

# Dance/exercise class keeps seniors moving



ORVILLE MYERS/The Herald

Jeanie Gould, center, leads a Lebed Method class at The Park Lane, A Classic Residence by Hyatt in Monterey.

By **MARC CABRERA**  
*Herald Staff Writer*

Every Tuesday morning, 89-year-old Carolyn "GiGi" Gelzer puts on a colorful Hawaiian wrap and does a hula dance to the island version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

It's part of her Lebed Method workout routine, as practiced at The Park Lane, A Classic Residence by Hyatt, a retirement community in Monterey. It's also become a fixture in her activity schedule.

"I live for it," the spunky Georgia native said in a sweet Southern twang. "It keeps my motor going."

Part physical therapy, part dance exercise, part social

**"I live for it. It keeps my motor going."**

**Carolyn "GiGi" Gelzer**  
Lebed Method enthusiast

activity, the Lebed Method, also known as the Focus on Healing program, combines dancing with movement exercise and breathing techniques. A combination of dance and motion is set to a vibrant beat — from Aretha Franklin to the Steve Miller Band.

The Park Lane began offering the class, under the name "Dance Steps to Health," to the general public in October. The class is led by certified Lebed Method

instructor Jeanie Gould.

It was originally developed for breast cancer patients as a means of regaining full range of body motion, as well as healing both physically and mentally. It has quickly grown to include those recovering from any surgery or dealing with chronic disorders, as well as senior citizens.

According to a pamphlet, movements specifically designed in a particular order stimulate the optimum flow of the lymphatic system, one of the largest systems in the body. The lymphatic system supports the function of the immune system.

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# Dance

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The Lebed Method uses low- and medium-impact movements involving the entire body, largely through dance such as that in the Park Lane classes. In all, more than 500 hospitals and community-based programs worldwide offer Lebed Method classes and activities, according to Gould.

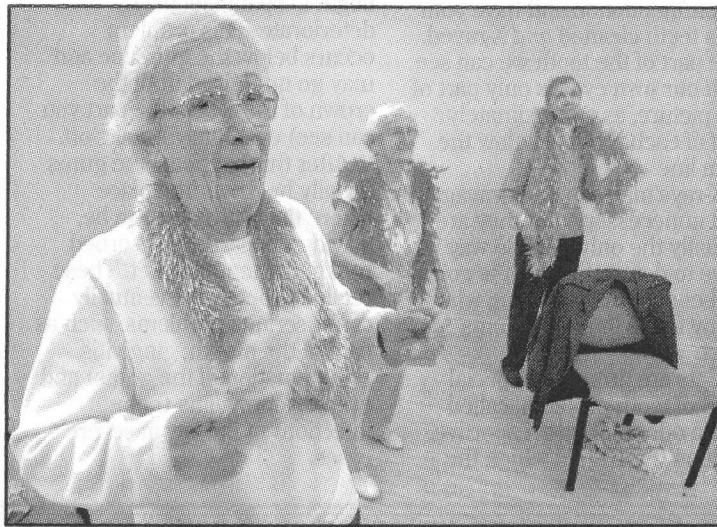
"It's great to have it here. It's not new — it's been around for 25 years — but it's new to the area," Gould said.

Along with the emphasis on dance and movement, the class encourages group participation and positive reinforcement through group activity. Getting people together en masse to dance is easier than working with them individually.

"There are a lot of psychological benefits. You are with a group of friends, there's networking involved," Gould said. "We're not thinking about exercise, we're thinking about friends and fun."

Gina Puccinelli, lifestyle director at Park Lane, said the program is as much about encouraging seniors to focus on what they can do.

"Our focus is what is right with you, as opposed to what is wrong," Puccinelli said. "It's



ORVILLE MYERS/The Herald

**Norma Mitchell swings her boa during the Lebed Method class at The Park Lane, A Classic Residence by Hyatt, in Monterey.**

about self-love and self-care from the inside out and having fun."

The class is free and open to the public and Puccinelli makes a point to invite anyone who may be interested to participate.

At a February session, the class began with slow breathing exercises and stretches, meant to stimulate the Lymphatic system and let participants get in tune with their body. The Eric Clapton song "Wonderful Tonight" played softly through a boom box as Gould led the class.

Most in the group stood up for the duration of the class,

though a few sat in their chairs and still participated. "You can do it standing or sitting," Gould said.

Gould led the group through a variety of dance steps, from jazz to hula to mambo. The dancing was low-intensive but still got the seniors moving and grooving.

As the song "Build Me Up Buttercup" played, Gelzer bounced along in step with Gould's instructions. During the hula dance, the seniors were given colorful Hawaiian scarves to wrap around their waists.

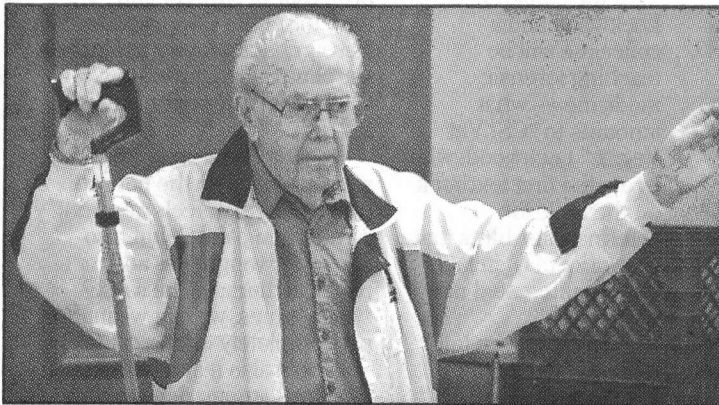
For 89-year-old Evelyn Bindell, the hula dancing is the main draw. She has been coming to the class since it started.

"I like this one because it's (set) to music," Bindell said. "It's just made me feel so much better."

Bindell is an active Park Lane senior and participates regularly in yoga and chair exercises. The dance classes have improved her health.

"I really do feel well," Bindell said. "I think the dance movement has contributed to that."

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**George Tainter gets in the groove during a Lebed Method workout routine at The Park Lane, A Classic Residence by Hyatt, in Monterey**