

# Living on the Waters Edge

Volume 9, Issue 12

December 2012

A tradition of caring since 1971.

Now in our Forty-First Year of Providing Health Services to the Elders of the Alameda/Oakland Area.



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## Holiday Plants and Their History

By David Ruttan

All of us know the stories behind Santa Claus and St. Nicholas, but how many of us know the traditions and history surrounding the plants that are also associated with the Holiday Season? How could we celebrate the Holiday Season without mistletoe, holly, Christmas trees and poinsettias?

The Druids used mistletoe to celebrate



the coming of winter, two hundred years before the birth of Christ. They gathered this evergreen plant that is parasitic upon other trees to decorate their homes. They believed the plant had special healing powers for everything from female infertility to ingestion of poison. Scandinavians considered mistletoe a plant of peace and harmony. They associated mistletoe with their goddess of

love, Frigga; the custom of kissing under the mistletoe probably originated from this belief. The early church banned the use of mistletoe in Christmas celebrations because of its pagan origins. Not to be outdone by pagan traditions, Church fathers suggested the use of holly as the appropriate Christmas greenery.



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## Winter Health Precautions

By Wilson Trang

Many people assume that once the heat is gone from the summer, the weather is just that much more safe for seniors. While the heat is no longer the main threat, there are many different dangers that effect seniors.



The lack of sun is one of the primary threats to

seniors during the winter. The sun or sunlight exposure is responsible for Vitamin D production in the human body. Vitamin D is responsible for bone health and cholesterol control. The sun is also responsible for dopamine production, which is a chemical receptor for happiness. This doesn't just affect seniors. Studies have found that people who experience less sunshine have a higher risk of

suicide and depression. If you are feeling sluggish, tired or down, spending some time outside might cheer you up.

Another threat is a lack of hydration. Many people think that because the heat is gone, they don't have to drink as much water. Hydration becomes a major problem for



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## Exercise Your Mind!

### Triva

What entertainer performed his 25,000th show in 1996? (*hint: he is still performing today*)

Who is the gorilla who signed more than 1,000 words?

Name the Native American warrior who was commissioned in the regular British Army as brigadier general during the War of 1812.

Name the first US Supreme Court Justice.

### Brain Benders

One winter day, there was a man standing in the middle of someone's front yard. The person stayed there for several weeks without moving and the owner of the yard didn't mind. Eventually the man left. Who was the man?

A man builds a four-walled house. Each of the walls, on the outside, face due south. The man looks out the window and sees a bear. What color is the bear?

A man walks into a bar and asks for a drink of water. The bartender thinks for a minute, pulls out a gun and points it at him. The man says, "Thank you," and walks out. What happened?

### Poetry

By: Bernard Welz, Resident

My dog chases small birds  
Up a beach till beach becomes sea  
I call for him to stay,  
But his blood was up  
And he wouldn't obey.  
Then muddied and panting  
Comes back to me.  
I take him home,  
I wash him with a hose,  
He bumps me with his nose  
And we are buddies again.

.....

If in a hundred years  
You ask for me  
I'll be in flower  
Or a tree  
And the songbirds  
Will sing to me

.....

With a sudden  
Flutter of wings  
The small bird left  
The tree at the East gate.  
Now a breeze plays melancholic  
Among the leaves.

### Last month's answers

The Greek Goddess of Corn is who? **Demeter**

What is the name of the Roman God of Grain?  
**Ceres**

What was the name of the captain of the Mayflower? **Christopher Jones**

Which President gave Thanksgiving an official date? (*there are 2*). **Lincoln declared it the last Thursday in November and FDR changed it to the 4th Thursday.**

Cornucopia means what? **Horn of plenty**

Briana, Devon, Eileen, and Thomas, each have a different favorite Thanksgiving food. Use the clues to decide whose favorite is turkey, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, and sweet potatoes.

- Briana loves Turkey
- Devon enjoys Sweet Potatoes
- Eileen likes Cranberry Sauce
- Thomas prefers Pumpkin Pie

	Turkey	Cranberry Sauce	Pumpkin Pie	Sweet Potatoes
Briana		x	x	x
Devon	x	x	x	
Eileen	x		x	x
Thomas	x	x		x

## Silence is Golden (and Healthy!)

By Wilson Trang



The old saying, "Silence is Golden" often implies that sometimes nothing said is preferable to

speaking. It's ironic that adage is extremely useful in fitness and wellness as well. By silencing your movement and steps, you have the potential to save your knees and joints.

The sound you make when your feet step while walking or climbing the stairs is directly proportionate to the amount of force your legs and body are absorbing. The louder the steps, the more force the body is absorbing. The sound that one hears from the steps is the force projected onto the floor from the bone-to-bone contact with the floor.

Imagine if you hit the wall with a pillow versus hitting the wall with a baseball bat. The softness of the

pillow hitting the wall nullifies a majority of the sound. A baseball bat's tough frame hitting a wall creates a ton of sound.

When walking up or down the stairs, the transfer from one foot to another often creates a lot of force in the transition. You are essentially transferring your entire body-weight from one foot to another. The force is significantly more when traveling down the stairs, when that body-weight is transferred and increased when going down by gravity.

As the years pass, this pounding eventually adds up, resulting in cases of arthritis, osteoporosis and damaged ligaments. It might also lead to muscle deformity as the human body finds new and unconventional ways to walk to mitigate the pain.

In order to minimize the force

the body takes, one should lighten the step of each step taken. Be as quiet as you can. As you try to minimize the sound of each step, you'll notice two things: one, there is significantly more muscle contraction and usage with each step and two, there will be lot less speed when walking down the stairs. In essence, the body is using the muscles as the pillow, instead of the bones as the baseball bat. You will also notice that you will pay a lot more attention to each step, resulting in greater balance and control of your lower body.



A quick tip in quieting the sound of each step is to reach out with each step, allowing the toes to contact the ground first. This allows all three joints in the leg, ankle, knees, and toes, to distribute the force.

## World Tour: Holiday Celebrations

This month we pause our traveling in favor of celebrating; please enjoy the celebrations of Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and Eid al-Adha.

### Fun Facts about the holidays:

- Each year, more than 3 billion Christmas cards are sent in the U.S. alone.
- Christmas trees usually grow for about 15 years before they are sold.

- During the eight days of Hanukkah, the entire Hallel (psalms of praise) is said.
- Kwanzaa isn't a religious holiday, but a cultural celebration of African heritage togetherness.
- Eid al-Adha is an Islamic festival to commemorate Abraham's willingness to follow God's command to sacrifice his only son.

*Happy Holidays*



## Congratulations!

The following staff members celebrate their anniversaries this month, and we would like to thank them for their continuing service and dedication. We couldn't do it without them!

### One Year:

Doug Anderson, Lodge  
Gloria Hicks, Elders

### Six Years:

Martha Martinez, Lodge

### Seven Years:

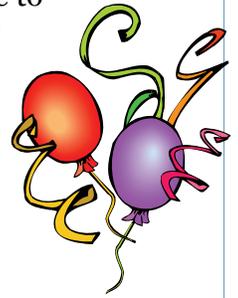
Sweetie Shrestha, Elders

### Eight Years:

Stephen Zimmerman, Lodge

### Thirty One Years!

Barbara Covington,  
Lodge



## Holiday Traditions Around the Globe

By Brittany Malone

Christmas celebrations in the United States differ between regions and consist of holiday lights, Christmas trees, and colorful decorations. However, there are many different holiday traditions throughout the world that we may not be familiar with. Here is a quick look into a few of our world's celebrations.

During Christmas season in China, known as Sheng Dan Jien, Chinese Christians are visited by Dun Che Lao Ren, "Old Man Christmas", who delivers presents to the



children. Christmas trees and homes are decorated with paper lanterns symbolizing the New Year. These lanterns are a sign of luck, long life, prosperity and happiness. Christmas in China coincides with the Spring Festival, which honors the family's ancestors.

In Italy, Christmas Eve is a time for viewing manger scenes or creche. Creche are shown with figurines such as Baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Babbo Natale (Father Christmas) delivers presents on Christmas. Traditionally,

gifts are distributed on the 12th day of Christmas (known as the Epiphany), when the three Wise Men gave Baby Jesus their gifts. Similar to Santa Claus, La Befana brings presents to the children's stockings. "Buon Natale!" (Merry Christmas).

In Mexico, Christmas is a true folk celebration, with customs similar to Europe and the United States. Pesebre, a nativity scene displaying the city of



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## Winter Heath

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seniors in the winter. Seniors are more sensitive to the cold weather and are more willing to wear many layers. The heavy layers are much closer to the skin, and warms up the body quickly.

However, due to the proximity to the skin, the skin is unable to breathe properly and sweats much more rapidly than in the heat, as in summer. Without the

air to cool down the skin temperature, the body keeps sweating, leading to dehydration. Hydrating in the winter is just as crucial as in the summer.



Winter also brings about new environmental threats as well. One is the increase in fall risk and obstacles. The sun goes down much earlier, creating hazardous walking

situations earlier in the day. The rain also makes it harder to walk outside. The slippery rain risk isn't just outside; people walking in and out of the rain can track water indoors as well, creating a rain hazard indoors.

Despite these risks, winter can be just as safe as summer. As long as you keep your eyes up and look out for these risks, you can keep yourself safe and warm during the long winter days.

## Resident of the Month: Ann Parrington



Ann Parrington, born and raised in New York, takes pride in having grown up in the Big Apple. No wonder her favorite memory from her youth is going to the World Fair in Queens and spending time in Long Island with her family every year.

Ann also enjoyed travelling.

She's been to Hawaii, the British Isles, Italy and has even cruised the Gulf of Mexico. She recalls that her favorite part of the cruise is the buffet, particularly the one that included shrimp.



As a Resident at the Lodge, Ann enjoys watching PBS shows, playing scrabble, and

watching and rooting for her favorite baseball team, the Yankees.

We are proud to honor Ann Parrington as our December Resident of the Month.



## Eating Out

On Thursday, December 6, we will be going to lunch at Pearl's Deluxe Burgers in Alameda. Pearl's offers a wide variety of delicious burgers and yummy home made french fries.

On Thursday, December 27, we will be going to Fentons Creamery in Piedmont. Fentons offers a selection of salads, grilled sandwiches, and, most importantly, home-made ice cream. If you are interested in going on either outing please check the sign-up sheet at the front desk, we meet in the lobby at 11:30 am!

## Book Nook (Audio)



Please join our book club group every Sunday at 1pm as we discuss the month's book selection.

**This month's book is:**  
**Skipping Christmas**  
 by John Grisham.

## Holiday Party and New Years Bash!

Happy Holidays from Waters Edge Lodge Staff! On Thursday, December 13, we are having our annual Holiday Party from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. We look forward to listening to Helen Placourakis play violin and Todd Haemerle sing and play guitar, as residents and families celebrate the beginning of the winter holiday season. We will be serving refreshments and hors d'oeuvres.



Can you believe it is almost 2013? The New Year is quickly approaching and we are

going to have a count down celebration! At 6:00 pm on Monday, December 31st, it will be midnight in Brazil and we'll start our celebration. Please join us as we count down with champagne & sparkling cider!

## From Brittany's Desk

We have many exciting events and outings planned for December! Residents will have the opportunity to view Christmas lights around Alameda and then warm up with hot chocolate, eggnog, and cookies in the cafe (two trips planned, join us at 6:00 pm on either Tuesday, December 11 or Tuesday, December 18).

We can't wait to listen to the Urquhart Band on Wednesday, December 5 at 7:15 pm.

We also plan on taking a ferry ride to San Francisco and enjoying lunch at Sinbad's Seafood Restaurant, located right next to the ferry building. Please check the calendar for additional activities!



## Resident of the Month: Henrietta Woon

Henrietta Woon was born in San Francisco a few short years ago---1917. She is the 9<sup>th</sup> of 10 children! Her father was a doctor in China and was brought to the United States by the railroads to administer medicine to the railroad workers. Although he was a medical doctor in China, he wasn't allowed to practice Western medicine, so he became an Herbalist. He bought papers for Henrietta's mother and their eldest child. They were quite wealthy in

China and Henrietta's mother, as was the custom in the higher classes, had her feet bound!



Henrietta attended school in San Francisco and went to work for the Federal government, where she met her husband. He was a scholar of Chinese literature, wrote poetry and was an editor for an Asian American newsletter.

Henrietta was an avid golfer all of her life and her apartment is full of the trophies she has won over the years. Until quite recently she was still playing 2 or 3 times a week! Her nephew, Ty, calls her the "fun" Aunt and we agree, she certainly is a joy to be around.

Congratulations to Henrietta on being December's Resident of the Month.

*Congratulations!*

## Garden News!

Our activity program is always evolving in the Garden Neighborhood and this month that change is staff! We are happy to welcome Judith as the newest member of our Activity Department at Elders Inn. Judith will be spending time in the Garden Neighborhood and would love to meet everyone at afternoon tea!

## Traditions

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Bethlehem, is displayed inside the house as well as beautiful poinsettias. In Mexico poinsettias are known as "The Flower of The Blessed Night" because they look like the star of Bethlehem. "Feliz Navidad!"



## Holiday Plants

*(Continued from page 1)*



The use of a Christmas tree originated in 16th century Germany. It was common for the Germanic people to decorate fir trees, both inside and out, with roses, apples, and colored paper. It is believed that Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, was the first to light a Christmas tree with candles. While coming home one dark winter night near Christmas, he noticed the beauty of the starlight shining through the branches of a small fir tree outside his home. He replicated the starlight by using candles attached to the branches of his indoor tree. The Christmas tree was not

widely used in Britain until the 19th century. In the 1820's the Christmas tree was brought to Pennsylvania by German immigrants.

**Poinsettias:** Named for America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, the poinsettia plant was brought to America in 1828. Native to Mexico, the poinsettia plant was thought to be symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem in the 18th century. Thus the poinsettia became associated with the Christmas season. The actual flower of the poinsettia is small and yellow. Surrounding the flower are large, bright red leaves, often mistaken for flower petals.



## Meet Arran Rogerson

Meet your new Wellness Coordinator! Arran Rogerson (“Ar-Ran”; named after the Isle of Arran in Scotland) was born in Los Angeles in November of 1987, shortly before moving north to Alameda. He attended Alameda High School where he was captain of the varsity Cross-Country team. Arran led the team to compete in the state championships of 2004 and 2005 and was crowned ACCAL League Champion in 2005. Arran’s love for exercise and

competition led him to sign a scholarship with the University of California, Davis for NCAA Cross-Country and pursue a Bachelor’s of Science in Exercise Biology. While attending UC Davis, Arran worked in the Plant Sciences department driving a forklift, performed regularly with a Rock n’ Roll band, and traveled the country competing for the Division 1 Cross-Country team. For the standard 5-mile Cross-Country race he posted a

personal best time of 25min:24sec. He is currently pursuing his long-term goal of working with professional athletes as a physical therapist or sports trainer. His hobbies include playing guitar, competing in athletics, going for nature hikes, and drawing comics. Be sure to drop by the fitness room and introduce yourself!

# WELCOME

## Aerobic Exercise

By Arran Rogerson

When planning a fitness program for elders, aerobic exercise is often overlooked because of the hassle and complication it involves. Despite its time-consuming and uncomfortable nature, aerobic exercise and cardiovascular fitness remain extremely important to overall health and well-being, especially in the later years of our life. The word “aerobic” is used to describe exercise that is low in intensity and can be performed for an extended period of time. This generally refers to activities like jogging, cycling, dancing, or even walking that get your heart rate pumping and your lungs working. Unfortunately, these activities take time and effort, occasionally requiring one to go outside or spend an hour

in the pool or on the stationary bike. It takes determination and patience, but the rewards are huge.

When performed regularly, aerobic exercise improves the body’s ability to pump blood throughout the body, delivering more oxygen and nutrients to the cells and removing more waste. Put simply, it makes the heart better at doing its job. This can tackle obesity and diabetes, lower cholesterol and high blood pressure, and overall make you feel more agile, able, and just-plain-good. Lifting weights and improving your balance and flexibility are only half of the equation. The other half simply requires the initiative to go for a walk. Try attending Walking Club and going for a stroll with your favorite Wellness Coordinator. Live long and prosper. Get some aerobic exercise.



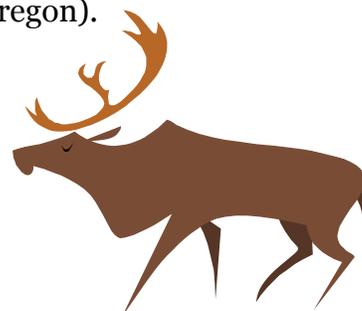
## Walking Club

The Walking Club at Waters Edge Lodge is getting out there and enjoying the weather! Even though the weather is starting to change, they’re still at it, adding miles to their total every time the weather is accommodating. Here’s their total mileage so far!



**Between February 17 and November 20, the club walked 162.1 miles.**

That’s like walking from Christmas Valley, Oregon to Blitzen Crossing (also in Oregon).



## What is Alameda Elder Communities?

**Alameda Elder Communities** is a group of family owned senior services devoted to serving the needs of elders in Alameda and the East Bay. Our mission is to enable elders in our local community to age in place and achieve the greatest possible level of self-sufficiency.

**Elders Inn on Webster** is a 52 unit assisted living facility offering every Resident the opportunity to live as independently as possible. With three “neighborhoods,” Elders Inn offers a range of services including a delayed

egress area for the safety and comfort of Residents affected by Alzheimer's and dementia.

**Waters Edge Lodge** is an assisted living facility located in a unique and peaceful setting on the lagoon at Harbor Bay. Offering 101 suites which provide seniors with a warm and familiar homelike atmosphere, the Lodge allows Residents to maintain an independent and active lifestyle.

**Alameda Elder Services Rehabilitation Agency** (AES) is a wellness and fitness center that has been specially designed for elders.

This Medicare approved Outpatient Rehab agency specializes in Physical, Speech, and Occupational Therapy for the older adult. As a fitness center, AES provides affordable wellness and strengthening programs tailored to the needs of seniors.

**Alameda Senior Magazine** is the newest member of Alameda Elder Communities. This quarterly magazine focuses on senior specific issues and resources available in Alameda and the surrounding area.



Alameda Elder Communities  
*Caring for Alameda Seniors since 1971*  
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