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• Living Longer and Loving it •

Local Poet Denver Nunley gets his Heart's Desire
By Moya Stone



Denver Nunley

Photo Moya Stone

Activities Director Kelly Hardman says they have fulfilled dozens of wishes. "It's a lot of fun for us and for the residents," says Hardman. "It's really a blessing."

Wishes are submitted by residents and chosen by a committee, but no one is ever turned down. "It's such a pleasure for us to see the residents' faces when they get their wish," says Hardman. Over the years, wishes have included a dinner cruise on the bay for one resident and his family, a Notre Dame football game, a hot air balloon ride, and a day grooming and feeding horses.

Nunley couldn't be happier about his wish and hopes people will be caught up and entertained by his poetry. Heart's Desire is planning to take Nunley's collection of over 200 poems, titled Poems from the Heart, and have them printed and spiral bound. Hardman knows someone in the publishing business who has volunteered to look into getting the collection published.

Born in Texas in 1914, the young Nunley had to grow up quickly living in poverty and losing his mother to Dust Pneumonia. Life has been challenging but always interesting for the poet. He worked on a farm, flew planes for the Navy in World War II, became a hypnotist, practiced yoga, and taught Human Relations at Contra Costa College for 13 years. Sorrows have not spared Nunley, having lost two of his four children and more recently his wife. But he speaks of his life with good humor and can easily recall minute details of events long past. He recounts meeting his future wife as if it just happened yesterday, not in 1942. "I can still see Patricia sitting in that nightclub," he shares. "Her hands and face fascinated me." His experiences and zest for life are fodder for his poetry, of which he says, "It lives, it breathes, it's me." Energetic and engaged, Nunley can still recite poems he learned in grade school and counts Longfellow among his favorite authors.

Although he had always dabbled in writing poetry, it was after an accident 21 years ago that Nunley experienced a shift in his work. He fell off a BART platform onto the rails and was hit by an oncoming train. He survived four months of rehabilitation and writes of the experience in the poem titled, *This is More*: "Mentally I found a new life full of confidence and began writing poetry with a feeling that the creator was directing my mind and hand."

Join Denver Nunley for an afternoon of his life in rhyme on August 21 at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda, 3PM.

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Denver Nunley has a very special day coming up. On August 21 he will not only be celebrating his 95th birthday, but he will, for the first time, be reading his poetry to a public audience at the Orinda Library. Nunley lives at Manor Care Center in Walnut Creek and thanks to their program called Heart's Desire he will finally realize a long held dream of sharing his verse with the world.

Heart's Desire was implemented by Manor Care Center ten years ago to offer something special for their residents. The program is modeled after the Make a Wish Foundation, which gives wishes to terminally ill children. Manor Care

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Cooking Class- Pumpkin Gnocchi- Just in time for your Thanksgiving feast. Come and enjoy making one of the most delicious Italian dishes: Gnocchetti di Zucca (pumpkin gnocchi) sprinkled with fresh goat cheese. Instructor, Lucia Falcone, was born and raised in Murano, Italy. If you like good food, come join us, and bring your appetite. This cooking class meets Thursday, September 24, in the Sequoia Room at the Lafayette Community Center, from 1 – 3. The price is \$25 for nonmembers and \$23 for Emeritus College members. Price includes lab fee. To register contact Emeritus College (925) 906-9105.

Lafayette Senior Services On Going Programs:
Embracing Aging with Story and Movement- Every other Thursday, 1:00 -2:30 PM, 9/10 & 9/24
Positive Living Forum- On the second Thursday of each month, 10:30 – noon, 9/10
Bi-Monthly Caregiver Support Group, Mondays, 8/24, 9/14 & 9/28, 1:30 – 2:30 PM

Tea Dancing with Karen and Michael, every Wednesday, 12:30– 3:00 PM, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette. All event/programs \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. For info call (925)284-5050.

Widowed Person's Support Meetings. Saturdays from 10 a.m. to Noon at St. Stephen's Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda: September 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10 and 17, 2009. Meetings are informal discussions among the participants of the emotional and practical needs and concerns of the bereaving person. All widowed persons are welcome. For questions call (925) 932-3448.

Free Brain Gym Introductions for Seniors, August 8 and August 22 and Sept 12, 10 – 11:30 am, 58 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda. Learn tools that bring your brain, body, and balance to their optimum. You will improve concentration, memory, vision, hearing and movement in easy steps. Have Fun and Take It With You!! RSVP with Pam Whitman (925)253-1223. For more information visit www.transitionpoint.org.

The Peripheral Neuropathy Group will meet on Friday, August 28, from 12 PM to 1:30 PM in the Las Trampas Room of the Hillside Clubhouse, in Rossmoor. Dr. Steven J. Holtz M.D. will be the guest speaker and will give a presentation, as well as answer questions, about peripheral neuropathy. Peripheral Neuropathy group meetings are open to all those living outside as well as inside Rossmoor. There is no cost for these educational meetings. For questions of any kind please contact Nancy Ostrander at 930-9524 or Carolyn Cash at 254-8195.

Computer Maintenance 101 with Ed Zeidan, Nerd4Rent. This popular and informative class will cover the basics of computer ownership for seniors. We'll describe what steps to take to keep your computer running well, when to replace vs. repair, and give recommendations on what features to look for in your next computer. Tues 9/22 from 10:30 - Noon. Please call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette.

Falling Down is Often Life Changing – Especially for Older Adults – Workshop by Supervisor Gayle Uilkema and Jennifer Mountain, Manager, Contra Costa County Fall Prevention Program. Falls are not accidents if they are preventable and falls don't just happen because you're older. Learn about specific steps and comprehensive solutions by which we can re-design our living spaces, look at the drugs we take, improve our physical well-being, and address other everyday choices we make that could reduce the risk of hurting ourselves through falls. Tues 9/29, 10:30 - Noon, Elderberry. Please call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette.

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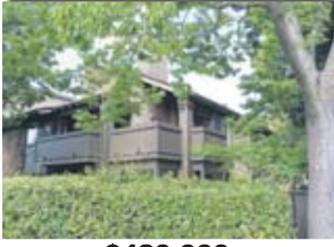
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