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Edited by: Sabrina Britton



*A Continuum of Caring,  
Since 1972  
Waters Edge Nursing Home  
Waters Edge Lodge-011440777  
Elders Inn-015600526  
Alameda Elder Services  
Rehab Agency*



Alameda Elder Communities  
801 Island Drive  
Alameda, CA 94502

**Alameda Elder Communities** believes that long term care facilities should be active and friendly places, where the Residents receive the best possible care while enjoying companionship in our family of facilities. The **Waters Edge Nursing Home** is a 120 bed Medicare certified Skilled Nursing Facility, offering outstanding rehab and custodial care to all Residents. The **Elders Inn on Webster** is a licensed 52 unit assisted living facility offering every Resident the opportunity to live as independently as possible. The **Elders Inn** also offers a special care "neighborhood" for the safety and comfort of Residents affected by Alzheimer's and dementia. The **Waters Edge Lodge** is an assisted living facility located in a unique and peaceful setting on the Lagoon at Harbor Bay. Offering 102 suites which provide seniors with a warm and familiar homelike setting, the **Waters Edge Lodge** allows Residents to maintain an independent and active lifestyle. **Alameda Elder Services Rehab Agency** provides a wellness and fitness center that has been specially designed for elders aged 70 years and older. This facility is both a Medicare approved Outpatient Rehab agency, and a Fitness Center providing affordable wellness and strengthening programs.

## Alameda Elder Communities

# Living on the Waters Edge

Volume 6, Issue 6

December, 2009

Established in  
January, 1972.

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

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## Christmas in Europe

By: Kryspin Turczynski,  
MA

Europe is considered by some to be "post-Christian", since a majority of Europeans no longer practice the Christian religion on a regular basis. Be that as it may, Europe is still very much a Christian continent in a cultural sense. This is most evident during the Christmas season, when even non-believers join in the many festivities and traditions passed down through the centuries. Some European Christmas traditions

have found their way to the new world, most notably the Christmas tree. The earliest historical record of a pine tree being decorated for Christmas dates back to 1521 in the Alsace region of Germany, where it was called a *Tannenbaum*. This practice quickly caught on throughout Germany, Europe, and nowadays can be found all over the world. It is worth noting that Christmas trees have always been criticized by some Christians due to their

pagan origin. Other traditions have retained a rather local flavor, such as the western Norwegian custom of eating a burned sheep's head at the main Christmas meal! Children in the Netherlands are highly motivated to behave well, lest the *zwarte Pieten* (black Peters) throw them in a sack and drag them to the coal mines, a myth that is undoubtedly appreciated by millions of Dutch parents. One of my favorite Christmas tradi-

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## Christian F. Zimmerman Senior Walking Course

Many of the Residents of Waters Edge Lodge enjoy the general paths and gardens of Harbor Bay, but for some it is too difficult to venture out onto these paths. For these Residents, The Waters Edge Lodge has decided to replace the front lawn on Island Drive, instead adding a looping path between the trees to create a par course for the frail elderly. Along

the pathway will be four benches that can be used as rest stations or just areas to sit and enjoy the outdoors. Each bench will be fitted with a series of exercises that have been found to assist in sustaining and regaining "core strength," which is so important in maintaining independence. This gentle fitness feature complements our extensive Fitness Program,

which is the foundation of Alameda Elder Communities mission to promote elder independence.

The new Senior Walking Course at the Waters Edge Lodge is being named for Christian F. Zimmerman, the CEO of Alameda Elder Communities for his dedication to the health and well-being of the seniors of Alameda since 1971.

## Laughter: The Best Medicine

By: Rosemarie Caigoy

"Laughter is the shock absorber that eases the blows of life."

In today's society, we are surrounded by so much negativity that it can sometimes be hard to be positive. For example, all the feel good sitcoms that use to flood the TV sta-

tions have been replaced with crime dramas and reality TV that exploits someone's tragedies or misfortune. While reading the newspaper there are more negative articles about horrible crimes on the front page than positive ones, that focus community organizations which have created something positive for the

masses (hidden on the back page). The expectations and grueling work of making ends meet seem to have made some of us forget that life is truly funny and laughing at life and ourselves is the medicine God has created within us to heal ourselves. It is a [our] birth-right. The physiological

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## Christmas in Europe (Continued from page 1)

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tions in Europe are the German Christmas markets (*Weihnachtsmarkt*, or *Christkindlmarkt*), with their festive lights, beautiful hand-crafted trinkets, and delicious, warmed Christmas wine. If you're willing to spend an extra euro, you can add a shot of rum to your wine, which can really add to the Christmas "spirit"!

Even though I grew up in the United States, my family maintained many of the Christmas traditions passed down in Polish culture. Like in many other European countries, the climax of the holiday season is Christmas Eve. My mother and grandmother would spend at least two days preparing for the Christmas Eve feast, which is called *wigilia*. Tradition calls for the feast to begin with the appearance of the first star, although cloudy weather, city lights, and the challenges of cooking twelve distinct courses can make this tradition difficult to actually maintain in practice. An extra plate is set at

the table, just in case God comes to visit the house in the form of a lonely traveler. Some families place some straw underneath the tablecloth, to symbolize the manger in which Jesus was born. Tradition also claims that animals start speaking at midnight of Christmas Eve, although none of the animals I've seen on Christmas Eve ever seemed to be aware of this custom. Furthermore, there is a widespread superstition in Poland that fighting and quarreling on Christmas Eve day would be an omen of a bad year to come, so everyone tends to be on their best behavior.

Before eating, everyone in attendance receives a rectangular, unconsecrated wafer (*oplatek*) adorned with an image of the Holy Family. Each person goes around the table and individually shares blessings and wishes for the upcoming year, exchanging a piece of each other's wafer in the process. Next comes the fun part: supper! The first course is always red borscht with mushroom-filled dump-

lings. The main course is traditionally fried carp, served in horseshoe-shaped portions. Some examples of popular side dishes are boiled potatoes, pickled herring, and sauerkraut. Meat and alcohol, normally staples of any Polish meal, are conspicuously absent from the Christmas Eve feast, further highlighting the special importance of the evening. Dessert might include fruit, pastries, chocolate and candy. After supper, gifts are exchanged. I always bragged about this aspect of Polish Christmas to my friends: I got to open my Christmas gifts a full 10 hours before they did! Finally, tradition calls for the whole family to go to church for Midnight Mass, thus allowing everyone to lounge around the house and relax on Christmas Day itself. Whatever your religion or your customs, may this special season bring you and your family the blessings of joy and health in the year to come. *Wesołych Świąt!* Happy Holidays!

## Laughter: The Best Medicine (Continued from page 1)

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change that occurs in our body to create laughter is very complex that it takes a baby 3 months before he or she can fully laugh. According to the author of *Physiology of Laughter*, laughter is when the nervous system in general discharges itself on the muscular system and that it can be involuntary. In the case of humorous response, certain abdominal and facial muscles contract, the epiglottis half closes the larynx, and tear ducts are activated.

So how exactly does laughing heal ourselves, you ask. For one, it boosts immunity by decreasing stress hormones and increasing immune cells as well as infectious fighting antibodies. After a good laugh, your muscles stay relaxed for up to 45 minutes, relieving physical tension and stress. Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins, the feel good chemicals that give us an all around sense of well being and can even temporarily relieve pain. If these don't impress you, laughter ALSO improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow which can help protect you against a heart attack or other cardiovascular diseases. An average laugh by far has a higher octave than the highest opera note which our brain subconsciously catches. In order to process this oddly high

sound, a different part of our brain is activated that in turn kind of creates an attraction orbital. This is why a great laugh is contagious or why when people flirt, they tend to giggle and laugh at jokes harder. Laughter is certainly a tool for attraction. Now I hope some of you are thinking, "How can I make myself laugh more if Rosemarie's work hours are limited?" Don't fret! Here are some tips that work for me:

- Smile more. Smile is the beginning step of laughing, and like laughter, it is contagious. Practice smiling when walking past someone or something even mildly pleasant.
- Meditate on funny memories. You will be surprised how much you laugh when you simply reflect on the last funny thing that has happened to you.
- When you hear laughter, move towards it. Sometimes it can be from a private joke between people but more often it's not. Besides, people will want to explain what was so funny so that another opportunity to laugh arises and they can feed off the humor you find in it.
- Spend time with fun and playful people. Again, this relates to my limited work hours, but working at both the Lodge and Elders Inn has introduced me to MANY MANY fun and play-

ful residents. Go out and find them!

•Bring humor into conversations. If you know a good joke, start off your conversation with it or if there's a moment of silence, fill it with "What is the funniest thing that has happen to you lately?" Not only does it let the speaker have the opportunity to share something about themselves, but it lets both of you laugh about it, creating a bond and easing stress.

Incorporating laughter in your life will definitely enhance the positivity you will be surrounded with because it is going to start with you. If you come across a bad situation, your perspective of it will change if you imply humor in it daily. It is easy for anyone to point out the dark side of every situation and live in it, but only you have the power to turn every situation brighter with more laughter. Your social circles will be stronger, your creativity will flourish, and you will come across new discoveries everyday with friends, acquaintances, and loved ones. Most importantly, your view on life will be from a more relaxed, positive, and balanced point of view.



## From the Desk of the Administrator: Christina Carter

For the more independent Resident, we are introducing new outings on the Activities calendar. Every Thursday will be Mastick Day. Our van will drive those who want to attend to the Mastick Senior Center located on Santa Clara Avenue at 9:00 am and will pick those residents up from Mastick at 2:45 pm. We will supply a bag lunch, or if you would rather, you may purchase a hot lunch provided by Mastick for \$2.25. Hot lunch is by reservation only. If you would like a calendar of events at Mastick Senior Center, please visit the Administrator's office.

We will also be reintroducing more physical activity games using the Nintendo Wii. Please join us for some fun activities!!

On December 9, 2009, we will be having our Annual Elders Inn Christmas Party at 6:30 pm in the Buena Vista Dining Room. The Tap Dancing Christmas Trees will be performing. Beverages and light refreshments will be served. Come all and be merry!

We will be celebrating both Christmas and Hanukah this

month with two special meals: Our Hanukah meal will be served on December 14, 2009 at lunch and the Christmas Meal will be served at lunch on Christmas Day. If your loved ones would like to join us for either meal, please let us know in advance.

If you plan on being away during the holidays, please inform the Nurse's Office so that they can prepare your medications to take with you. Please provide at least 48 hours notice.

## December Activities

Well, right on schedule, Mother Nature has packed up all of her green, gold and red leaves and put them away for the winter. Our beautiful patios seem a little bare, but they still beckon us to sit and enjoy the change of weather---put on a sweater, join your friends and breathe in some fresh air with a cup of hot coffee or cocoa. There is no substitute for fresh air!

Come see the Tap Dancing Christmas Trees, who will be entertaining us at our annual Elders Inn Holiday party on Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. The Trees have performed in the Oakland Holiday Parade, The Niles Parade, The Napa Valley Parade and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

## Resident of the Month: Phyllis Myers

Phyllis Myers was born in Chicago Illinois and is the youngest of 4 girls. Her father was a furniture manufacturer who specialized in fine upholstery and her mother was quite busy as a housekeeper with 4 girls running around!

She attended school in Chicago and graduated from the University of Chicago. She was introduced to her future husband by a mutual friend and married during World War II. After their marriage, Phyllis and her husband moved to Washington D.C., where they both worked for the United States Geological Service. They then moved to California where her husband worked as an exploratory geologist in oil produc-

tion. From there, they bought 80 acres of timberland in Oregon and owned a fishing resort before getting a real estate broker license and moving back to California.

Phyllis has a son in Sacramento, another son in Oregon, a daughter in Oakland, and 4 grandchildren. She is an amazing painter and her apartment is full of her works of art. She is delighted to have residents and staff drop by and admire her artistic talents and we welcome her to Elders Inn.



## Holiday Gift Giving Ideas

Even Santa needs a little help once in a while with gift ideas, so if you're drawing a blank as to what to give your friends and loved ones for the Holidays, here are some suggestions for things that not only would be fun to get but would be of much benefit to our residents:

- **Night lights:** Many residents get up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. When they get up they are half asleep but also in a hurry, leading to an increased risk of falls. Night lights help light the path to the bathroom so that the trip is safer.

- **Slip-on shoe-style slippers with rubber soles:** These are far better than the slip-on type slipper. Residents need to be encouraged to use good slippers in their room rather than walking barefoot, which increases the risk of falling, especially in the bathroom. Slippers also keep the feet warm on chilly nights.

- **Flannel sheets and Pajamas:** As we age our circulatory system becomes less efficient at maintaining body warmth, especially at night when our bodies are inactive.

- **Battery operated toothbrushes:** Studies have shown that electric toothbrushes facilitate good oral hygiene better than manual toothbrushes; good oral hygiene also decreases the risk of infection to other areas of the body, such as the heart.

- **Lighted, large print digital clocks:** As a person ages, it may be easier to read a

digital clock than a standard clock. Also, the larger and brighter the numbers, the easier it will be to read.

- **Large digit phones with numbers of family and friends programmed in:** The phone is an important way for residents to maintain important social contacts. Large numbers make it easier for residents to dial.

- **A new pair of glasses:** Not only can new glasses give a person a new look, but an updated prescription will help reduce falls through better vision.

- **Large print editions of books:** These are easier to read for those with visual deficits. Reading stimulates the mind!

- **Books on tape:** Sometimes it's nice to just sit and listen!

- **Short stories or condensed version books:** With these types of books, it is easier to remember plot lines and characters.

- **Magnifying glasses:** Vision can deteriorate with aging, making reading small print frustrating if not impossible.

- **Word and number puzzle books:** The brain needs mental gymnastics just like the body needs physical workouts.

- **A new pair of shoes:** Good shoes support the feet and prevent falls. These can be of two types: A leather, lace-up walking-type oxford with leather soles, or a good, high-quality leather athletic

shoe. Reminder: when shopping for shoes, shop in the later afternoon when the feet tend to be a little swollen. If you shop in the morning, the shoes might be too tight by the afternoon.

- **Reachers:** These can help reach objects in higher or lower spaces and may help prevent falls.

- **Movie passes:** Spend some time with your loved ones at the movies. The Alameda Theatre has a "classics movie" series that feature movies from the Golden Age of Hollywood.

- **Digital Picture Frames:** These frames offer rotating pictures that can remind residents of loved ones and past events.

- **Scrapbooks:** Help your loved ones make a scrapbook that chronicles their lives. This is a great way to learn about your family's history, while spending some quality time together.

- **Time:** This can be going out for lunches or plays or just going on regular walks together. The best gift you can give any loved one is the gift of time.

**Happy Holidays from all of us in the Rehab and Fitness Departments. May you be a good Santa and may Santa be good to you.**



### December Activities

There are a whole host of events and activities planned for the holiday season, first and foremost is our Annual Holiday Party. This year the Holiday Party will take place on Thursday, December 17th, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The main act will be the Sugar Plum Elves, a spunky cabaret group that serves huge portions of holiday cheer with a side of spice! Additional entertainment will be presented along with holiday trivia and refreshments. Special holiday entertainment has been arranged all throughout Decem-

ber, including the East Bay Harmony A Cappella Chorus (Sunday, December 6th at 1:00 pm) and the Rockridge Chorale Holiday Concert (Saturday, December 12th at 3:30 pm). For your holiday shopping needs, we have scheduled an outing to the Holiday Expo at Temple Israel in Alameda (Sunday, December 6th at 10:00 am) and the Rock Wall Winery Holiday Bazaar (Saturday, December 5th at 1:30 pm), where a cover charge includes tastings of numerous holiday wines. No cultural event reflects the holiday spirit as much as the Nut-

cracker, so we are offering shuttle service to Oakland's Paramount Theater to see the Nutcracker performed by the Oakland Ballet Company on Thursday, December 24th - the van leaves the Lodge at 10:00 am sharp, and senior discount tickets costs only \$11.25. Finally, back by popular demand, we are offering a driving tour of Alameda's Christmas lights immediately after dinner on Tuesday, December 15th. Even with two vans, space will still be limited for this popular tour, so be sure to sign up early!

### Resident of the Month: Phyllis Multhauf

Phyllis Multhauf was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1935. At age six, Phyllis' father passed away, and she enrolled in St. Joseph's Academy, a Catholic boarding school in Des Moines. Her mother moved back home, and died just two years later. Phyllis' aunt took custody of her, but Phyllis could no longer afford to attend the Academy, so she moved to Ivanhoe, in southwest Minnesota. Every summer, Phyllis would with her favorite aunt in South Dakota; this was her favorite time of year. After graduating from Ivanhoe High School with a class of 27 students, Phyllis attended Mankato State University where she studied elementary education. She lived in a dormitory with various roommates until her senior year, when she rented a house with her friends before graduating in 1957.

Phyllis' first position out of college was teaching fourth graders in Hastings, Michigan, where she worked for two years. She then moved to Washington, D.C.,

teaching kids in nearby Suitland, Maryland. Phyllis had always wanted to teach overseas, and in 1961 she was offered the opportunity to teach in Japan. Phyllis lived and worked on the U.S. Air Force Base in Tachikawa, Japan, which has since been closed and returned to the Japanese government. She taught the children of airmen for one year; when faced with the choice of transferring to a different country or coming back home, Phyllis chose to return. On her way back from Japan, she came through the Bay Area, and she has lived here ever since. Phyllis first lived in Oakland and taught for a year in Pleasanton, which was quite rural at the time! She then transferred to the Oakland School District, eventually finding herself in Fruitvale School, where she stayed until her retirement in 1995. After so many moves and transitions, Phyllis finally settled down in the Islandia neighborhood of Alameda, where she lived for over thirty years.

Phyllis is a true teacher: she loves to help children learn, especially third and fourth graders. An additional perk of teaching, however, is having the summers off, and Phyllis liked to use that time to travel. During the summer of 1965, she went on a grand tour of Europe, visiting the British Isles (England, Scotland, Ireland), France, Spain, Germany, and Italy. Phyllis is also a real dog lover, having owned numerous dogs in the past, including cocker spaniels and black poodles. She once had a kitten, but she tried to give it a bath and it ran away! Phyllis had to give away her current dog, a beautiful Maltese named Jackson, to a friend before she came to the Lodge, but luckily, Jackson comes to visit her once a week. We are truly blessed to have such a thoughtful and intelligent neighbor in our community, and it is with great joy that we honor Phyllis Multhauf as our Resident of the Month.

### Resident of the Month: Gertrude Kelly

Gertrude Kelly was born in Alameda, CA in 1923 to William & Nora Fisher. Her mother was born in Madrid Spain, while her has Irish and English decent. Gertrude was the oldest child, with three brothers and 1 sister. As a child one of Gertrude's favorite hobbies was bowling with her friends. Gertrude also helped care for her younger siblings while her father worked to provide for them. Gertrude admired her hardworking parents. Her father worked for Southern Pacific Railroad, and her mother was a house wife with a talent for playing the guitar and singing.

Later Gertrude met the love of

her life Robert Leroy Kelly Sr, who worked as Teamster. "We actually met through my uncle" said Kelly " We had a lot in common and we had great relationship." Gertrude, who was also homemaker, raising seven children of her own: four sons and three daughters. She is also a grandmother to 26 grandchildren and 26 great grandchildren. Gertrude also attended a Baptist church.

Gertrude has been a resident at The Waters Edge Nursing Home facility for just over one year. She enjoys participating in the Arts & Craft classes, as well as listening to a variety of musical entertain-

ment. "I love all the people here, and I get along with everybody. In the beginning I felt lonely, but the great staff made me feel right at home." she said. Gertrude is always positive, with an open heart towards other residents and staff. She always has a smile on her face and carries a spirit of friendly warmth, which is why she is being honored as the resident for the month of December.

### Filmed in Alameda

By: Resident Bernard Welz  
Do you remember two films which were filmed in Alameda?

First and best was Treasure Island (1934), with Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper. It rated three and half stars. Adapted from Robert Louis Stevenson's pirate adventure story of 18th century England. While not filming scenes, Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper stayed at the Hotel Alameda. Scenes were shot at the Alaska Packers dock near the end of Grand Street. Alaska Packers ships had square rigged sails.

The second movie was "Thirty Seconds over Tokyo," (1944) three stars. Directed by Mervyn Leroy with Van Johnson, Robert Mitchum, Steven McNally, with a guest appearance by Spencer Tracy as Jimmie Doolittle. Included are film shots of the tidal canal between Alameda and Oakland, with houseboats along it, representing a river in Tokyo.

### December Activities

The Waters Edge Nursing Home will be hosting our annual Holiday Party on December 16th at 2:00 pm. Eddie Fernandez, the Elvis Pressley Impersonator from the Crab Cove Picnic will be entertaining our residents with his amazing moves. Sherry will also be performing some Hanukkah songs. This will be a great and special celebration for our residents.

Our bimonthly Bingo Bonanza will be held on December 8th and December 22nd. Please come play bingo!

John Heleen will be playing guitar every Thursday, and on December 12th and December 26th.

We will be having a Christmas Luncheon on December 25th at noon. If you are interested in joining your loved one for the holiday, please sign up at the front desk by December 18th.

Our Birthday Party will be held on December 31st as we ring in the New Year.

On Mondays, throughout the month of December, Jimi James will play the guitar. On Sundays, Jerry Gee will play the Harmonica.

There will be plenty of fun things to enjoy during the month of December. Check the Activity Calendar out for more events and activities.