dining sites at the senior centers. Call 24 hours in advance at (800) 788-5114 or 426-3079. Suggested donation: \$3 per meal. Meals are served Monday through Friday at these locations: Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador St., noon; Marina Towers, 601 Sacramento St., 11:30 a.m.; and 1205 East Second St., Benicia, 11:30 a.m.

Menu for this week

Monday — Hot turkey sandwich w/gravy, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, Caesar salad, fruit.

Tuesday — Beef-A-Roni, green beans, wheat roll, orange juice, peach cobbler.

Wednesday — Baked chicken w/gravy, brown rice, Brussels sprouts, fruited Jello.

Thursday — Spaghetti w/meat sauce, Italian vegetables, green salad, bread, fruit.

Friday — Breaded fruit, baked potatoes, broccoli, bread, fruit.

Meals on Wheels is seeking volunteers in the Vallejo area for home deliveries one day a week. Call 626-3079 for more information.

9 a.m., \$10 per month; Jazzercise lite, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m., \$2.50 per class, 12 classes for \$25; dominos, 1 p.m., \$1 per session; mah jongg, 9 a.m., \$1; Scrabble group, 1 p.m., \$1 per session; Bocce ball, 9 a.m.

Health services:

- RN/Certified Diabetic

Educator — first Wednesday of the month. Free blood sugar (glucose) checks.

- Caregivers Support Group — 10:30 a.m., second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Free.

- Elder Health Nurse — 9 a.m. to noon, second and fourth Wednesday of the month. Free. Schedule at 643-1044.

DISTINCTIONS

Sutter Solano Medical Center Guild has installed the following officers at its general meeting:

- Michael Hayes, president
- Mary Collins, vice president
- Renate Kobert, treasurer
- Jo Ann Cox, recording secretary
- Margaret Marvick, corresponding Secretary

Hourly service pins also were

awarded to numerous volunteers at the meeting and \$2,000 scholarships were awarded for continuing education to these hospital employees:

- Therese Frank, RN, Clinical Nurse Educator
- Jenifer Ault, RN, CCU Nurse
- Imelda Nagasawa, ER Technician
- Michael Luttrell, Surgery Technician

Benicia resident Laura Fentress, daughter of Robert and Sally Fentress, was named to the St. Olaf College deans list for fall 2009. She is a Benicia High School graduate majoring in English and Asian studies.

The Dean's list recognizes St. Olaf students with a semester grade point average of 3.75 or higher on a 4-point scale.

Ernie Villanueva, with Prudential California Realty's Vallejo office, was named American Canyon Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year and Realtor of the Year by the American Canyon Association of Realtors for 2009.



Courtesy Photo

Cheerleader Fest at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in 2008.

The Vallejo Convention & Visitors Bureau was named SportsEvents Magazine's Readers Choice pick for hosting sports events, the bureau announced.

The special Readers Choice feature is included in the January 2010 issue of SportsEvents Magazine and spotlights industry professionals nationwide who have exhibited a high level of professionalism, creativity and excellence in hosting sports events, according to the announcement.

"Sports event planners were asked to nominate their favorite destinations and venues for hosting sporting events and we are happy that they recognized our bureau and the Vallejo area," bureau Executive Director Mike Browne said. "We were acknowledged for excellence within Sports Destination Marketing Organization category and were one of only two

California destinations so honored."

Magazine officials "put the call out to readers to nominate sports planners and sports-friendly destinations and venues" for the awards, asking that only the best be recommended, SportsEvents Magazine publisher J. Tally O'Connor said.

"The Vallejo CVB, not only meets but exceeds the high demands of producing successful sports events today," he said.

The bureau also will get a certificate with a "Sports Event Planning Excellence" seal along with special recognition at the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Symposium this April in Columbus, Ohio, O'Connor said.

For more information about the Vallejo Convention & Visitors Bureau, call (707) 642-3653, (800) 4-VALLEJO, or visit www.VisitVallejo.com.



Courtesy Photo

Napa County Fire Department Fire Chief Ernie Loveless was recognized as a Patriotic Employer and recently presented a plaque by members of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

The ESGR is an agency of the Department of Defense that provides support services to service members and employers.

What you need to know about IBS

By Lawrence Chan, M.D.
Solano Coalition for Better Health

While most people may have heard of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), far less may be able to define it.

Also known as spastic colon, IBS afflicts up to 20 percent of the world's population, and is the most common chronic health disorder in the U.S., Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

IBS tends to affect women more than men (roughly twice as many), and it can affect anyone at any age. This modern diagnosis of an age-old problem is both under-reported and under-recognized.

Many people who suffer from abnormal pain during bowel movements and/or chronic constipation, diarrhea, gas and bloating, but don't recognize this as IBS. While IBS can have a negative impact on the quality of life, the news is that it has no long-term physical side effects.

While the cause of IBS remains a mystery, intolerance to certain foods, like dairy and those that promote intestinal gals, seems to be a contributing factor. Whatever the cause, the resulting impact is a disruption of normal bowel function due to increased nerve sensitivity.

Since there is no official test to diagnose IBS, when it is suspected, more serious conditions such as bacterial infections, bowel obstructions, inflammatory bowel diseases, colon cancer and gall-bladder problems are ruled out first before settling on a diagnosis of IBS. It should also be noted that symptoms such as blood in stool, weight loss and fever are not associated with IBS, but with potentially serious issues that should be checked out immediately by a healthcare provider.



Treatment

The treatment for IBS will vary from patient to patient. Fiber supplementation is often initially prescribed, and additional recommendations may follow depending on how you respond to initial treatment. Since the effectiveness of drugs prescribed for IBS differs for each person, patients may go through a trial and error period before finding the best course of treatment.

Additionally, the provider will usually try to address underlying factors that are present, such as diet and stress, with the goal being to holistic management of the condition. This often means eliminating foods from your diet that may trigger IBS and finding ways to deal with stress such as meditation and yoga.

Those who do not seek treatment are likely to be less productive and feel sluggish on a regular basis. Overall, most people are able to cope with IBS and fully enjoy life, especially if treatment is sought early. If you believe that you may be suffering from IBS, be sure to schedule an appointment with your provider right away.

Lawrence Chan, M.D., is a board-certified gastroenterologist affiliated with Sutter Regional Medical Foundation, a member of Solano Coalition for Better Health.