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NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2020

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Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan's mission is to provide older persons and persons with a disability an array of services designed to promote independence and dignity in their homes and their communities.

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER WINNER: LAVON THOMAS OF KENT CITY
The Indian Corn was found on page 22 in the garden story.

The Power of Story



BY
DAVE
KAMPFSCHULTE

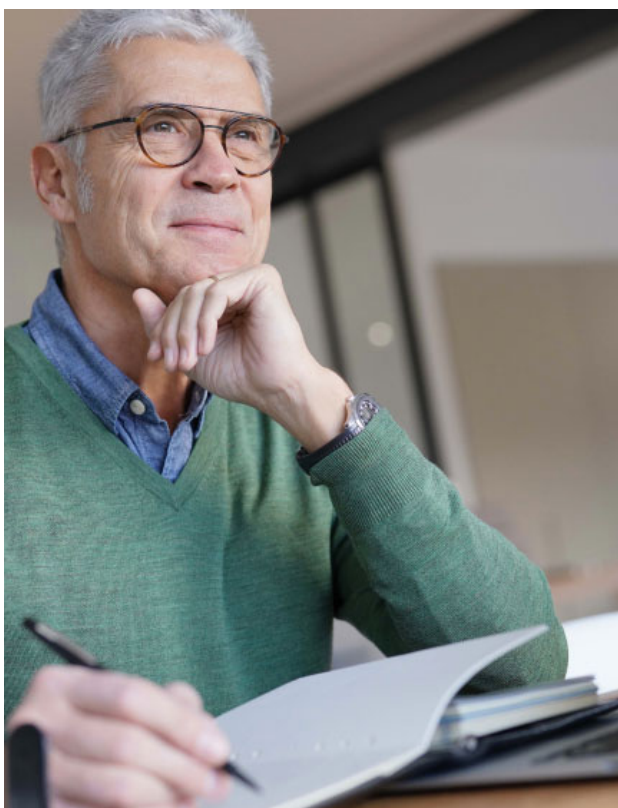
I think it is safe to say we all like a good story. At first glance, stories are entertaining, as we are often transported to a different time and place, with the author skillfully painting us a picture in words. Or we are able to obtain some history along with a good story from a historical fiction book. Who doesn't like a good "who done it" thriller?

But as Paul Harvey would say, "Now for the rest of the story." Daniel Taylor wrote a nifty little book, *Tell Me a Story*, which I am going to be drawing on for this article. It helped me understand the subtle, unconscious pull that stories have on us.

Stories, at their core, involve choices and the consequences that result from those choices. Those consequences often have long-lasting effects on the subject and the people around him. Sound familiar to our own lives? Those choices are the result of the constant shifting ground of our values. A never-ending dilemma exists between going with the values that our culture provided us with growing up, that we accepted without question, or adopting the new values emerging as we view our life through a new lens, brought on by recent experiences.

It is like having a foot in each of two rowboats side by side. It is comfortable and manageable at first. But then as values diverge, the boats start to drift, spreading legs to the breaking point, and pretty soon, the main character has to make an irreversible, life-changing decision or else fall into the water. Which boat does she jump to?

Ted Kramer in the movie *Kramer v. Kramer* is a great illustration of that. He thought his role as the husband and dad was, as society had instructed him, to "bring home the bacon." With much angst, what he learned from raising his son helped him to make a desperate lunge for the other boat and to become a better, changed man in the process. These choices don't happen immediately. Like our own lives, they play out over time. That is where the story is. They often need to percolate. They percolate not with just the main character, but with us, too. We often find ourselves asking, "What would I do under similar circumstances?" Our values develop from questions like that.



The character in the story is inviting us in subtle ways, "I am going on this journey to unknown places; would you like to come, too?" In the often-neglected fine print, it says that these unknown places aren't always going to be physi-

cal ones. They often involve an irresistible journey to where much of the conflict resides, into the recesses of our psyche. These inevitably create encounters with the Big Questions of Life: *What am I to do? Who am I? Who are all these others and what are they doing here?* So much of this is gradually going on at an unconscious level; like waves slowly moving sand around on a beach.

A story is not just facts. It is the emotions that go along with it. Those emotions have an effect on us, too. How many times have we shed a tear, laughed out loud, or reacted in horror from our encounters with story? You find yourself experiencing the same emotions the characters are. They become, as Daniel Taylor says, part of our spiritual and mental universe.

The main character changed, but guess what, I was affected and I changed too! As a result of that story, a part of me is a different person. I think of the first time I read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. My comfortable white bubble that I had been living in burst, as I realized there was a whole different world out there with people facing challenges and prejudices I never knew existed. It is similar on an elementary level to the shock for a child learning there is no Santa Claus. That realization propels us to dare to think that some things can be better than they are. The heart of any change is that realization. We all know change is hard. It is easier to live in the predictable bubble we have created. The hero's quest is all about leaving the bubble, going out to gain wisdom, and returning to help the dying society recover.

"This is all very interesting, but what does it have to do with me?" you say. Bottom line, they have helped us be the author of our own, never-ending book of our lives. I can't wait to read it. I will look for it on the best seller list, under the heading of *What I Have Learned about Myself*.

Dave Kampfschulte has been a hospice volunteer for 32 years with Spectrum Health Hospice and Harbor Hospice. He is the founder of Amazing Circle Workshops and is the author of I'm Dying to Talk with You: 25 years of end of life conversations. In 2019, he was one of 16 honored by Senior Neighbors as an Engaged and Inspired leader in our community over the age of 60.

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Question: My husband has been in poor health for some time and doctors have recently diagnosed him with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)—commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig’s Disease. I’ve heard Social Security has a “fast track” for some people who are disabled. Would you tell me about it?



BY
VONDA
VANTIL

Answer: We have two processes to “fast track” applications for disability benefits. Our Compassionate Allowances initiative allows us to fast track certain cases of individuals with very severe disabilities. There are dozens of different types of disabilities that qualify for this expedited decision, including ALS, and that list continues to expand. Learn more about Compassionate Allowances and

see the full list of conditions at www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

Another way we speed up decisions is with our Quick Disability Determinations initiative, which uses technology to identify applicants who have the most severe disabilities and allows us to expedite our decisions on those cases. Read more about Quick Disability Determinations at www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/qdd.htm.



Question: How does Social Security decide if I am disabled?

Answer: For an adult to be considered disabled, Social Security must determine that you are unable to do the work you did before and that, based on your age, education, and work experience, you are unable to adjust to any other work that exists in significant numbers in the national economy. Also, your disability must last or be expected to last for at least one year or to result in death. Social Security

pays for total disability only. No benefits are payable for partial disability or short-term disability (less than a year). For more information, read our publication, Disability Benefits, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

Question: Will my eligibility for the Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs be reviewed and, if so, how often?

Answer: If you get the Extra Help, Social Security may contact you to review your status. This reassessment will ensure you remain eligible for Extra Help and receive all the benefits you deserve. Annually, usually at the end of August, we may send you a form to complete: Social Security Administration Review of Your Eligibility for Extra Help. You will have 30 days to complete and return this form. Any necessary adjustments to the Extra Help will be effective in January of the following year. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp for more information.

Vonda Van Til is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.

How do we achieve OUR desires or the desires of A LOVED ONE navigating through the GOLDEN YEARS?

The conversation starts with the idea of “Aging in Place.”



If staying in your own home is a DESIRE you have as you travel through the “golden years,” then coming up with a plan to achieve those expectations should be discussed. Think about your support group and start having discussions of what “Aging in Place” looks like for you. Family, friends, and whomever your support group includes should know your plan and how you intend on getting there. Walking through those golden years should be the of quality of life that YOU desire. The people in your inner circle need to be aware of these desires, plans and goals.

There are moments in time we may be confronted with unforeseen life altering events that may or may not impact our way of living. To really achieve your goal, you should be discussing with your support group several conversations of how you see yourself moving into your golden years. These are not easy conversations to have and most of the time they can be very emotional. Sometimes we choose not to discuss them because of our sense of privacy, the unknown, a fear of, or facing situational reality.

In my twenty years of working with seniors and

their families, I know it’s important to start these conversations sooner than later. Over time the talks will get more in depth, become more comfortable and give everyone involved a complete understanding of your desires. It will also create a feeling of happiness, satisfaction, and peace knowing your family and support team are working together to achieve the goal of, “Aging in place” with confidence and a clear plan.

Whether it is yourself or a loved one entering the golden years, I want to simplify it by saying “plant the seed and then watch it grow.” The start of one discussion will turn into another and another clarifying what one wants as they age in place. These discussions will help each person in your support group think about the future and what you or a loved one may or may not want. Ultimately talking through and deciding what aging in place looks like for you.

So again, the true question... How do we achieve OUR desires or help a loved one achieve their desires navigating through the Golden years?

Shelley Vasey, President



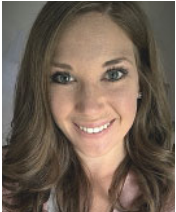
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Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Checking in for the Holidays:



How To Spot Warning Signs of Abuse



BY
CASSIE
CAPLE

Holidays are a time when family and friends get together and, for some, may be the first in-person interaction in a long time. This is a great opportunity to visit with vulnerable loved ones and to make sure they are staying safe and healthy. Knowing the warning signs of abuse and neglect can raise red flags early on to stop or prevent abuse from happening. Elder abuse is often categorized in five

types: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, and financial abuse. Older adults who live alone or rely on a caregiver to get their needs met are at a higher risk of abuse and neglect. Take time this holiday season to check in with your family and friends and use the following as a guide to assess for warning signs of abuse or neglect.

Things to look for when doing a visual assessment on a loved one:

- Do they have unexplained bruises or injuries?
- Are their clothes torn or dirty? Are they always wearing the same clothing?

- Do they report having frequent falls?
- Do they appear dehydrated or undernourished?
- Do they express issues with sight, hearing, dental problems, or incontinence?

In addition to a visual check, it's important to talk to your loved one to make sure they are receiving the proper care and have access to basic needs. It could be helpful to talk to the older adult alone so they can feel safe to share any concerns. Remember most abusers are relatives. A few things to ask and assess for are:

- Is the older adult getting the assistance they need to complete Activities of Daily Living?
- Do they have access to basic needs such as bathing, food, and safe shelter?
- How often do they socialize? Are they isolated?
- If they live with another person, are they dependent on that person for caregiving?
- Has there been a recent change in caregiver or a "new friend" assisting in caregiving?
- Have there been sudden changes in banking or spending patterns?

If you have a concern that a loved one is not in a safe and healthy living situation, you can report your concerns by calling Adult Protective Services at 855-444-3911. For more information about warning signs of elder abuse, scams, and financial exploitation, visit the Kent County Elder Abuse Coalition website at www.ProtectKentSeniors.org.

Interested in learning what services are available to older adults? Call the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan for more information at 616-456-5664 or visit our website at www.aaawm.org.

**Sources: USC Center on Elder Mistreatment, World Health Organization*

Cassie is a Contract Administrator at the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) where she also coordinates the Kent County Elder Abuse Coalition. Cassie earned her Master's Degree in Social Work from Grand Valley State University and says her favorite part about her job is collaborating with the community to keep seniors and their families safe and independent.

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BY
EMILY
ARMSTRONG

Adapting Traditions

In what we consider “normal” times, November and December would usher in the holiday season. Gatherings with family, perhaps a trip to a warmer climate to escape the Michigan winter, getting together with your neighborhood friends to bake holiday treats. With the current coronavirus crisis, admittedly this year looks a little different. Mourning the loss of these traditions is understandable; traditions provide us with a sense of comfort and belonging. There is undoubtedly a sense of loneliness that comes from the loss of an activity that we look forward to each year. But just because the circumstances change doesn’t mean we have to lose our traditions – they can be adapted to fit the times like anything else. What the pandemic has surely taught us is that we are resilient and also creative when finding solutions to the unexpected curveballs thrown our way.

So how can you look after yourself and keep these heartfelt traditions going? Here are a few tips:



Take your gatherings virtual. Connection is important.

It seems almost all things have gone virtual at this time: doctor’s appointments, work meetings, exercise classes. The same can apply to our maintaining our relationships as well. Technology

offers us a tool to stay in touch with those we love most; Facetime, Skype, Zoom, and many other online tools can bring your community together. Not to mention that these virtual check-ins can boost your mood and provide a feeling of closeness, even from afar. Schedule calls with your family and friends leading up to the holidays and maybe even plan a large group call for the day of, with virtual games, eating your meals together, etc.

Keep the traditions that you can or adopt new ones.

Some things, like attending a Thanksgiving Day parade or 5K run are certainly off the table, but others can still be done safely. Send out holiday cards via the mail. Bake your favorite holiday-themed dessert and drop it off on your neighbor’s doorstep. Sync up the timing and watch your favorite movie with a friend over Facetime or Netflix Party. There are plenty of ways to still create that special holiday magic.

Take care of yourself.

This could be a more stressful time for you than usual, especially with the many changes, so it is important to remember to take care of yourself. Self-care can take a variety of forms, from moving your body to reading a book. Take time to do something that you love and that is just for you to enjoy.

Cultivate gratitude.

Recognize and take stock of the good around you. This seems cliché, but the mindset makes all the difference. Try to stay grounded and mindful in the present moment you are in and the things you do have. Recognize that this holiday season is unique and undoubtedly presents its own challenges, but that it won’t likely be the norm forever. Therefore, this upcoming holiday season is truly unprecedented, and using this time to try new things could be the perfect change in mindset.

Emily Armstrong is the Public Relations and Communications Specialist at AAAMW. She enjoys exploring Michigan with her husband and their labradoodle, Moose. On the weekends you can usually find her cheering on the Spartans, camping, practicing photography, or reading.

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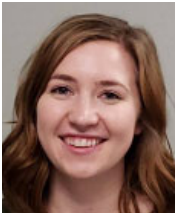
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BY
CARLY
WHETSTONE

How Can I Help Someone with Dementia THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS?

It might be awkward or sad when mom forgets the name of someone she's known for years, and with the holidays coming up, it may be more likely to occur. Individuals with dementia benefit greatly from daily routine and there's nothing quite like the holiday season to get in the way of that.

Those with dementia can be especially sensitive to the environment around them, and with so many extra people around causing loud chatter, it may set off some upsetting feelings. One way you can help a loved one through this is to keep him or her in a space with less chaos. Perhaps this means sitting in the dining room and having a one-on-one chat, allowing family members to greet

him or her just one or two at a time. It may also be good to lower the music (and better yet to play familiar music), and to keep decorations toned down.

If you're taking someone who has dementia somewhere, it may also be beneficial to keep the visit brief. Take breaks, be prepared to leave early, and do your best to read social signs that he/she may be growing uncomfortable or tired. If possible, it is best to celebrate in a location that is most familiar to the person with dementia, as it can reduce confusion and anxiety.

As far as communication goes, a lot of people get stuck in what to do when a person continually repeats him or herself. Should



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you point out that grandpa already asked you how work is going four times, or should you just politely answer the question again? If you are comfortable doing so, prepare other family members and friends with what you think is right for him/her. Typically, it is best to continue the conversation wherever the person with dementia is at, and if that means backtracking several times, then so be it. Prepare others the best you can by setting expectations. Is there a good chance that he/she won't remember who you are? Is this person prone to angry outbursts? Are there things that you know might be upsetting or triggering? As tough as those conversations may be, it can be helpful in guiding a productive interaction.

Lastly, remember that it's okay for you as

the caregiver to take a break. If there are others that the person with dementia is comfortable being with, it's okay to step away and take time for yourself. In fact, it's encouraged! Know that there are resources out there that could help with respite care and give yourself enough love and care to take up those offers. Just because the holidays are harder on someone else, doesn't mean they aren't hard for you, too. Give yourself grace, take breaks, and do what you can to find joy in these times. Remember what is important, and cut out what isn't.

Carly Whetstone, LLMSW is the Outreach Specialist at Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. She can be reached at carlyw@aaawm.org



BY
JOEL
DULYEA

Passage

It was cold and windless that November morning many years ago. Soft snow blanketed the dimly lit forest. Dad had seated

me next to a tree, then disappeared deeper into the woods.

Warm and snug in my insulated red hunting clothes, I watched fat snowflakes drift silently, filling the air and anointing the forest with calm. Just after sunrise, when the snow stopped, I settled against the tree and closed my eyes — for just a minute.

Hunting was a rite of passage for my three older brothers who had been in these woods with Dad. It seemed inevitable I would have my turn. A hunting camp had been established here, north of Baldwin, before I was born. But when the olive-green army surplus tent burned up, my uncle Bob Eyestone acquired another place to stay. So, the night before I was initiated into the clan, we were cramped together under the hissing of a Coleman lantern in Uncle Bob's deer hunting cabin.

During a card game of razzle-dazzle that continued late into the night, tall tales were told by my uncles. When we climbed into our sleeping bags, we lay in a homemade triple bunk bed; dad and me in the claustrophobic bottom rack, and the two upper decks for my snoring uncles who exchanged volleys in their sleep throughout the short night. I hoped their squeaky upper bunks would not collapse upon Dad and me.

Early morning, the smell of pancakes, bacon, and eggs cooking in a cast iron skillet roused us to the breakfast table. After an injection of percolated coffee and hot chocolate we followed the headlights of our car through the dark until we turned onto the familiar two-tracks that led to the old hunting camp. From there, hunters fanned out into the forest. Somewhere in those hardwoods I closed my eyes for just a minute. Four hours later, I awoke. Midday sunlight revealed hardwood

trees, naked but for scraggly patches of dead leaves. The calmness of the forest seemed within reach, like I could almost touch it. Within the aloneness I was not alone. Thoughts drifted into consciousness to disturb the moment. Where is Dad? Should I wait here? Should I find my way out?

Grey light revealed the footprints left by our earlier walk under darkness. The trail of snow-dusted prints led through the woods to the two-tracks, which returned me to the hunting camp just as my uncles arrived. When Dad emerged from the same trail I followed, the coffee and hot chocolate were ready. The steam from our mugs mixed with talk; did anyone see any sign of deer? No one did. I wondered if Dad too had fallen asleep against a tree.

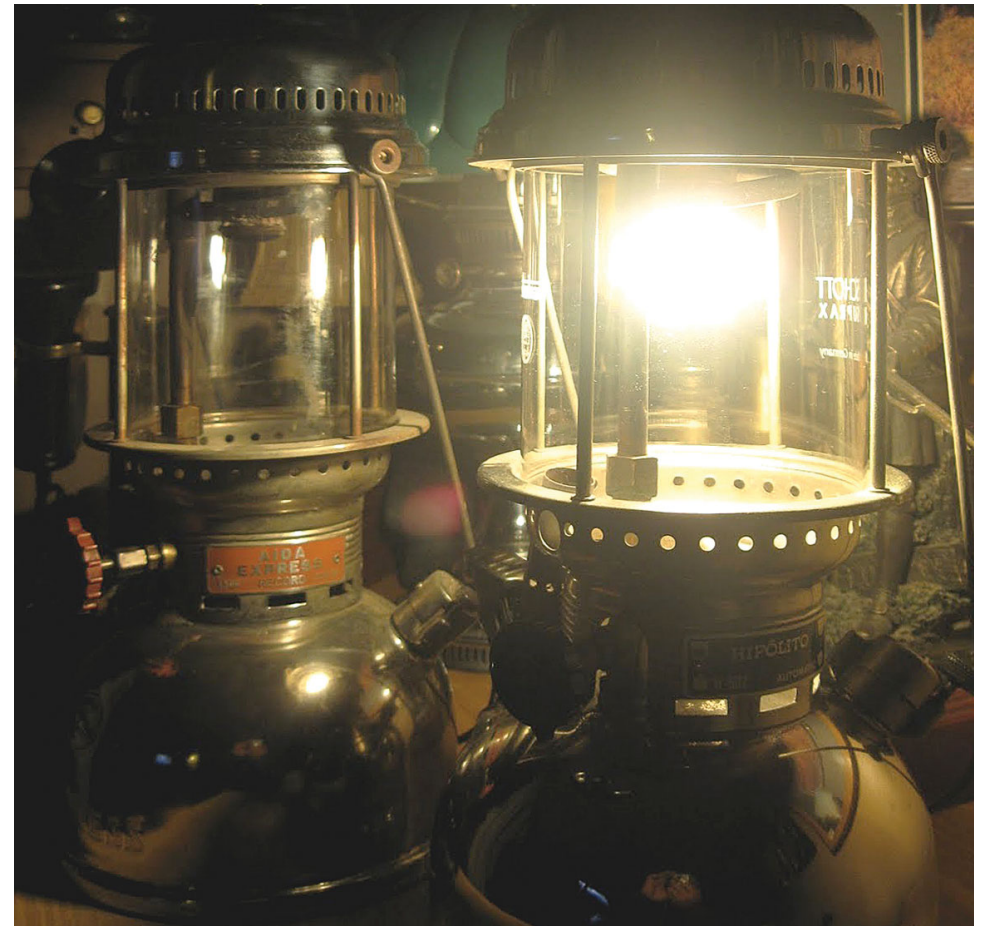
After lunch, I followed Dad and Uncle Bob back up the snow-covered two-tracks, onto the earlier trail, past the site of my morning nap, and deeper into the woods. We came to a small opening with a large, thigh-high stump. At the edge of the clearing, a farm fence disappeared into the woods in opposite directions. Dad left me on the stump and followed my uncle; their red and orange disappeared into a thicket as they searched for another clearing.

They are all gone now, save one; the generation that was great to us.

I live in a house next to a hardwood forest that harbors many species of animals, including whitetail deer. When it is cold, I do not like to sit outside on our deck. But, this November, I hope we get a windless, cold morning, with fat snowflakes and a calmness that can almost be touched. I will think of them waiting for us. I will settle into a chair and close my eyes — for just a minute.

In Memory of K. Wayne Dulyea Sr.

Joel Dulyea is a United States Army retiree who loves to sing with his wife Merijo, spend time with his daughter and son-in-law, dote on his granddaughter and spoil his wire-haired dachshund, Heidi.



Upcoming Classes

Wednesday, November 4
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“We Give Thanks”



BY
CINDY
HOGG

My husband's father fought for Gen. Patton as a tank gunner in the 6th Armored Division during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Last December marked the 75th anniversary, so my husband and I, along with six other adult family members – plus our 10-year-old grandson – decided to travel to Bastogne, Belgium, for the celebrations marking the occasion.

Our grandson is a history buff and he's also named after his great grandfather, so it seemed a perfect trip to take him along on. He had already heard many of the war stories that have been passed down, including the most “famous” two.

In the first, my father-in-law had been ordered to shell a large farm building at the bottom of a hill because it was feared that German soldiers were hiding there. For the first time, his tank refused to fire, although he tried over and over again – spurred on by some colorful language from his commander. Suddenly the doors opened and men, women, and children began to slowly file out with their hands raised over their heads.

These were not German soldiers, but 92 citizens of the small town of Arloncourt. The incident became known as “The Miracle of Arloncourt” and during our visit, the story was recounted yet again in a local newspaper.

In the second, my father-in-law and a buddy were “flushing out the enemy” by creeping through a farmhouse, guns drawn. As they yanked open the door to the cellar, they discovered the owners of the home – a young Belgian couple – cowering on a pile of potatoes, along with their 9-year-old son, a young boy about the same age as our grandson. Both parties were glad that the other was a friend, and not an enemy. That young boy went on to become mayor of Bastogne.

The two families stayed in touch, and the widow and her daughter and son-in-law (the latter served as our translator) acted as our hosts and guides during our visit. We also met the widow and son of the owner of the farmhouse spared when the tank refused to fire. They still live there and invited us into their home for coffee and cookies, and let us stand in the same room where the villagers stood crowded together, praying.

I think of a trip like this as a “family legacy” trip, one that makes family history come alive, which this one certainly did. But there was an unexpected bonus. In addition to our hosts with a personal connection, anyone who recognized us as Americans



thanked us. In the military parade, Americans were portrayed as heroes. Even our airbnb hostess said to us, “Thank you for our freedom.” In an era where the United States is not always portrayed favorably, it was nice to relive an era where Americans showed up to do the right thing and are remembered and honored for it. It was a good lesson for our grandson to see.

We visited the Peace Woods, a grove of trees where individual trees were planted to honor individual soldiers who fought there. My husband, son, and grandson, all bearing the same name as my father-in-law, stood together by the “Bob” tree: grateful for the sacrifice of his youth (he was only 19); grateful that he returned home safely; grateful for tokens of mercy, even during war, as evidenced by our friends standing there beside us.

On Veterans' Day and at Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, we will experience gratitude on a deeper level now that travel has allowed us to actually stand in the places of some of those stories, meeting real flesh-and-blood people – and making it all the more personal and meaningful.

Cynthia Hogg, LBSW, is the Care Counselor for the Alzheimer's Association's Dementia Support Program. She is a freelance writer whose passion is travel, especially with her grandchildren. She is the founder of the blog skipgentravelguru.com.

Fire Safety



BY
ASHLEY
BIEBER

As the days get shorter and it cools down outside we move inside, heat things up by turning on the furnace, and start getting prepared for time at home and the holidays. This time of year and preparing for the holidays means different things

to different people and what that looks like varies, but what everyone should be thinking about and including in that process are home fire safety measures.

According to the Red Cross on average in the U.S. "seven people die every day from a home fire, most impacting children and the elderly" and 36 people are injured daily. A U.S. Fire Administration report in 2018 found that per every 1,000 residential structure fires in Michigan there were 10.9 deaths and 32.7 injuries, while the national average was 6.1 deaths and 25.3 injuries.

Additionally, according to the Michigan Fire Inspector Society report, as of August 3rd of this year there were 84 fire-related deaths in Michigan, which is a 48% increase from the same time period in 2019, where for the year there were 102 deaths in 90 fires total. 75% of the 84 victims were between the ages of 40 and 79. The Michigan Fire Inspector Society report found that 50% of the fires started in the living room of the home and the top three locations for a fire to start in a home are the living room, kitchen, and bedroom.

These are pretty heavy facts about the possible danger in your home, where you should be safe. The good news is that there are low cost and even free ways to better protect your home, yourself, and your loved ones. Awareness of the danger and taking steps to prevent and be better prepared should a fire occur in your home will have a huge impact on the total number of fires and especially deaths in house fires.

According to the Red Cross, having correctly installed and working smoke detectors cuts the risk of death by half. Their steps for fire safety include having the right number of smoke alarms in the home which are tested once a month and batteries changed at least once a year. Make sure everyone knows at least two ways out of each room in the home and establish a family emergency communication plan to ensure that no one goes back into the home and everyone knows who to contact if they cannot find each other.

Additionally, according to the Red Cross, there are some easy things you can make a habit of which will help prevent a fire: Before starting up the furnace for the season, make sure it is clean and in working order. Never leave a burning candle unattended and try to use flashlights instead of candles during power outages if possible. Keep the stove area clean of things that could catch fire and stay in the kitchen while cooking. Do not overload outlets, dispose of items and/or cords if the cord or wire frays, and never run cords under rugs or where they will be walked on.

So when things heat up at home, stay cool because you know how to be safer this holiday season.

Visit the Red Cross at www.redcross.org to find out more facts on how to improve the fire safety of your home and get information on how to get free smoke alarms installed in your home.

<https://mfis.org/fire-stats>
<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/states/michigan.html>

Ashley Bieber MS, is an intern at the Area Agency on Aging Western Michigan. She is currently a graduate student at Grand Valley State University in the public administration and social work programs and previously graduated with a master's in communication. Helping people is a passion of hers. Her goal is to enrich the lives of others and whenever possible, volunteer in the community.

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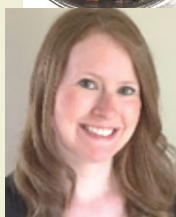
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BY
STACI
GERKEN

AAAWM Eats

Muffin Tin Mini Meatloaf

This recipe is a different take on an old classic that uses a muffin tin which reduces the cooking time. If you already have a family favorite meatloaf recipe, try cooking it this way!

When using a standard muffin pan, this will make 12 mini meatloaves.

Meatloaf:

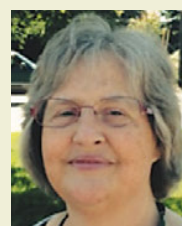
1 lb lean ground beef
 ½ pkg Lipton Onion Soup mix
 1 egg
 1 tablespoon ketchup
 1/4 of an onion, diced
 1/2 of a green pepper, diced
 1/4 of a package of saltine crackers, crushed
 Salt, pepper as desired

Sauce:

1 cup ketchup
 ½ tablespoon onion powder
 ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 ½ tablespoon steak sauce
 ¼ teaspoon thyme
 Salt, pepper as desired

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Mix together all of the meatloaf ingredients in a large bowl. The easiest way to do this is with your hands, but it can also be done with a spoon or fork.
3. WASH HANDS.
4. Using a scoop or spoon, fill the muffin tins about ½ – ¾ full with the meatloaf, evenly distributing the mixture in all of the slots.
5. Mix together ingredients for the sauce and place a spoonful on top of each mini meatloaf.
6. Bake for 20-30 min. until the internal temperature of the beef reaches 160F.
7. Enjoy with mashed potatoes and roasted vegetables!

Staci Gerken is a Registered Dietitian and the Nutrition Contract Administrator at the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan where she works with congregate and home delivered meal partners in a nine-county region.



BY
CATHAY
THIBDAUE

Cathay's Cooking Corner



Eastern Pumpkin Bread

1 15 oz. can pumpkin puree
 4 eggs
 ½ cup vegetable oil
 ½ cup applesauce
 2/3 cup apple juice
 1 teaspoons vanilla
 2 cups white sugar
 3 ½ cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking soda
 1 teaspoons salt
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon pumpkin spice
 1 cup walnuts, chopped
 1 teaspoon nutmeg
 ½ teaspoon ground cloves
 ½ teaspoon ground ginger

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour three 7x3 inch loaf pans. In a large bowl, mix pumpkin puree, eggs, oil, applesauce, apple juice, vanilla, and sugar until well blended. In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, pumpkin spice, cloves, chopped walnuts and ginger. Stir the dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture until just blended. Pour into the prepared pans.

Bake for about 50 minutes in the preheated oven. Loaves are done when toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. If using larger loaf pan, bake for additional 10-20 minutes depending oven and pans. Also makes great muffins and freezes well.

Cathay is the Network Manager, Certified HIPAA Security Professional, Certified Medical Practice Security Professional, Certified PCI-DSS Security Compliance Professional, Certified Healthcare Cybersecurity Professional, and has a Certificate of Leadership in Healthcare Management Proficiency at Senior Resources of West Michigan. She also enjoys boating, fishing, and spending time with her family.



The Four Freedoms



BY
DICK
HOFFSTEDT

On January 20, 1941, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated for an unprecedented third term as President of the United States. Prior to his inauguration, he delivered what was technically the 1941 State of the Union address on

January 6. It was dubbed the “Four Freedoms Speech.”

The “Four Freedoms” had been on his mind for some time. He proposed four fundamental freedoms that people everywhere in the world ought to enjoy. They were Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want and Freedom from Fear.

In the second half of the speech, he lists the benefits of democracy, which include economic opportunity, employment, social security, and the promise of adequate health care.

The first two freedoms -- of speech and religion -- are protected by the First Amendment in the United States Constitution. His inclusion of the latter two freedoms went beyond the traditional constitutional values protected by the U.S. Bill of Rights. FDR endorsed a broader human right to economic security and included the “Freedom

from Fear” against national aggression, which had plagued nations for centuries.

Nobody quarrels with the first two freedoms, speech and worship. It’s the last two that have caused a severe split in our political discourse. Freedom from want and fear? That’s Socialism! Or is it? What is a government for? To collect taxes and provide for a military establishment? Anything the government does could be considered a socialist program.

I look at all of this through an article I wrote for *Senior Perspectives* in the Sep./Oct., 2019 issue titled “We the People.” It focused on one part of the preamble to our constitution which was “to promote the general welfare.” That’s what our founders thought a government should do.

So, I think FDR was on the right track with the last two of his Four Freedoms. Our citizens deserve no less.

Richard Hoffstedt was born to Swedish immigrants in 1934 and raised in Chicago. He is a U.S. Army veteran. He has been married to Shirley for 65 years. Richard has six children, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Richard is an engineer by profession. His interests are music, reading, travel, riding his adult tricycle, Mark Twain and John Steinbeck.

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The Source for Seniors

They're Called "Men's Sheds"



BY
JOY
SPAHN

Many of you are probably familiar with "She Sheds" and "Man Caves" but have you heard about "Men's Sheds"? If not, you're not alone. Unlike She Sheds and Man Caves that provide a place to retreat from the world for a while, Men's Sheds

are just the opposite. The main purpose of a Men's Shed is to bring men, primarily older or retired men, together in an environment designed to encourage social interaction and to "do stuff."

For many men, once they retire they struggle to find a way to occupy their time. Research shows that the rates of depression, loss of self-worth and even suicide, increase as men get older. The primary culprit is increased social isolation. Charlotte. S. Yeh, the Chief Medical Officer for AARP, stated that "One of the biggest issues for men is social isolation, which affects both mental and physical health, particularly in retirement."

Everyone needs to feel they have a purpose in life. That sense of purpose comes in many forms but for a lot of us it comes from our work. It's our work that allows us to feed and house our families. It also provides structure to our days and gives us a reason to get up in the morning. Upon retirement, that familiar structure and routine may no longer be there to guide our days. That's where the Men's Sheds comes in.

The first Men's Shed was started in Australia around 2000. A retired gentleman opened his woodworking garage to local men as a place to gather and work on woodworking projects. The unintended



benefits of his generosity resulted in a worldwide movement and the establishment of Men's Sheds around the world. Currently, there are fifteen Men's Sheds in the United States, two in Michigan and over 2,000 in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the U.K. -- and the numbers continue to grow daily.

You might be wondering by now what exactly is a Men's Shed. It's actually quite simple. It's a place for men, and sometimes women, to work on projects together. Most Men's Sheds offer woodworking, but they can also include metal working, painting, or teaching home repair. Some even offer cooking classes.

Most of all they offer a safe, friendly and accepting environment where members can benefit from a social network, a sense of belonging, purpose, a chance to learn something new, make new friends, have a cup of coffee, and a chance to discuss health and well-being issues with peers. Men sometimes struggle when it comes to talking about personal issues, but when working "shoulder to shoulder" on a project, it's a lot easier. There are many testimonials from "Shedders" as the members of the Men's Sheds call themselves, that report the Shed they attend saved their life after retirement or the loss of a spouse. The Shed gave them a place where they felt they belonged and, at the end of the day, we all need a place where we feel we belong.

For more information on Men's Sheds in Michigan, you can email us at mensshedsowm@gmail.com

Joy Spahn, MPA has over 45 years of experience working with older adults with mental health disorders and persons with dementia and their caregivers. Prior to her retirement in 2019, she was the West Michigan Regional Director for the Alzheimer's Association Michigan Chapter for fourteen years. She has a Master's degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Health Care. Ms. Spahn continues to be a frequent educator and speaker on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias and caregiver issues. Additionally, she is on the Board of Directors for the Men's Shed of West Michigan, an Advisory Board Member for the Michigan State University Michigan Center for Contextual Factors in Alzheimer's disease for the Latino community, and an Advisory Board Member for Grand Rapids Senior Neighbors. Joy can be reached at 616.540.3514 or jspahn7@gmail.com





See your lifetime earnings with My Social Security



BY
VONDA
VANTIL

Did you know you can see your work history online all the way back to your first job? Your earnings history is a record of your progress toward your Social Security benefits. We keep track of your earnings so we can pay you the benefits you've earned over your lifetime. This is why reviewing your Social Security earnings record is so important.

If an employer didn't properly report just one year of your earnings to us, your future benefit payments could be less than they should be. Over the course of a lifetime, that could cost you tens of

thousands of dollars in retirement or other benefits to which you are entitled. It's important to identify reporting problems as soon as possible. As time passes, you may no longer have easy access to past tax documents, and some employers may no longer exist or be able to provide past payroll information.

While it's your employer's responsibility to provide accurate earnings information to us, you should still review and inform us of any errors or omissions so you get credit for the contributions you've made through payroll taxes. You're the only person who can look at your lifetime earnings record and verify that it's complete and correct.

The easiest way to verify your earnings record is to visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount and set up or sign in to your personal my Social Security account. You should review each year of listed earnings

carefully and confirm them using your own records, such as W-2s and tax returns. Keep in mind that earnings from this year and last year may not be listed yet.

You can find detailed instructions on how to correct your Social Security earnings record at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf.

Let your friends and family know they can access important information like this any time at www.ssa.gov and do much of their business with us online.

Vonda Van Til is the Public Affairs Specialist for West Michigan. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 3045 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525 or via email at vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.

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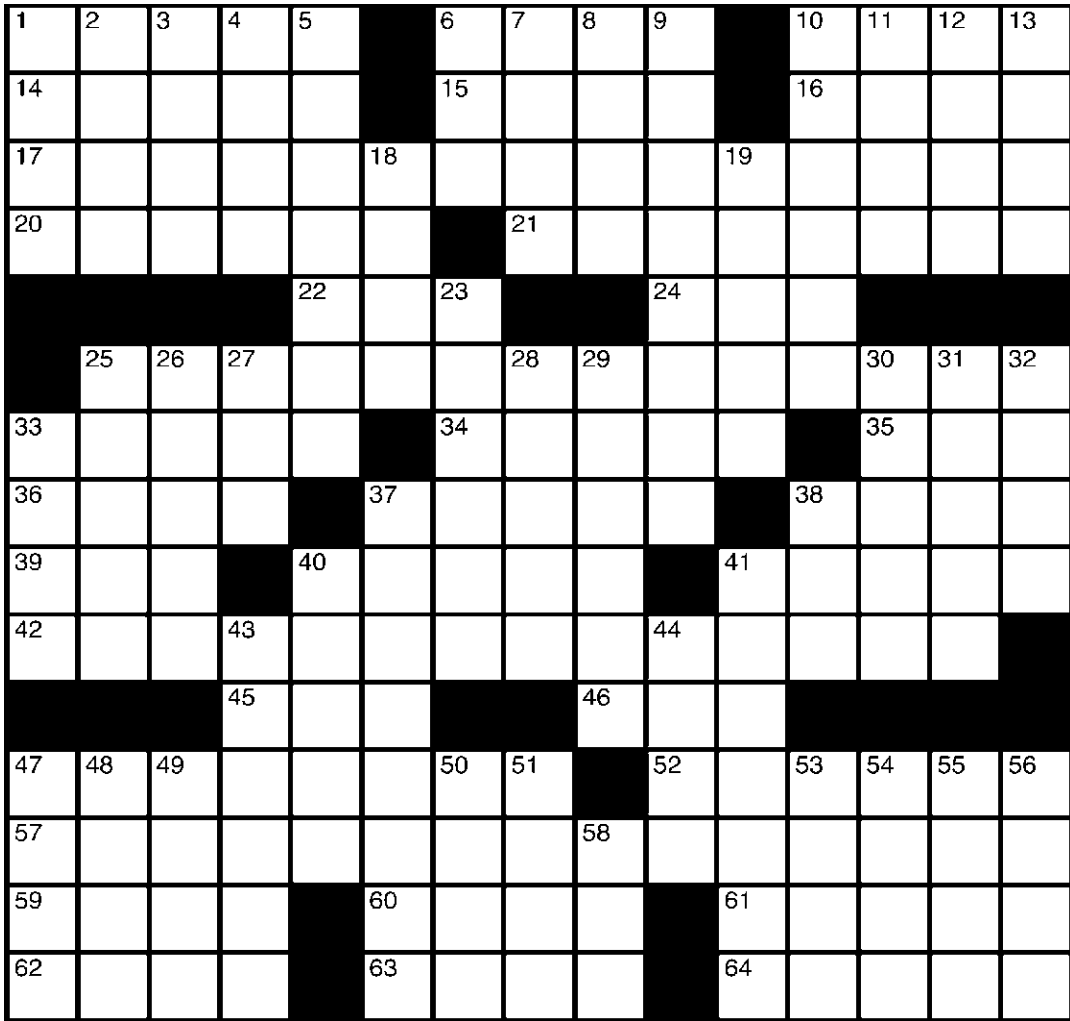
ACROSS

- 1 Rene of "Ransom" (1996)
6 Not as expensive
10 A bit loopy
14 Part of "the works" on a burger
15 Old man, in German
16 Needle case
17 1950 Gloria Swanson film
20 Peanut butter choice
21 Like wax fruit
22 Note from one who's shy?
24 Laser pointer chaser
25 1979 Jim Henson film
33 Get out of bed
34 Jazz instruments
35 Peruvian singer Sumac
36 Squirrel's hoard
37 Credited in an endnote
38 Place to tie up a boat
39 24-hr. cash source
40 Equestrian
41 "That's ___!": "Piece of cake!"
42 1988 Demi Moore film
45 News initials
46 ___ bunt: productive MLB out
47 Looks at closely
52 "John Wick" star Keanu
57 2002 Woody Allen film ... or what
each of the last words of 17-, 25-
and 42-Across can be
59 "Garfield" dog
60 Baseball family name
61 Dalai Lama's land
62 Have a craving for
63 Appraise
64 Clairvoyants

DOWN

- 1 PBS painter Bob
2 E pluribus ___
3 Chinese: Pref.
4 Fair-to-middling
5 Previous
6 Chem class
7 Fair-haired Wells race
8 Flabbergast
9 Chose
10 Actor Danny who appears in
M&M's commercials
11 Run ___: drink on credit
12 Roll and bind, as a sail
13 Laundry soap brand
18 Commandment pronoun
19 Red-wrapped cheeses
23 Positive aspect
25 "The ___ is out there": "The
X-Files" catchphrase

- 26 Blackjack request
27 Handy Scrabble tile
28 Eucharistic plate
29 Applies, as pressure
30 Competing (for)
31 "Know what ___?"
32 Wyatt of the Old West
33 Future MD's class
37 1860s North-South conflict
38 Letter before omega
40 Settle, as a debt
41 Climbs
43 Rental from a renter
44 Tortoise racer
47 Website with step-by-step
instructions
48 "Star Wars" sentence inverter
49 Tiger Woods' ex
50 1970 Kinks hit
51 Chimney residue
53 Actress Falco
54 Vague feeling
55 The "E" in DOE: Abbr.
56 Some NCOs
58 Deserving



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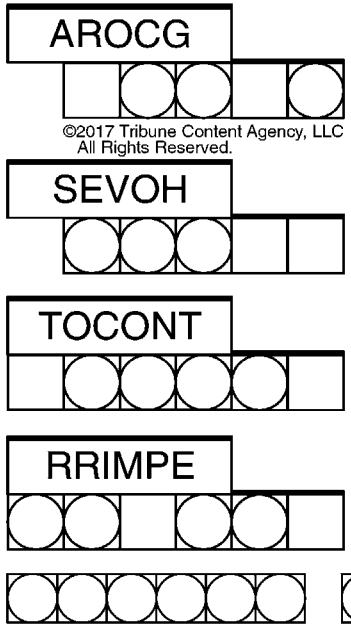


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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters
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suggested by the above cartoon.

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

SENIOR PERSPECTIVES GAME PAGE

Answers on Page 23



By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

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.



12-15-19

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BY
CHRISTINE
WISTROM

Designing Your Disaster Plan

When the Coronavirus crisis hit, many people found their emergency preparations were inadequate. The problem is, Covid-19 is only one of the potential disasters we might face and many of us have not prepared for any of them! I thought it might be worthwhile revisiting how to design a plan for disaster response.

There are many things that can force us into depending on our emergency plan, not just a pandemic. Sometimes we forget that normal life can bring dangers into our circle and threaten us too, such as an accident resulting in a chemical spill, civil unrest, natural disasters, radiation leaks, etc. In those instances, having a plan is our best first response! We may have to survive for days before

help can get to us.

When designing a plan for how to respond to an emergency situation, think about who you can call on for help, no matter what kind of help you might need. Make a list of family members, caregivers, and friends you could call if you needed someone to care for you, transport you, care for your pets if you couldn't, etc. Try to come up with more than one name as you may well have more than one need! If your support network would be expected to come into your home and provide care or do things for you, do they have a key? Do they know where you keep your Advanced Directives for Medical Care paperwork?

If you require special procedures related to your disability, such as dialysis, have



you thought about what you could do if the site has been shut down? Where else could you go? Include in your plan alternative sites to go for procedures, and the people who might be able to help you with transportation.

If you use a service animal, do you have all the supplies you need for it? Keep at least a week's worth of extra food and water on hand for you and your pets. Be sure you have tie-out equipment on hand, and whatever else you need to keep your pet comfortable too.

Do you have identification with you at all times? It may be wise to carry a card with the members of your support group listed, as well as their contact information, your medical condition, medications you are taking and with the dosage, frequency and insurance information.

If you use Assistive Technology items,

do you have back up? For example, if you use a power wheelchair all the time, what would you do if the power went out and you could not charge your battery? It would be a good idea to have a manual wheelchair in storage to use for backup.

The Coronavirus was a wake-up call. We don't know what might happen, but we can make some preparations ahead of time to help get us through the next disaster. I hope you'll take the time today to make your plan. If you need help, please don't hesitate to give me a call! 616-396-5326.

Chris is a Gerontologist and a certified dog trainer who works at Disability Network/Lakeshore in Holland, Michigan. Current interests include assistive technology, veterans' issues, emergency preparedness planning and service dog training.

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Soul Food

The Gifts of Thankfulness

BY
GIL BOERSMA,
M.DIV., B.C.C.

The last two months of the year can seem to pass too fast with all our family activity, friendships, and traditions. It's easy to get caught up in the pace of our lives due to travel, visiting friends and neighbors, shopping, and preparing for special events like Thanksgiving and Christmas, let alone birthdays and anniversaries. Have you ever thought that it's nice to be retired so you can take an easier pace as you plan for the gatherings?

I know that some of us have family who have moved away to obtain jobs, or for schooling that led to jobs in another city or state. We can be thankful for mobile phones and the internet that keep us connected and provide visual chats; the visual part didn't happen for our parents or grandparents!

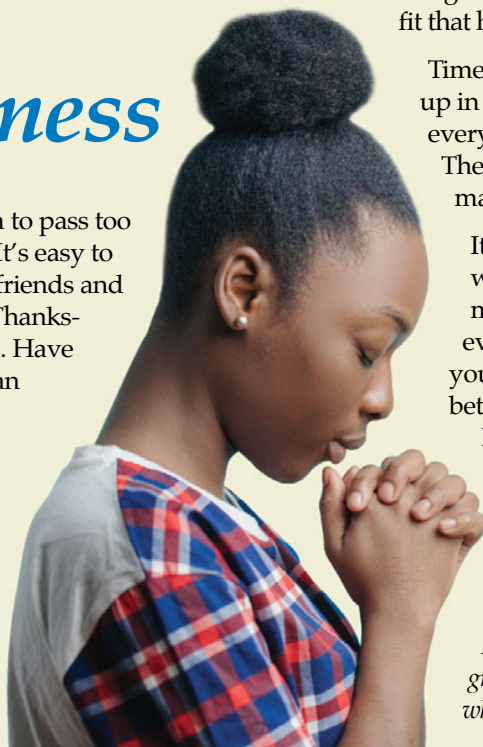
Today's mobile phones are such a blessing, aren't they!? I get nervous if I have left my phone behind or if it's running

out of charge while at a store, event, or when traveling. My Jeep has more than one power cord to charge either my phone or iPad, using that round plug-in space that years ago used to be just the cigarette lighter! Hope you have stopped smoking like I did long, long ago!! Now I have newly invented plugs that fit that hole in the dash -- to create power sources for cords!

Time has always been a gift. Now that I am 71, that gift has gone up in value! Thankfulness has made its way into my conscience every day; and every day my thoughts and prayers come easier. These COVID-19 days have caused us all to assess what really matters in our lives.

It does not matter if your prayers are short, even just a few words. You can pray thoughtfully, without speaking; but don't miss out on praying out loud whenever you desire, and wherever you are. Remember to pause before the "amen" in case you get a response. The wonderful gifts of prayer are how much better you feel, how much easier you breathe, how your needs in life become clearer, how the Spirit feeds you and directs you -- filling your heart with thanksgiving, directing your path for the hours or days ahead.

Rev. Gilbert Boersma, BBA, MDIV, is a retired United Methodist pastor of the (former) West Michigan Conference, and board-certified chaplain. His wife Sara is retired from Muskegon Community Mental Health and offers counseling privately, part-time. Their two sons and three grandchildren also live in Muskegon. Gil offers Spiritual Direction for those who have interest. You may contact him by email: boersmagil71@gmail.com



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BY
JOE
STAPEL

Safety and Security

Property Fraud Issues Targeting Seniors

Fraud Guard is another Muskegon County program to protect Seniors from fraud involving their property or business. This program is offered through the Muskegon County Register of Deeds.

Imagine coming home from vacation to find someone *living in your home!* Someone who says they bought it!

Imagine trying to settle an estate of a senior member of your family and finding out there are loans against the property that you know they never took out against their property. This is Property Fraud.

In Muskegon County there is a free service to protect you or your loved ones from this type of property fraud. It is called property **Fraud Guard** and it is free of charge.

What is Fraud Guard?

Fraud guard is a simple tool that helps protect you or your business from becoming the victim of fraud. Fraud Guard notifies you via email when your name is on a document being recorded in Muskegon County. With Fraud Guard you can stay informed

about how your name is connected to a property.

The FBI reports that white collar crime is on the rise. These are complex schemes involving fraud and theft.

If you live in Muskegon County you can register for Fraud Guard by visiting the Muskegon County Register of Deeds on line at www.co.muskegon.mi.us/deeds.

Click on Fraud Guard in the blue menu and you will be taken to a page to register your email with the County. You will be asked to enter variations of your

name or business name. After registering, a confirmation email will be sent. When the system finds one of these name variations on a document, you will be notified via email with a link to the newly recorded document.

Take advantage of this program to protect yourself against property fraud.

Please stay safe.

Joe Stapel has a degree in Criminal Justice from Ferris State University. He has worked as a police officer for three different agencies in Muskegon County for 20 years full and part time. He also was a Licensed Private Investigator in The State of Michigan for nine years. Joe also worked for the Meijer Corporate Loss Prevention Office in Grand Rapids for 28 years as a Security Officer and as the company's first Safety Specialist. Joe previously worked for Baker College of Muskegon as the Campus Safety Director with a staff of 27 armed officers and eight dispatchers. He worked as the Ordinance Enforcement Officer for Laketon Township in Muskegon County for three and a half years.



Are you a senior citizen?

Are you worried about debt you can't afford to pay?

Are debt collectors calling and sending you threatening letters?

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Debt collectors can no longer communicate with a person represented by an attorney. HELPS is a national nonprofit law firm and charitable organization. We represent senior citizens who have debt they can't afford to pay. We send letters to your debt collectors. This stops unwanted debt collector contact. They can no longer call you or send you demands. You can always call us with questions or concerns. We turn no senior citizen away that needs the help we provide.

HELPS can immediately protect you from harassing debt collectors and bring peace back to your life.

Eric W. Olsen

Eric W. Olsen | Attorney | Executive Director

HELPS
Bringing Peace to Your Life
501(c)(3) Nonprofit

Call HELPS now toll-free at 855-HELPS-US to learn more or visit us on the web at www.helpsishere.org

Martin's Meanderings

It's a Tree Thing



BY
CLIF
MARTIN

I like trees and trees like me. I talk to them and they answer me. I sit under them. I hug them. I take endless photos of them. I have not climbed one lately, but I just might do that. I should be thinking about Christmas trees these days, but I am living in the past summer when my yard was gloriously green. I am blessed with two huge maples just a few yards apart.

I feel a poem coming on. A fellow named Joyce Kilmer from New Brunswick, New Jersey, wrote it in 1886. His first name was Alfred but he is

known by the middle name, Joyce. His poem, "Trees," was published in 1914, just a few years before the U.S. entered World War I. It begins, "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree." The last line says "Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." If you haven't read it or heard it sung lately, look it up. You might want to go out and say nice things to a tree.



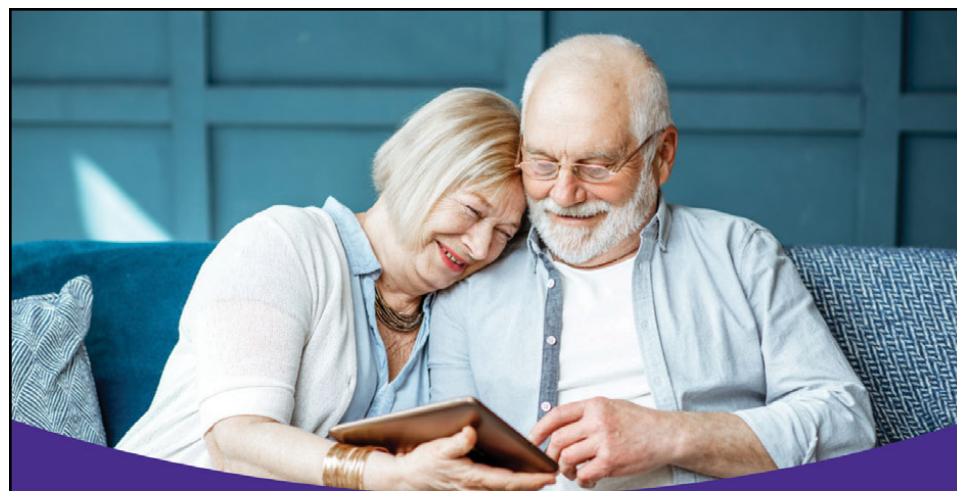
Joyce Kilmer is mainly remembered for that poem, but there is so much more to his life story and his tragic death. He was a well-respected journalist, poet and lecturer. He was compared to G. K. Chesterton, one of the great British writers of the time. Chesterton and Kilmer both wrote enduring Christian works, and Chesterton created Father Brown, the priest who solved crimes.

Kilmer enlisted in the New York National Guard in 1917 and was sent to France. He was killed by a German sniper's bullet at age 31.

I was glad to see that Joyce Kilmer is well remembered in his home state. If you travel to New Jersey you will see his name on a service area, a park, several schools, a museum and a street. North Carolina is home to the 3,800 acre Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest.

Next time you see a lovely tree, thank Joyce Kilmer for writing about it and thank God for making it.

Clif wants you to know that Joyce Kilmer's father worked for Johnson & Johnson and he invented their baby powder. Stay tuned for more important things you need to know.



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ADVOCATES
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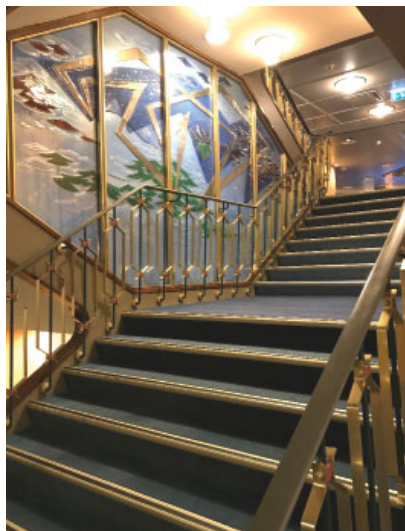
Advocates for Senior Issues is a non-partisan group empowering seniors through education and advocacy. The group meets regularly to advocate, learn, and socialize.

Join us!

**Upcoming Meeting: Friday, November 20
10:00 am via Zoom**

Contact us for more information:

(616) 222-7015 | LaceyC@aaawm.org
Or visit www.aaawm.org/afsi



The Graying Globetrotter A Mid-Century Marvel Lives On



BY
JAY
NEWMARCH

If you are interested in stepping back into a mid-century wonderland, there's no better way to fill the bill than to step aboard the *S.S. Rotterdam*. The ship, which launched in 1958, is now permanently moored in the harbor that provided its name.

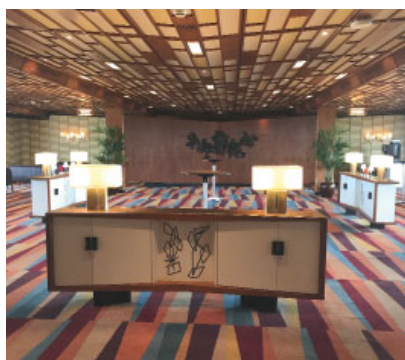
With just a few existing examples left, of the hundreds of ocean liners that once plied the oceans well into the seventies, I knew I had to take advantage of the

chance to see this ship while visiting the Netherlands last year.

Her forty plus years on the open sea was a relatively long career, even though her years as a true ocean liner were relatively short. This was due largely to the fact that by the time she was designed and built, in the mid 50s, air travel was already cutting into the lucrative transatlantic ocean liner business. In fact, she was permanently pulled from transatlantic service just 10 years after her maiden voyage.

But, because her owners, Holland America Line, had their sights on the future, she was designed from the very beginning with an eye on the cruise business. Her conversion for her new world of cruising, involved only a small refit. She sailed the waters as a cruise ship for another 30 years. A popular ship with an impeccable pedigree. The last great ocean liner designed for the great Holland America Line.

Because she was designed as the flagship of Holland America Line's fleet, she was designed to be an ambassa-

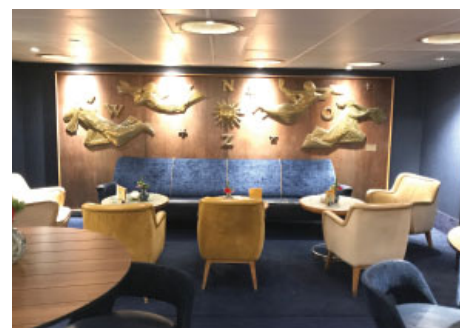


dor of Dutch style and culture. From her beginnings on paper, she was designed to be of the future, not the past. Entering service in the late 50s, she was considered outside the box. But she stood the test of time. Her look and configuration were copied again and again for future cruise ships.

In 1988, Holland America Line was acquired by Carnival Cruise Line, and because of the new stricter restrictions and safety requirements for cruise ships, they considered renovations for the *S.S. Rotterdam* to be too expensive. She was then acquired by Premier Cruises and sailed as the *S.S. Rembrandt* for another thirteen years.

When Premier Cruises went bankrupt and shut down, the ship found herself without an owner or port of call. She was laid up in Freeport, Bahamas, along with her Premier sisters. Without prospects, her future looked grim. But in 2004, she was saved from the scrap heap with an eye of returning her to the Netherlands.

Over the next four years, she was escorted from Gibraltar to Cadiz and then on to Gdansk and Wilhelmshaven as she was restored to her former glory. In 2008, after almost fifty years traveling the world, the *S.S. Rotterdam* returned home for good. Her fans in the Netherlands greeted her as she took her place as the prominent Grande Dame in Rotterdam's harbor.



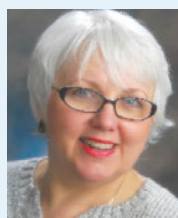
Today, she is a member of the Dutch WestCord Hotel family. Incidentally, WestCord also owns Hotel New York, housed in the restored home base of the historic Holland America Line (HAL). Together, these two encapsulate the long history of Holland America that began way back in 1873. Over that time, countless immigrants, business people and travelers helped to create the history that is

now enshrined in the *S.S. Rotterdam* and the restored HAL offices.

I had the great opportunity to stay on the *S.S. Rotterdam* and then visit this former head office, enjoying a meal in one of the restaurants that are now a part of that building. I believe the Hotel New York is a fitting tip of the hat to this building's one-time history as a temporary place of accommodation for European immigrants en route to their next life.

If you are a fan of ocean liners, travel or history, you will enjoy a stay at either or both of these great examples of ocean travel. Whether to enjoy the history and architecture of HAL's old headquarters, or the beautiful mid-century design and fittings that have been so lovingly restored on the *S.S. Rotterdam*, you are in for a treat. If you find yourself in Rotterdam, don't miss the opportunity to miss these jewels of days gone by.

Jay Newmarch is a marketing professional and graphic artist living in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Jay designs the Senior Perspectives publication for Senior Resources and is an avid traveller who takes every opportunity to visit different corners of the world.



BY
ROLINA
VERMEER

2020 Holiday Plans



Holiday preparations and celebrations will likely be a bit different this year. I'll not be attending big parties and open houses...such a great opportunity to see folks in a relaxed setting and enjoy catching up. And "getting together for lunch" is not on my calendar anymore. Even our family gatherings will be smaller, and most will probably be virtual, for the most part. Life seems slower and simpler now that we've had to be so careful with social distancing and businesses not all running at full speed just yet!

Thanksgiving will be small and simple, I'm sure. Will the traditional community Thanksgiving feast be advisable? We'll see. Likely not in the same festive manner to which we have been accustomed. But I'll still be grateful and feel there is so much to account for in my grateful heart. Gratitude cannot be sequestered.

This year, I'll really miss singing Christmas carols in church and other gatherings, but I'll likely play more music at home. I have wonderful memories of family Christmas gatherings with cousins, all of us gathered around my aunt at the pump organ, singing our hearts out! My mom and dad had beautiful singing voices, as did my aunt and uncle and I think we cousins developed a real appreciation for harmony and the power of music to elevate the spirit! Maybe I'll reconnect my electric piano and practice playing Christmas carols, just for the reminiscing pleasure it brings.

Every year I resolve to send Christmas cards but somehow never get to it to the degree I used to, years ago, before Facebook, email and Instagram greetings. This year would be a good year to resurrect that lovely practice and I'm sure family

and friends would enjoy getting a card in their mailbox. I know I always do.

I'm not so keen to spend time Christmas shopping this year. I'm careful but not generally fearful, however shopping has lost its allure. So this year I am thinking a well-chosen book might be the most thoughtful way to enhance my giving experience, and hopefully the receiver's as well. I was given a lovely book of prose last year for Christmas and have enjoyed it many times throughout the year. When I was growing up a new book of my own was always something I looked forward to.

In those days, our gift giving was done on Christmas Eve. Mom served Christmas treats on her doiled, silver platter and she and dad always enjoyed a glass of port while the children had punch or hot chocolate, all of us dressed up and gathered in the magic light of the Christmas Tree. Christmas morning was reserved for church and then a gathering with cousins where we exchanged homemade gifts and cards and shared a big Christmas dinner! So this year, in honor of those special memories, and to fill our hearts with Christmas magic, I think a glass of port and a Christmas book might be extra special on Christmas Eve!

The end of the year is generally a time to look to the future, perhaps set a few goals and make new plans for travel, recommit to a creative project, maybe a renovation, or (my favorite) updating my reading list!

How will you celebrate your holiday this year?

Rolina Vermeer writes regularly in celebration of the life and inspiration of her mother.

Answers for Word Search, Crossword Puzzle and Suduko on Pages 16 & 17

R	U	S	S	O		L	E	S	S		D	A	F	T
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3	9	6	1	8	7	4	5	2
2	3	8	4	9	1	6	7	5
6	1	4	7	3	5	2	9	8
7	5	9	6	2	8	3	1	4

Boggle Answers:

PIN BALL LANE SCORE SPLIT
SPARE STRIKE ALLEY

Jumble Answers:

CARGO SHOVE COTTON PRIMER

ANSWER:

The plastic surgeon who was known
for leaving no scars
was a — SMOOTH OPERATOR



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