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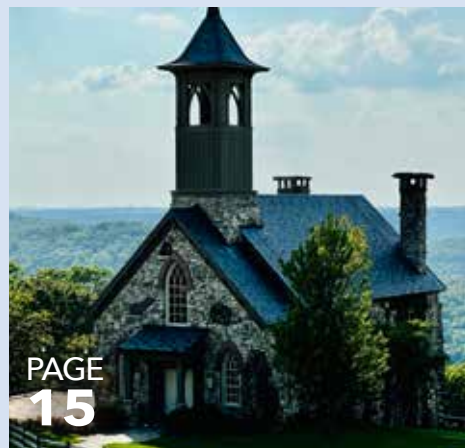
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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024

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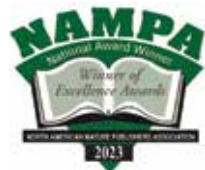


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From the Publisher



BY
MICHELLE
FIELDS



In early November, the Senior Perspectives team got together for their annual Fall Harvest. This is always a fun time for the writers and staff to get together, catch up with old friends and share creative thoughts and writing ideas. This event is also time for the honorees of the 2023 North American Mature Publishers Association (NAMPA) Awards in Excellence to receive their awards.

The 2023 NAMPA entries were independently reviewed and judged by the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Awards were given in a variety of categories, including general excellence, writing, design and editing. The talented writers and contributors of Senior Perspectives were awarded 10 awards. A total of 87 since 2015.



Writer Janet Hasselbring and Distribution Specialist Jimmy Epplert



(L-R) Writers Joel Dulyea and Louise Matz, photographer Glenn Rutgers with Editor Michelle Fields



(L-R) Editor Michelle Fields, Copy Editor Bonnie Borgeson and Writer Jackie Lindrup



(L-R) Communications Director Lisa Tyler, Recipe Page contributor Kim Jarchow and Writers Cindy Hogg and Jerry Mattson



(L-R) Writer Keith Sipe and friend Pat, Human Resources Director Nicole Epplert and Recipe Contributor Brandi Waldman



1st Place:

How-to Feature – Cindy Hogg

2nd Place:

Best Use of Photography/Covers – Glenn Rutgers and Dana Fields

3rd Place:

Briefs and Shorts – Joel Dulyea

3rd Place:

Personal Profile – Louise Matz

3rd Place:

Travel Column – Jackie Lindrup

3rd Place:

Briefs and Shorts (Editorial) – Michelle Fields

2nd Place:

Best Use of Color (Design)

2nd Place:

Letter from Editor-NAMPA Awards

2nd Place:

Self Promo-Award, Advertisement

2nd Place:

Table of Contents

Michelle Fields has been with Senior Resources since June of 2009. She became the Editor of Senior Perspectives newspaper in 2012 and the Publisher in 2015. Since 2015, Fields and her team at Senior Perspectives have won 87 National Awards for their work. She enjoys spending time with her family, fishing, camping, gardening, and kayaking with her husband Mike, dog Tigo and new puppy Daisy.



Saying Goodbye

By Michelle Fields, Editor

I first met Rolina Vermeer at Four Pointes in Grand Haven, where she was the Activity Director. It must have been in 2012 or 2013. She was creative, genuinely caring, and an all-around good person. We became friends immediately.

When I became the Editor of Senior Perspectives in 2015, I knew she would be the perfect addition to our already exceptional group of writers. She had recently retired from Four Pointes to spend more time with her mother Ann, who needed a bit more care than usual. I extended the offer, she accepted, and began writing her column, sharing her caregiving experience titled, *"A Caregiver's Perspective-Notes from my mother's daughter."*

Rolina wrote for Senior Perspectives from 2015-2021. She was well received by our readers and also won three national awards in excellence with the North American Mature Publishers Association.

Rolina was a remarkable writer. Many people didn't know she received her BA in Art History from Hope College and was a brilliant artist.

It is with a heavy heart that I share that Rolina lost her courageous battle with cancer this past October...but her amazing legacy will live in her stories.

You can view her stories at <https://seniorresourceswmi.org/senior-perspectives-newspaper/>

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Nov/Dec Winners Are:

Penni DeWitt of Grand Haven

Judy DeHaan of Hudsonville

William Herman of Fruitport

In the last issue, the candy cane heart was hidden in the recipe image on page 11.

A Different Kind of Care

A local acupuncturist provides truly compassionate care and proven solutions for chronic pain and complicated conditions.

Care Rooted in Empathy and Experience

Do you ever wonder why it is that makes some care providers so incredibly compassionate while others have a bedside manner better suited for the DMV?

In the case of Corinne Conry, MSOM, LAc, of Acupuncture Center of Grand Rapids, it is a case of true empathy, "I suffered from cluster migraines in my teens and twenties." Cluster migraines are named such for their debilitating pain that is a step above the norm. "I had migraine headaches 3-5 days a week that were so intense I was often bed ridden and would become physically sick."

Being that migraine is one of those complicated conditions not fully understood, Corinne's options were prescription medications, that often did not work, and to make lifestyle changes limit triggers that often cause migraine. "It was no way to live," she shares. "I was young and should've been living a bright, vibrant life. Instead I was monitoring my daily caffeine intake, avoiding long exposure to fluorescent lights, and doing my best to prepare for changing weather conditions."

As you can imagine, Spring and Fall were especially rough. The seasonal transitions were unpredictable - winter in the morning and summer in the afternoon!

It wasn't until her primary care doctor sent her to an acupuncturist that she found real relief, and her future calling.

"This is why I often refer to my practice as 'The Last Resort with the Best Results.' You've been everywhere else and have been given the same disheartening prognosis, prescribed the same medications and told 'this is just something you're going to have to learn to live with.' Soon after her incredible experiences with the healing arts, she made the life changing decision to abandon her consulting career and pursue her degree in acupuncture. "Acupuncture quite literally saved my life and I wanted to share that with the world," she proclaims.



Your Golden Years Should Be Golden

Later she watched as her mother-in-law began to suffer from peripheral neuropathy. Your golden years should be golden, not plagued with insufferable pain while doctors and specialists tell you there is nothing they can do. Understanding that Eastern Medicine excels where Western Medicine fails, Corinne set forth to develop treatment protocols for all variations of peripheral neuropathy (including diabetic and chemotherapy-induced). She now has a 90% success rate in treating this once difficult-to-manage condition.

"I was tired of seeing the older generation suffer unnecessarily," shares Corinne. "Diagnosing them as 'just getting older' and giving them a treatment plan of 'you're just going to have to get used to it' has never sat well with me so I wanted to offer them a real option for treatment and care."

The Magic of Compassionate Care

And what do those in her care have to say?

"Corinne looked me in my eyes and wanted to know about me, not just my condition. I feel like a person, not just a patient," shares Perry. "In fact I don't think she ever used the word patient." Others proclaim "she saved my life", "her neuropathy treatments gave me my life back" and "its a miracle she treated my fibromyalgia, I don't know how else to explain it."

Corinne Conry, MSOM, LAc has a long personal history in complicated, difficult to understand conditions and recognizes how tragic it can all be if left untreated. "I have sat where my patients sit. I've experienced their pain and suffering in a very real way. I know the frustration of feeling hopeless on an intimate level. It's why I practice the brand of medicine I do and why I've made it my life's mission to treat the 'untreatable'. It brings me such incredible joy when I get to say "I can help you!"

Furthermore, Corinne isn't opposed to more modern medical solutions. "It's in blending the time-tested science of acupuncture with recent innovations in medicine that get me the best results." One of those advancements is ATP Resonance BioTherapy™, originally developed by NASA. It aids nerves regeneration by providing them the nutrients they need to repair and renew, "very similar to what water does for a plant!"

Corinne Conry, MSOM, LAc and her staff specialize in treating chronic pain, complicated neurological conditions, and autoimmune diseases that leave other professionals scratching their heads. Ready to schedule? Call **(616) 369-2121** for a comprehensive consultation today. For more information about Corinne Conry, MSOM, LAc and what she treats, visit acu.gr.com.





BY
LISA
TYLER

Caregiving



“There are only four kinds of people in the world - those who have been caregivers, those who are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.”

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter famously said those words in 2011 when she addressed the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

As we live longer, needs for caregivers increase. You may not think of yourself as a caregiver, but if you’re helping an older adult in any way – even just an hour or two a week – you are a caregiver. You may have many questions or concerns and not know where to find answers or support. Senior Resources of West Michigan has two full-time caregiver support specialists who provide information, education, tips, and more.

Caregiving is hard work. “Many people think it is just their job and should be able to handle it alone, especially if it is a family member,” said Paula Kolberg, caregiver support specialist. “If you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, you are ready for some support. We can’t fix everything, but we can offer tips and advice to make the journey more manageable. We also offer respite care so you can attend support group sessions.”

Support groups are offered in Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa counties, and are a great source of information. Virginia Vazquez says they offer tips and resources, as well as friendships that may develop. “They are attended by other caregivers who can share their experiences in similar situations, which often helps the others in the group. Support group members often end up making connections with each other and provide support to one another. In some cases we have been able to help the caregivers reach their goal of keeping their loved ones at home by giving them resources to get help in the home, as well as teaching them about the disease and tips to handle difficult situations.”

Sometimes those connections continue even after their loved one has passed. “We have several participants who still attend the group post-caregiving,” Vazquez continued. “They have shared how the group has become a family unit to them. They tell us they could not have done it without our help and support.”

Beyond support groups, Kolberg and Vazquez offer one-to-one support options, including phone calls and helping find resources. “We 100% want to give them as much support as possible,” Kolberg said. “It is very important to us to make sure the caregiver is equipped with the knowledge they need to feel successful in their caregiving role.”

Vazquez and Kolberg shared that a caregiver started attending a support group five years ago when he found his wife was having cognitive issues. A year later she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. He wanted to remain her primary caregiver. After two years he took advice from one of the caregiver support specialists to try the respite voucher. He was also referred to other programs for more support and help and came more frequently to the support group. His wife passed in the fall; he reached out to the caregiver support team to let them know and express his gratitude. “He told us he considered everyone in that group family. At the funeral he was telling everyone how much of an impact the caregiver support team had on him. He continues to still come to the group, hoping he can help other caregivers.”


Guest speakers at support groups, a monthly newsletter, and books are a few more of the resources they share. To learn more, visit <https://seniorresourceswmi.org/caregivers/>, email caregivers@seniorresourceswmi.org, or call them at 231-733-3531 or 231-683-4760.

Lisa Tyler is the communications director for Senior Resources. She and her husband Aaron are the proud parents of Hannah, a graduate of Hope College, and Nicholas, a graduate of MSU. Lisa is also an alumna of MSU, loves scrapbooking and travel, and being involved in her community. She is secretary of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Board of Education, past chair of the Kids’ Food Basket Muskegon advisory committee, vice president for the board of CALL 2-1-1, and a member of the Muskegon Rotary Club, MSU Alumni Club of Muskegon Lakeshore Area, and Greater Muskegon Service League.

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The Second Semester of 1973



BY
JOEL
DULYEA

During the spring of 1973, Bill Monroe, director of the Muskegon Community College choir, asked me to sing for the Miss Michigan Pageant in L.C. Walker Arena, and for the musical *The Fantasticks* in Whitehall's Howmet Playhouse. Both opportunities were unexpected. I would not have participated in either event without Bill's encouragement.

Over the summer, Larry Gray replaced Bill. Larry was a percussionist turned choral director. He studied music at the University of Michigan. His attention to rhythm, tempo, musicality, and the influence of text upon the performance of music was extraordinary. He encouraged me to major in music. Other instructors also helped in that process. Margaret Sherman opened the door to English art songs, Italian arias, and German songs (lieder) as she encouraged me to use my voice. Dorothy Sheets suffered the sounds of my keyboard skills (such as they were) as she prepared me for further study later. Harold Luoma taught Johann Sebastian Bach's rules for composition, a subject I labored diligently to understand. The payoff was unexpected. Without the knowledge of Bach's rules, the music of P.D.Q. Bach, "a fictional composer invented by the American musical satirist Peter Schickele," could not have moved me to tears of laughter. P.D.Q. broke every single rule I worked hard to comprehend! Bless you, Mr. Luoma.

September of 1974, I returned for a second year of studies at MCC. My classes included mandatory core curriculum and studies in music theory, piano, voice lessons, and choir. MCC was a very good place to explore vocational options. In hindsight, with the inclusion of multiple music classes, it seemed inevitable that music would be my major.

That had not been considered earlier in my life. In junior high school, on vocation day students could search a gray, vertical four-drawer metal cabinet that contained files of careers organized alphabetically. There was no folder marked with the occupation of “singer.” The folder for “tool and die maker” was two inches thick. Outside the realm of college, I left Burger King for a better paying job in Montague at Mold Finishers (which no longer exists). Other jobs would follow.

Then there was Uncle Jack. I do have an Uncle Jack through family ties. “Family Jack” is a genuine character that every family should have, but he didn’t teach history at MCC. Jack Rice taught the History of Western Civilization. His lectures were inspired performances that awakened a lifelong desire to learn. His class was one of the core subjects that I would not have taken but for its necessity. Total transparency demands that I tell you this: before a test on ancient Egyptian history, Uncle Jack, the lecture wizard, supplied me with his lecture notes. Why did he do that? Because I fell asleep in his class. Allow me to explain. Adopted Uncle Jack also directed rehearsals for Civic Theater’s production of Rogers and Hammerstein’s musical *Carousel*. After each rehearsal, Mr. Snow (the character I played in the musical) punched in at Hackley Hospital to work in the role of an orderly on third shift. (Dear reader of this article who may think, “Whoa! Didn’t you say you worked for Mold Finishers? Yes, I did. But please understand, I wasn’t sleeping enough, so I neglected to tell you.) To continue, I punched out of Hackley Hospital and drove to MCC in time for morning donuts and coffee in the student lounge at MCC. Eventually, I got three hours of sleep after school before the evening rehearsals resumed. The schedule was a carousel. I slept through a weekend after we struck the set of *Carousel*.

The teachers at MCC prepared me well to continue my education. What I appreciated most was their belief in my raw talent. They encouraged me to take the path of an empty folder marked “singer.” But nothing had more influence for a happy future than singing in the choir. That’s where I met my future wife, Merijo Nelson, during the second semester of 1973. We’ve sung together for forty-nine years and filled a filing cabinet with memories.

Joel Dulyea is a National Award-Winning writer and United States Army retiree who loves to sing with his wife Merijo. She encouraged him through college and walked by his side through twenty-eight years as a singer with the United States Army Soldiers’ Chorus.



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BY
CATHAY
THIBDAUE

Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 3 cups chopped broccoli florets, bite-size pieces
- 1 large carrot, julienned or finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

Melt the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onion, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in the garlic and cook for another minute, then sprinkle in the flour and whisk continuously for 1 to 2 minutes or until the flour turns golden. Slowly pour in the milk, whisking continuously.

Add the broth, broccoli, carrot, and mustard and combine. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until the broccoli is tender.

Gradually add the cheese, stirring after each addition, until all the cheese is melted and the soup is creamy.

Cathay Thibdaue is the Network Manager at Senior Resources of West Michigan. She has been with Senior Resources for 24 years. Cathay has been contributing recipes to Senior Perspectives since 2004. She enjoys fishing with her husband, Wayne, and boating. Cathay also enjoys gardening and cooking.



BY
BRANDI
WALDMAN

Montana Stew

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. raw stew meat, cut into chunks
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 5 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 14.5oz. can of beef broth
- 2 Tbsp. barley

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together in a covered roaster. Bake at 250 degrees for 5-6 hours. No need to look at it or stir it!

Brandi is the Staff Educator, HIPAA Privacy Officer and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at Senior Resources of West Michigan. She has been with Senior Resources for seven years and loves animals, board games and anything crafty.



BY
KIM
JARCHOW

Hearty Vegan Stew

Ingredients:

- 3 ½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 ½ cups finely chopped (very large) white or yellow onion
- 5 extra-large cloves garlic (or 1 packed Tbsp of minced garlic)
- 1 heaping cup of sliced carrots
- ¾ cup dry red wine, cabernet sauvignon (or a merlot)

optional: 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast

- 2 lbs. (about 6 medium size) red potatoes in 1-inch chunks
- 1 heaping cup tomato sauce/puree or tomato soup
- 2 ½ tablespoons of Italian seasoning
- 2 teaspoons fine sea salt • ½ teaspoon black pepper

Directions: First, add ONLY 1 cup of the broth to a large pot with the onions, garlic and carrots. Turn to medium heat and once the liquid is bubbling, cook 5-8 minutes until onions are tender.

Add the wine and nutritional yeast (if using) and stir well. Continue to cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes so the wine cooks down some. Five minutes is plenty.

Add the remaining broth (2 ½ cups), potatoes, tomato sauce, Italian herbs, salt and pepper. Turn to high heat and bring to a rolling boil. Once fully boiling, cover with a lid and turn the heat to low.

Cook on low simmer for 30-45 minutes until the potatoes and carrots are tender.

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Kim Jarchow is a Plant Based Nutritionist as well as a Licensed Health Insurance Agent with HealthMarkets. Her passion is plant-based education. She helps others learn how healthy whole foods can be used as nutrition therapy (food as medicine). Kim created My Rooted Nutrition with the hopes of intentionally sharing just how simple and nutritious eating a whole food plant rich diet can be. She also presents at cancer retreats on nutrition as well as hosting community cooking classes for learning plant-based cooking.

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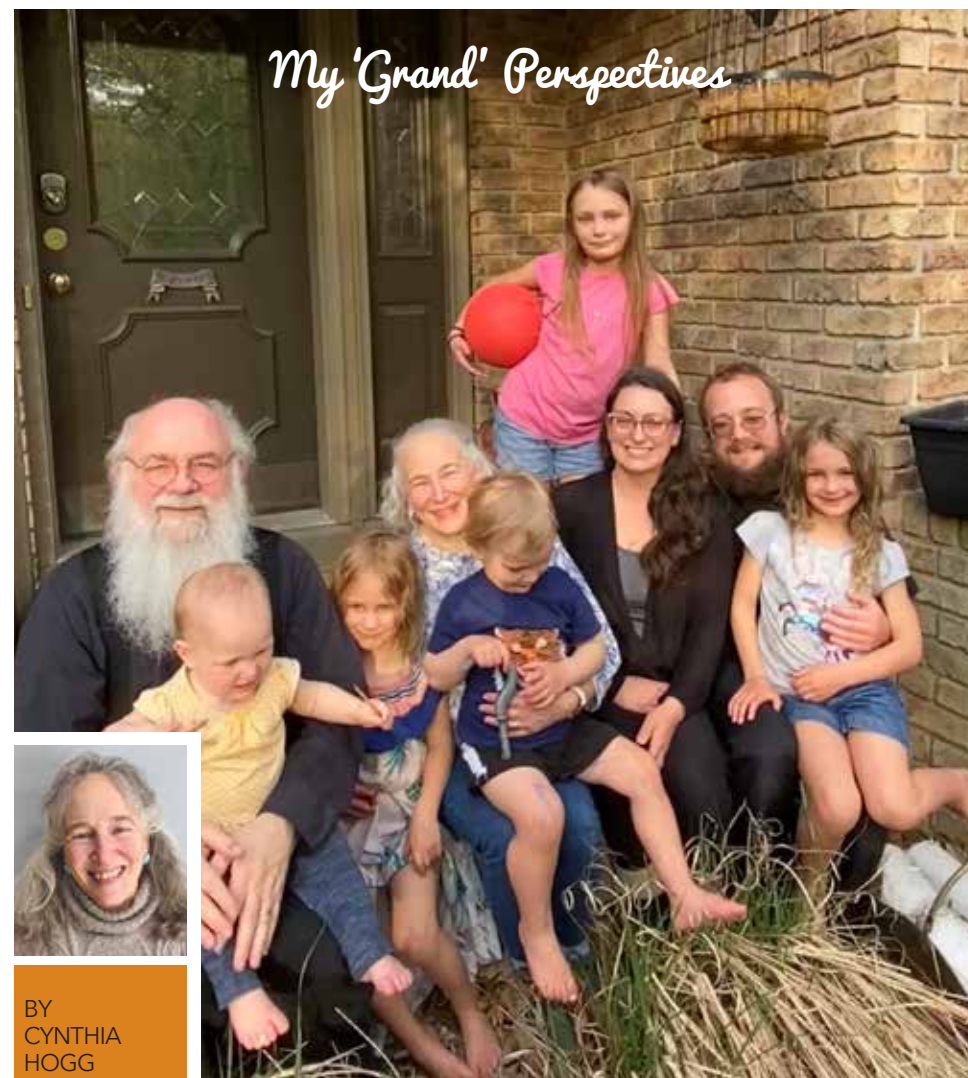
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Good Night, My Sweet little Grandma

My husband and I did this on purpose. We were not forced into it by physical infirmity or financial difficulties. We were drawn to it instead by the sheer force of the potential advantages we saw. Chief among those was the ability to form deep and meaningful relationships with our grandchildren.

What we chose to do was to pursue a multi-generational living arrangement.

It made the most sense to do it with our younger son and his family. (We did check with our other kids, who assured us they had no interest in such an arrangement!) Our son's wife is an RN and they always told us, "Don't worry; when you're old, you'll always have a place with us." I began to think, "Why wait until we're old; we could be of help to you now." My daughter-in-law was working full-time as a nurse and they had three little girls under the age of six.

And while they had fairly good arrangements for caring for the girls since my son could often work from home, they began to see some of the advantages of having “grandma and grandpa” on site.

It used to be more common in our country, and even today it remains common in other cultures. But then we got so independent – and mobile – and spread out. AARP reports that many grandparents live at least 50 miles from their closest grandchild. Perhaps something important is being lost on both sides.

As we set out, we were clear that neither set of adults wanted to feel like the “tenants” of the other. For this reason (as well as space and layout reasons), we decided to buy a new property that we could split the price of, right down the middle, as joint owners. We also held a number of meetings ahead of buying a property to think of “everything that could possibly go wrong” (!) and to put in writing how we would handle any difficulties. In the end, this included the stipulation that either couple could, for whatever reason, decide to break up the arrangement, with no hard feelings on either side.

Finding just the right property in our price range was a little challenging. We knew we wanted something where we could each have our private area, along with a “communal” area. My husband and I were fine having a basement apartment but it had to have two things: a door at the top of the stairs to close off our area, and its own exit.

In the end we found a 5-bedroom home with a 3-stall garage and a walk-out basement. We spent about an additional \$30,000 (evenly split by both couples) to create an office for my son on the main floor and a laundry room and fully outfitted kitchen in our area. My son’s family has the bedrooms and two baths on the top floor, we have the walk-out basement, and the ground floor level is the communal area. We never go up to their floor without being invited and they never come down to our area without being invited, but everyone mixes freely on the main floor. (The only exception is our three-year-old grandson who often finds ways to sneak down to Grandma and Grandpa’s area. Our fault. He knows he’ll get a treat of some sort before we chase him back upstairs!)

We are more than five years in now, and of course we have discovered some drawbacks. First of all, with nine of us now under the same roof, it is not quiet. At all. Initially, my husband and I thought we could just retreat downstairs when we wanted some peace and quiet. Well, we can go downstairs – but it is not quiet. They had three little girls when we first moved in together and they now have four little girls and a boy; (trust me, girls can be every bit as loud as little boys!) That’s one reason why my husband and I invested in a modest little vacation spot about an hour-and-a-half north in Ludington. Nothing fancy, but it is nice to have a place to get away to, just the two of us.

Secondly, I’d be lying if I said there were never any little tensions between my daughter-in-law and myself, but we always get past it. We agree that wherever there is good will on both sides, things can be worked out.

Next, while the initial arrangement was financially advantageous to us (we were able to pay off our half of the new mortgage by selling our previous home, plus enough to invest in the little vacation spot), the day-to-day expenses don’t save us that much money. Our property taxes are higher (although splitting does help) and since we evenly split the utilities, we feel we are subsidizing them somewhat: seven of them vs two of us. Plus, living with grandchildren, Grandma is apt to keep buying them little things....

And finally, we have to work extra hard to make sure we give our other grandchildren the same attention.

The advantages are too numerous to list, however. So many precious everyday moments; funny ones and sad ones and all the ones in between. Plus, there’s nothing like the love of a grandchild! Perhaps I can sum it up by explaining the title of this article. Every night my three-year-old grandson wants me to sing him the Scottish lullaby, “Bonnie Wee.” While I am singing to him and stroking his hair, he is stroking my face. When I tell him, “Good-night, my sweet little boy,” he sighs, “Good-night my sweet little Grandma” and then kisses me. It melts my heart. Every single time. You have to go back four generations on my mother’s side to find a woman who lived long enough to see a grandchild. I do not take these special moments for granted.

At the first property we looked at, the Hispanic realtor for the seller looked perplexed when I told her what we were looking for. “That’s common in my culture,” she said, “but I don’t know many Americans looking for that.” I replied, “Just watch! I think you are going to see more and more of this.” And indeed, that has been the case. In the 5+ years since we did this, I know of at least a dozen others – friends, relatives, a co-worker – who have undertaken the same thing. In each case it was a conscious choice, like our situation, driven not by necessity but desire.

I will not be surprised to see future home construction designed with just this multi-generational desire in mind!

Cynthia Hogg is a National Award-winning freelance writer who lives in Grand Rapids. She also tries to spend as much time as possible at her vacation home in Ludington, as she is a volunteer lighthouse keeper there and loves to stroll the beaches looking for rocks and sea glass. She treasures spending time with her 10 grandchildren and traveling, especially in combination. She is the creator of the blog www.skipgentravelguru.com and can be reached at cindacord@gmail.com.



BY
CHRISTINE
WISTROM

Playing it SAFE



Internet safety is something we are becoming more aware of in this age of advanced technology. We try to use passwords that aren't easy to guess. We don't open emails from addresses we don't recognize, and we don't respond when someone asks us for account numbers or other personal information. Most of us try to stay safe online. Unfortunately, we often aren't successful, and we can get into trouble without even knowing what happened.

Online safety means taking your time as you're going through your email and not just automatically clicking on requests from people you don't know. It seems like every day someone comes up with another way to scam money or information from the unwary consumer. We've learned to not share personal information like passwords or account information with strangers, but now we have to think twice about sharing that same information with family or friends. Spyware makes it possible for strangers to read our emails. These criminals have programs that can filter through the mass of information on the web and gather what they need to steal your identity.

Our first priority has to be not sharing important, identifying information. Keep your private information private. If you get an email that looks official and it is requesting personal information, go online to the home website of the sender or call them first and ask if they are behind the request. Make it a habit not to provide private information using email. If they need the information, let them call you and confirm who they are first.

Never use public wi-fi for sending private messages. If you are on your computer at a coffee shop or a restaurant using public wi-fi, understand that others can tap into your messages. It's just not a good policy to use public wi-fi.

When you're on the internet looking at different websites, look at the top of the page to ensure the address you're visiting starts with <https://> and not <http://>. The "s" at the end means it's secure. You may even see a small padlock symbol next to the address which also indicates it is a secure site.

If you find yourself drawn into an online conversation that is making you uncomfortable, exit the site and block it so no one can contact you from that site again. You do not need to tolerate bullying or harassing behavior.

Make sure you have antivirus software on your computer and accept the updates that come in for your programs. There are new versions of malware and other

dangerous programs being developed all the time. The people who design the programs you use are constantly updating their software to protect from the most current schemes. That only helps if you don't install the updates.

Use long, complicated passwords that others can't guess, and have a backup program to keep your data safe. Take the time to read through the email coming to you before you respond. Stay aware; stay safe.

Chris is a Gerontologist who currently works at Disability Network Lakeshore as an Independent Living Specialist. She specializes in assistive technology, emergency preparedness planning, and service dog training.

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KEITH'S WORLD

Top of the Rock

BY
KEITH
SIPE

The photo of me in the golf cart with my friends shows our mode of transportation through the trails at Top of the Rocks, in Branson, Missouri. I was honored to be the driver of the golf cart during our travels through the trails of covered bridges, tunnels, and passing close to water falls. What a beautiful day for such an adventure! I was guided carefully through the trails by the two wonderful ladies in the back seat. I would have never made it safely without their knowledge of the trails. My speed was corrected often, as was to how to park the golf cart. Jim and I were very grateful for the ladies' guidance this afternoon. I can't thank them enough. It was a fun week with Jim and Sue and my friend Patricia. Such lovely, lovely people to spend a week with in Branson, Missouri, last October.

My friend Patricia and I started kindergarten together many years ago, and were able reconnect after all those years, like, dare I say...55 years ago after graduation. During one of our conversations Patricia mentioned that she had been to Branson over 20 years ago and would love to go back. Jim and Sue have been telling me for years how wonderful Branson is and how I would enjoy myself. They were correct, I did enjoy the week in Branson. Check it out sometime.

The first musical event we all went to was the "Texas Tenors." They were country singer JC Fisher, pop singer Marcus Collins, and opera singer John Hagen. It was a very enjoyable evening listening to these men sing. I would definitely recommend seeing the Texas Tenors. The variety of music was great and I am sure most would enjoy them.

Another evening, we attended the Hughes Brothers' Theatre. The Hughes family is a large family of singers, and I mean large. A very enjoyable evening listening to a family of performers. So much talent in the family.

My friend Patricia was very interested in attending a show at the Sight and Sound Theatre. Looking over the many events available in Branson, Pat wanted



This is a beverage bar in the cave. Yes, Pat got herself a diet coke, go figure.



There were many waterfalls on our travel through Top of the Rock.



Jim in the front seat, Sue and Pat in the back seat, I think.



The Chapel of the Ozark.

to go to see Queen Esther. What a great choice she made; we were very impressed. The stage was very large, with a

180-degree view from left to right from our seats. It was like watching the lives of many move throughout the day in the village, with camels, horses and other live animals moving from one place to another. We were very busy trying to capture everything that was happening on stage. Even horses with their rider moving down the aisles. I have been to Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford Upon Avon in England to see "My Fair Lady" and also "Les Miserables" in New York. But I must say, this was an outstanding performance as well. A must see!

The rolling hills of Branson are breathtaking to say the least. This story started with us in the golf cart, at the Top of the Rocks in the Ozarks. We traveled through the trails, over the bridges and into the tunnels. We stopped in many places and walked around to view the wonderful sites in the Top of the Rock.

Our week in Branson was a wonderful time. If you haven't been there it's a place that you should at least consider.

Keith may be reached at rightseat625bg@gmail.com Please drop him a note, he loves the attention, well, he would love to hear from you. Keith enjoys writing, photography, flying, cooking, history, traveling and lives in downtown in Muskegon.

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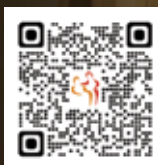
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BY
HILLARY
HATCH -
PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
SPECIALIST

Social Security Q & A

Question:

I usually get my benefit payment on the third of the month. But what if the third falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday? Will my payment be late?

Answer:

Just the opposite. Your payment should arrive early. For example, if you usually get your payment on the third of a month, but it falls on a weekend or legal holiday, we will send payments on the business day prior to the due date. You can find the payment schedules at www.ssa.gov/pubs/calendar.htm. Any time you don't receive a payment, be sure to wait three days before calling to report it missing. To ensure that your payments go to the right place, create a personal my Social Security account. There, you can verify and manage your benefits without calling or visiting an office. Please visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount to create your account.

Question:

How can I get a copy of my Social Security Statement?

Answer:

You can get your personal Social Security Statement online by using your personal my Social Security account. If you don't yet have an account, you can easily create one. Your online Statement gives you secure and convenient access to your earnings records. It also shows estimates for retirement, disability, and survivors benefits you and your family may be eligible for.

To set up or use your account to get your online Social Security Statement, go to www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

We also mail Statements to workers age 60 and over who aren't receiving Social Security benefits and do not yet have a my Social Security account. We mail the Statements three months prior to your birthday.

Question:

I served in the military, and I'll receive a military pension when I retire. Will that affect my Social Security benefits?

Answer:

You can get both Social Security retirement benefits and military retirement at the same time. Generally, we don't reduce your Social Security benefits because of your military benefits. When you're ready to apply for Social Security retirement benefits, go to www.ssa.gov/applyonline. This is the fastest and easiest way to apply. For your convenience, you can always save your progress during your application and complete it later. We thank you for your military service!

Question:

How are my retirement benefits calculated?

Answer:

Your Social Security benefits are based on earnings averaged over your lifetime. Your actual earnings are first adjusted or "indexed" to account for changes in average wages since the year the earnings were received. Then we calculate your average monthly indexed earnings during the 35 years in which you earned the most. We apply a formula to these earnings and arrive at your basic benefit. This is the amount you would receive at your full retirement age. You may be able to estimate your benefit by using our Retirement Estimator, which offers estimates based on your Social Security earnings. You can find the Retirement Estimator at www.ssa.gov/estimator.

Question:

I own a small business. How can I verify employees' Social Security numbers?

Answer:

Employers can use our Social Security Number Verification Service to verify the names and Social Security numbers of current and former employees for wage reporting purposes. For more information, go to www.ssa.gov/employer/ssno.htm.

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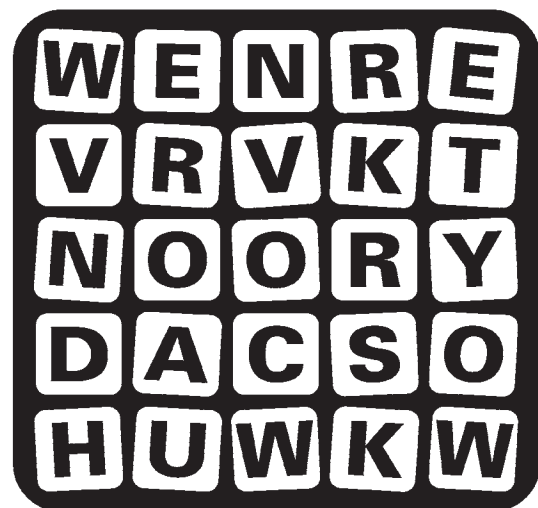
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Game Page
Answers
on
Page 39



By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



4-9-23

INSTRUCTIONS: Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once within a single word. Play with a friend and compare word finds, crossing out common words.

BOGGLE® POINT SCALE

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- 5 letters = 3 points
- 6 letters = 4 points
- 7 letters = 6 points
- 8 letters = 10 points
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A ₁	I ₁	T ₁	T ₁	R ₁	L ₁	S ₁	
E ₁	E ₁	U ₁	C ₃	T ₁	L ₁	T ₁	
A ₁	O ₁	O ₁	L ₁	N ₁	C ₃	N ₁	
A ₁	E ₁	E ₁	Y ₄	L ₁	L ₁	B ₃	2nd Letter Double
A ₁	I ₁	O ₁	N ₁	C ₃	R ₁	G ₂	Triple Word Score

PAR SCORE 250-260
BEST SCORE 321

FIVE RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

06-18



Cold Weather Can Be Dangerous



For many of us living in Michigan, winter is a welcome season, but extreme cold weather can be dangerous. Older people, their families, and friends should keep alert for frostbite and hypothermia risks.

FROSTBITE is the freezing of body parts exposed to the cold, resulting in the destruction of body tissue. Body parts most likely to be frostbitten are your nose, cheeks, ears, toes and fingers.

Symptoms include:

- “Pins and needles” sensation followed by numbness.
- Frostbitten skin is hard, pale, cold, and has no feeling.
- With more severe frostbite, the skin may appear white and numb (tissue has started to freeze).
- When skin has thawed out, it becomes red and painful (early frostbite).
- Very severe frostbite may cause blisters, gangrene (blackened dead tissue), and deep tissue damage in tendons, muscles, nerves, and bone.

Prevention:

- Keep your skin dry. Wet skin freezes quicker than dry skin.
- You should also wear a warm hat that covers your ears, gloves or mittens, dry socks, and dry shoes or boots that protect your feet against cold and dampness.
- A scarf or ski mask will also help protect your face.
- Don’t touch metal or wear jewelry outdoors in the cold. Metal conducts cold, thus increasing your chances of frostbite.
- If you suspect frostbite, seek emergency medical care immediately.

HYPOTHERMIA is the loss of core body heat due to exposure to the cold. It is a life-threatening condition that may be caused by short exposure to extreme cold or prolonged exposure to mild cold.

Symptoms:

- The muscles are often stiff, particularly in the neck, arms, and legs. Stiffness may be accompanied by trembling, sometimes limited to only one side of the body or one arm or leg.
- Shivering is another sign that the body is having trouble keeping warm. Shivering response is frequently diminished or absent in older adults. The fact that an older person is not shivering in a cool or cold environment does not GUARANTEE that the person is not cold.
- The face is sometimes puffy or swollen. This can be an important sign, especially when found in conjunction with cold skin and signs of confusion.
- Persons may have problems walking and maintaining balance. Look for poor coordination and jerky movements.
- Breathing and heart rate: These are slowed at low body temperatures. In severe hypothermia, they may be very difficult to detect.
- Skin: The skin is cool or cold to the touch. Pay special attention to the stomach, lower back, arms, leg, hand, and feet. Skin color is usually pale, but may also have large, irregular blue or pink spots.

- Consciousness: Consciousness is depressed as the body cools. Some hypothermia victims will have body temperatures as low as 80 degrees, yet still be conscious. Remember that “conscious” and “mental clarity” are two different things. A person can be “conscious and reactive” and yet still be confused, disoriented, and in a hypothermic state. The level of consciousness is not a reliable indicator of the victim’s condition.
- Confusion: One of the first indicators of hypothermia is a growing mental confusion. As body temperature falls, confusion becomes more pronounced. Memory loss and disorientation may also occur.
- Attitude: As body temperature falls, apathy often becomes apparent. The person loses interest in what is happening and often will be lethargic about taking steps to reduce his danger. Behavior changes may also include irritability, hostility, meanness and aggression.

Here are some tips for preventing hypothermia during the cold weather season:

- You are more likely to rapidly lose body heat when your clothes are wet.
- Wear dry clothing when working outdoors.
- One of the best ways to prevent cold-related injuries is to wear the right clothing outdoors.
- It’s better to wear several layers of clothing than a single heavy coat or jacket. If possible, wear a thin layer next to your skin such as polyester or polypropylene. This will help keep the heat close to your body. Wear this under a warm layer of clothing such as wool under an outer jacket that repels water and cuts the wind.
- Drink plenty of water to keep from getting dehydrated.
- If possible, do some of your outdoor work during the warmest part of the day.

- Avoid sitting still outdoors for long periods of time. Take adequate breaks from the cold.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, coffee and other drinks with caffeine. Smoking decreases circulation; alcohol increases the rate at which your body cools.
- Stay in good physical shape.

It is important you know what to do to reduce your risk of cold-related injuries. When in doubt, seek medical help immediately.

PREPARING FOR A WINTER STORM

At Home:

- Keep handy a battery-powered flashlight, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio and portable radio, extra food (canned or dried food is best), can opener, and bottled water (at least 3 gallons per person).
- Make sure each member of the household has a warm coat, gloves, hat and water-resistant boots. Ensure that extra blankets and heavy clothes are available.
- Keep on hand items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Keep on hand items for your pets. Animals feel the effects of wind chill. Be sure to have suitable shelter with food and water.
- Be aware of potential fire and carbon monoxide hazards if you plan to use an emergency heating source such as a fireplace, wood stove or space heater.

Outside:

- Avoid overexertion, such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a car, or walking in deep snow. Sweating could lead to chill and hypothermia, and abnormally low body temperatures. Cold weather also puts extra strain on the heart, so the elderly and those with heart conditions should be especially cautious when out in the cold.
- Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight warm clothing in layers, with a waterproof outer layer. Wear a wool hat and mittens.
- Keep your clothes dry. Change wet socks and clothing quickly to prevent loss of body heat.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill. As wind speed increases, heat is carried away from a person's body more rapidly which could lead to severe hypothermia.



AUTOMOTIVE PREPAREDNESS:

- Be sure the vehicle is winterized by late fall. This includes having the proper mix of antifreeze and water in the cooling system, topping off the windshield washing solution, and checking the tire treads. Have a mechanic check the belts, hoses, tires, battery, and coolant.
- Keep the fuel tank near full, as low fuel levels can cause condensation to form, degrading fuel quality and possibly causing the fuel line to freeze. Additionally, gas stations may be closed during a severe winter storm, so it is wise to fill up if storm warnings are being broadcasted.
- Your car should always be equipped with emergency supplies. Keep the following items stored in a portable container:
 - ❖ A small battery powered radio and extra batteries
 - ❖ Flashlight with extra batteries
 - ❖ Cellular phone
 - ❖ Windshield scraper
 - ❖ Jumper cables
 - ❖ Fire extinguisher
 - ❖ Maps
 - ❖ Shovel
 - ❖ Blanket and extra clothes
 - ❖ Flares
 - ❖ Bottled water and non-perishable, high energy foods (granola bars, canned nuts, raisins, hard candy, trail mix, peanut butter and crackers)
 - ❖ First aid kit
 - ❖ Tire repair kit and pump
 - ❖ Tow chain or rope
 - ❖ Phone book and phone list
 - ❖ De-icer and extra antifreeze
 - ❖ "Call Police" or other "Help" sign

Information provided by Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness

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BY HILLARY HATCH - PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

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- Check the status of your benefits application or appeal.
- Review your earnings history.
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most states).
- If you already receive benefits, you can also:
 - Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter.
 - Set up or change your direct deposit.
 - Change your address.
 - Get a Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099).

You can even use your personal my Social Security account to opt out of receiving certain notices by mail, including the annual cost-of-living adjustments notice and the income-related monthly adjustment amount notice. These notices are available in your Message Center when you sign into your account. We will email you when you have a new message, so you never miss an important update.

It's easy to sign up for a my Social Security account. Please let your friends and family know that they can create their own my Social Security account today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.





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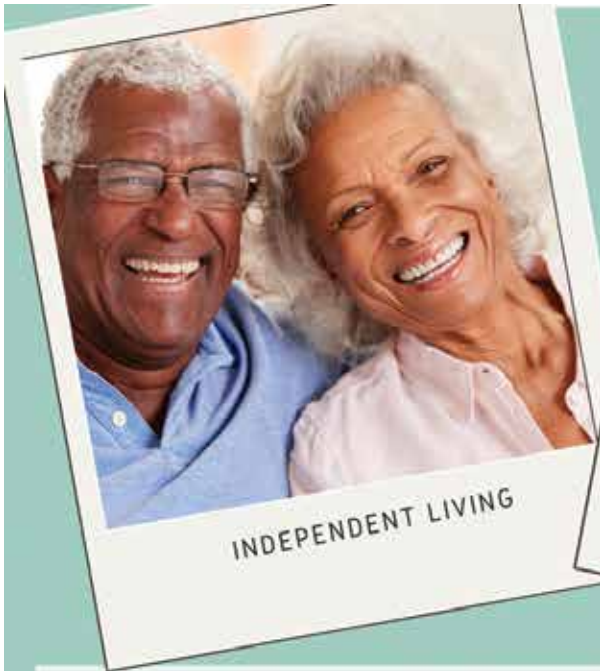
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A MARDI GRAS PARADE



BY
JERRY
MATTSON



For most of my life, I thought the only site of the Mardi Gras parade was New Orleans, Louisiana. Later, I found out it is only one of many, but probably the most publicized. In 2023, Gulf Shores, Alabama, local papers listed 66 Mardi Gras parade events in the surrounding area, including the city of Mobile. These were scheduled between January 28 and February 21. On February 19, we attended number 40 on the list, the one in Fort Morgan.

“The parade rolled for the first time on the unincorporated Fort Morgan, Alabama, peninsula in 2019, and from the beginning it has been inclusive, with golf carts, cars, jeeps, boats, decorated trailers and walkers all welcome to join the fun.”

This parade was only five years old, while the origins of Mardi Gras can be traced to medieval Europe, passing through Rome and Venice in the 17th and 18th centuries to the French House of Bourbons. In 1703, the tiny settlement of Fort Louis de la Mobile celebrated America’s first Mardi Gras. So, Mobile, Alabama, claims to be the birthplace of the Mardi Gras in the U. S.

The final parades are held on Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

To help people celebrate the season, and in probably the most delicious way, is eating pieces of a King Cake. This tradition was believed to have begun in the 1870s. Each cake is decorated in the traditional

Mardi Gras colors: purple (justice), green (faith) and gold (power). This treat is made from twisted strands of

blended coffee cake and cinnamon roll dough, covered with icing and sprinkled with purple, green and gold colored sugar.

A small plastic doll, symbolizing the baby Jesus, is included in each King Cake.

Mardi Gras parades are famous for their “throws.” People on larger floats, on golf carts, or just walking, toss things to those lining parade routes. I have some doubloons – aluminum coins – from a New Orleans event in the 1960s. Now strings of plastic beads seem to be the main items tossed. People wear hats made from them or jackets covered with sewn-on beads from previous years. By the end of each parade, people have many strands of them around their necks as well as several others in bags brought to hold the goodies. Rubber balls, small dolls and other items are also caught mid-air or are picked up from the sandy ground and added to their souvenir collection.

Parking for those attending local events like the one in Fort Morgan is limited to finding a spot along the main road or a nearby street. The smaller the vehicle the better. Jeeps and bicycles are popular. Many show up early to shorten the walking distance. Many are from “up north” and enjoy visiting with others while walking to or standing along the route.

The history of Marti Gras events may vary, or be distorted by time, but from big cities with lavash floats and elegant society balls to small events like Fort Morgan’s where after-parade parties are held in three local bars, everyone seems to enjoy the Mardi Gras season.

Jerry and Suzette spend some of the white months near Gulf Shores, Alabama, where much reading, writing and quilting are done. Seashells and plastic beads are among the items packed for the homeward trip each year.

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Heart Health and Prevention

Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and most of us know someone who has been affected by it. Leading risk factors include high cholesterol, obesity, smoking or tobacco use, high blood pressure, diets high in saturated fats, diabetes, and low activity levels. The good news is that there are some simple things we can do to help prevent heart disease. Here are just a few:

Diet - Reducing our intake of sodium, sugar, foods rich in saturated fats, highly processed foods, alcohol, and foods containing highly refined carbohydrates is a first step. Incorporating more fruits and vegetables, high fiber foods such as beans or legumes, whole grains, low fat or fat-free dairy foods, and lean meats and fish have been shown to improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels and lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Making even minor changes, or “swaps,” can help. For example, trading chips for an apple or carrots is an easy way to help reduce your intake of trans fats. Try “swapping” a new item each week until you reach your goal of eating from a healthier eating plan all the time.

Increase activity- Activity helps reduce many risk factors for heart disease. You may need to start slowly and work up to the goal of 30 minutes per day of moderate activity. This can include brisk walking, strength training two or more times a week, and 75 minutes of aerobic activity per week. Again, start with small steps with just 5 minutes of moving per day and work your way up. Simple activities could include walking your dog, gardening, housekeeping, and taking the stairs when possible, and they are easy to incorporate into your day.

Sleep - Sleep is a time for our bodies to repair, and it helps reduce many risk factors related to our hearts. Most adults need at least seven hours of

sleep each night. Try going to bed at the same time every night and keeping your room dark and quiet. Try not to use electronic devices within 30 minutes of going to bed to help your body start to relax for a full night’s sleep. In fact, keeping electronic devices outside of the bedroom can help reduce sleep interruptions and allow us to sleep deeper and longer.

Manage stress - Ongoing stress can increase our Cortisol (stress hormone) levels, affecting how our bodies process glucose and prevent weight loss. When we feel stressed many of us cope in unhealthy ways, like overeating, smoking, and increased alcohol intake. Exercise can increase endorphins, helping us feel less anxiety, hence reducing stress.

Health screenings and infection prevention - Getting regular health screening can help detect changes in key blood levels related to heart health and help you and your healthcare team proactively work on the health plan that is right for you. Certain infections can affect heart health. Staying up to date on vaccines can help protect you against infectious diseases. Key vaccines include, flu, Tdap, pneumonia, and COVID. All of these have been proven to reduce the seriousness of related illnesses by building up our immune system.

As always, consulting with your doctor or pharmacist is a great first step to finding a plan that works best for you and your overall health.

This information is not intended to treat, cure, or diagnose your condition. Consult with your doctor or local pharmacist before using any new medication or supplement.

Ben Bringedahl, RPh is Vice President of Retail with HomeTown Pharmacy Inc. For more information visit hometownpharmacy.com.



BY JACKIE LINDRUP RDH, M.ED.

Just Be Kind

We were driving home from visiting a grandchild in Lowell and passed Porter Hills in Grand Rapids, where mom and dad had lived for 25 years until passing away a few years ago. My husband Tom asked me, "Did your dad ever get mad at you when he was coaching you at golf?"

I thought back to the hours we had put in at various driving ranges and golf courses in Grand Rapids over the years. My dad was a great golfer. He loved the game and was, in his words, "a student of the game." He watched golf on TV, watched training videos by the pros, read books by Ben Hogan, Bobby Jones and Tommy Armour,



studying and practicing their techniques. Several of his favorite golf books fell apart over the years, books which I happily replaced for him on Ebay or Amazon. He was amazed that I could order on my phone (he called it my Magic Lantern) and the book would be delivered right to his door a few days later!

Dad loved the fact that we wanted to learn to play better golf. He had a great method of coaching that kept us engaged and not discouraged. He suggested what we could do to improve. He never yelled, never criticized, always suggested another way, saying "try a strong left hand" or "keep your head down all the way through the shot, Jack!" In his 90s we drove out to Boulder Creek to practice. He challenged my sister Barb and me to beat each other by chipping to the big rocks in the middle of the huge putting green to see who could get the closest. Then he would end practice with chipping and putting from hole to hole with the winner being who did it in the fewest shots. When we played golf and Dad came along, if we hit a bad shot he would always say "try it again" or "give yourself a better lie" to encourage us. And even after repeating suggestions time and time again, he never lost his cool. Dad also entertained us with

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funny expressions on the golf course. When the ball circled around the cup but did not go in, he called it “burnt lips” or “Arapaho.” When he hit a drive out of sight he’d ask “Where did that go?” If we hit a bad shot he’d suggest a corrected stance,

head position or swing. When we played golf with Dad it was always an opportunity to practice and for him to coach. He loved that we loved to play golf and he encouraged us to practice and play as often as we could.

That evening after the drive home from Lowell, I read an MLive profile of a woman who had just turned 100 which included her advice for living well. The headline was “Just Be Kind.” I thought of Dad and what a perfect description this was of his method of coaching. He always encouraged, never criticized or belittled, and had a great time. “Isn’t this a wonderful game?” he’d say, or “What a joy to be outside and be able to do this.” Besides being interested, he was always kind!

Jackie Lindrup is a retired dental hygienist who lives in Muskegon, Michigan, near Pere Marquette Beach. She is proud to be a two-time national award winner for Senior Perspectives and enjoys writing about her father, traveling and Bernie the Bernedoodle, who just turned one on Halloween! She and Tom are planning a winter road trip with Bernie. She also likes hiking, reading, painting and can be reached at jackielindrup111@gmail.com .

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BY
LOUISE
MATZ

It's a New Year!

Shall I make some changes? It's a good time to look forward and remind ourselves of some things we might want to address. After some thought, I came up with a short list. It's by no means complete, but perhaps enough to get a person thinking.

- Do I have all my vaccines – Flu, Covid, RSV, Shingles, pneumonia?
- Could I improve my diet to eat healthier?
- How about exercise? Do I get enough and the right kind?
- Do I need to lose weight?
- Do I need to get more sleep?

These are all related to better physical health. Now, how about ideas for better mental health or for a better community.

- Volunteer my time
- Make a charitable contribution
- Take a class
- Make better financial decisions
- Join a book club
- Reach out to a friend
- Become a better listener
- Become more positive, less negative
- Improve my prayer life
- Pay it forward
- More acts of kindness
- Promote a better environment
- A little more "please" and "thank you" and wearing a smile
- Brighten the day for someone else



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These are simple and ordinary suggestions. You might have a better list. Hopefully, you had a great 2023 and you're somewhat comfortable with your lifestyle choices. My suggestion is to give it some thought. Pick at least one topic and go for a better you and a better world!



At this writing, I have not made my choices, but I will by the time you see this article. I've been inspired by others and would like to share some stories.

Shopping at the grocery store, I approached the checkout line which was three deep. The woman in front of me turned and said, "You look to be in a hurry, please move in front of me." Well, I was in a hurry and that woman put a smile on my face all day long. I need to look for opportunities to do the same for others.

A man I know from Long Island had a friend who told him that he was in the process of finding a walker because he had so much pain in one leg that he could barely move around in his house. This man told his friend: "I have the perfect gift for you. It's a Rollator and it's better than a walker. I will send you one." The next day an Amazon truck dropped off the Rollator walker at his home!

I know a guy who paid it forward for the vehicle behind him on the Mackinac Bridge.

I'll never forget the kindness of the Meijer checkout people when I took my mother to do her grocery shopping. It was late in her life, her hearing was not good, and she was very slow checking out. The clerks were kind and patient and they treated her with dignity. It meant so much to me.

It's a new year, a good time to think about making this a better world.

Louise is a national award winning writer. She has been writing for Senior Perspectives for over 15 years. She enjoys family time, reading, traveling, biking, golf, pickleball and mahjonn. She and her husband spent over 20 years enjoying bow hunting for deer in the Upper Peninsula, hunting turkeys and fishing in the Florida Keys. She is currently re-inventing her life as she lost her husband of 62 years in November of 2023.



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Places of Our Lives - 2024




BY
JANET
HASSELBRING

I'm writing in my study, one of my favorite places. Within its silver sage walls, I'm surrounded by photographs of my children and grandchildren and artwork of places I've traveled; one, a farm scene, reminds me of my roots. It's cozy here, even though the room is open to the rest of the house, lending a spaciousness, not only to the room but also to the flow and connection of ideas. Behind me, windows open to the woods, where birds twitter and flit through the trees and squirrels chatter as they go about their endless games of "acorn management." The hum of distant traffic reminds me there's a world out there. A stunning paperweight and a funky yellow vase are mementos of my mother, who was creative and loved beauty. The yellow vase once housed her pins and needles; now it holds my paperclips. On my left is a pile of files containing aspects of my life; on my right is a copy of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, silently chiding me to "omit needless words." Snack, my Welshie, lies at my feet. The room (and house beyond), provides a delightful, constantly stimulating backdrop against which my life and ideas unfold, as if it's conversing with me. This place inspires me.

What is your favorite place? A place where you feel connected, rooted, peaceful, "at home."





Place or setting in a story sets the mood, influences the way characters behave, affects the dialogue, foreshadows events, and invokes emotional responses.

For example, the Cheshire Cat announces, in a concise description of the strange world Alice has discovered down the rabbit hole: “We’re all mad here!” She (and Carroll) made up the word, “curiouser,” just to describe her journey through this weird, confusing, yet oddly refreshing place. What would *Alice in Wonderland* be without the “wonder”land?

Just as the characters in the stories we read are affected by their surroundings, so we, consciously or subconsciously, are influenced by place.

In this series, I invite you to explore with me places that affect and shape our lives:

Outdoor places – perhaps a garden, where “we are closer to the heart of God than anywhere else on earth.” (Anon)

Homes – places that express who we are, not just shelters and places to store our stuff. Sarah Susanka notes, “The more a house expresses your passions, the more you’ll feel ‘at home’ there.” (*The Not So Big Life*) One of my parents’ favorite places was a porch where they could commune with nature and find respite from their chores.

Vacation spots – I’m hiking with my daughter in Acadia National Park. We stop for lunch on a summit, where I watch in horror as she heads out to a rock ledge. With trepidation I join her. Suspended in space, she experiences exuberance; I, an acrophobic, paralyzing fear. One mismove... Then a surreal sense of calm comes over me, making this one of the most memorable moments of our trip.

Third places – places between home (our first place), and work/school/retirement (our second place), where we choose to spend our time. One of my favorite “Third” places is the pickleball court, where I invariably meet new people or am reacquainted with people from the past, am accepted no matter my skill level, and where I celebrate fun, life, and good sportsmanship. Access my article on “The Disappearance of Bowling Leagues and the New ‘Third’ Place,” in the July/August issue of SP at <https://seniorresourceswmi.org/senior-perspectives-newspaper/> or <https://janethasselbring.wordpress.com/blog>

Inner lives – the stories we tell day by day, moment by moment through the thoughts we harbor, the beliefs we accept, the scenes and events we rehearse in the hidden studio of our minds.

If you’d like to share a description of your favorite place, send to janethasselbring23@gmail.com. Please indicate whether I could use your description in a future article in this series.

Janet lives in West MI with her husband, Don, and Welsh terrier, Snack. Jan drags herself off the tennis and pickleball courts occasionally to write. Her writings include Tales from Pelican Cove, a series of books featuring wild/shorebirds from FL and beyond, Country Dairy, which describes life on her family farm, in west MI, in the 1930’s, when her parents lived and worked on the land, and Tweets, A Twitter Feed of Short Stories and Articles. She is a multiple NAMPA winner. Her piano gets lonely because she chooses to whack fuzzy yellow balls and dink pickleballs instead of tickling its ivories.



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ANSWERS FOR GAMES ON PAGES 18 & 19

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3	8	4	2	7	5	9	6	1
5	6	1	3	8	9	4	7	2
4	2	5	6	3	1	8	9	7
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6	7	8	9	5	4	2	1	3

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S ₁	T ₁	A ₁	R ₁	L ₁	I ₁	T ₁	RACK 1 =	<u>57</u>
L ₁	E ₁	T ₁	T ₁	U ₁	C ₃	E ₁	RACK 2 =	<u>59</u>
N ₁	O ₁	N ₁	C ₃	O ₁	L ₁	A ₁	RACK 3 =	<u>59</u>
E ₁	Y ₄	E ₁	B ₃	A ₁	L ₁	L ₁	RACK 4 =	<u>66</u>
O ₁	R ₁	G ₂	A ₁	N ₁	I ₁	C ₃	RACK 5 =	<u>80</u>
PAR SCORE 250-260							TOTAL	321

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Answers - Boggle Game:

DOVE HAWK WREN TERN
CROW DUCK SWAN ROOK

Answers - Jumble:

LEAVE BATTY SHROUD ATTAIN

She correctly answered every question on her history exam, which her score

– ATTESTED TO



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