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Senior Perspectives

KENT COUNTY EDITION

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JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2021

Page 4 – Senior Perspectives Awards ■ Page 7 – Kent County Senior Millage
Page 12 – Recipes ■ Page 16 & 17 – Game Pages



JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2021 ■ WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| 04 It's Awards Time!
<i>by Michelle Fields</i> | 08 Long London Weekend
<i>by Jay Newmarch</i> | 12 Senior Perspectives Recipes | 18 Senior Living Communities
<i>by Sheila Carney</i> | 20 Fighting Scammers
<i>by Vonda VanTil</i> |
| 05 Family Caregiver
<i>by Ashley Bieber</i> | 09 In-Home Care
<i>by Carly Whetstone</i> | 13 Little Libraries
<i>by Jerry Mattson</i> | 19 Making it a Good Day!
<i>by Rolina Vermeer</i> | 21 The Price of Fame
<i>by Clif Martin</i> |
| 06 Bits of Wisdom
<i>by Dave Kampfschulte</i> | 10 Family Legacy Trip
<i>by Cindy Hogg</i> | 14 Varicose Veins
<i>by Tarin Paparella, DPM</i> | 19 Create a Smart911 Profile
<i>by Christine Wistrom</i> | 22 Winter Is Wonderful!
<i>by Louise Matz</i> |
| 07 2021 Kent County Senior Millage
<i>by Emily Armstrong</i> | 11 How Can I Laugh
<i>by Kendra Schumaker</i> | 15 New Year's Resolution
<i>by Gil Boersma, MDiv</i> | 20 Social Security Q & A
<i>by Vonda VanTil</i> | 23 Understanding Ageism
<i>by Author</i> |
| | | 16 Game Page | | |

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER WINNER: BETTY MCLEISH OF BARRYTON
The Running Turkey was found on page 14 in the men's shed story.

Letter from the Editor

It's Awards Time!



BY
MICHELLE
FIELDS

I am delighted to share that NAMPA (North American Mature Publishers Association) announced that Senior Perspectives Newspapers received seven National Awards in Excellence during the 2020 National (Virtual) Convention this past October. NAMPA is the only non-profit association of senior/boomer publications, with a membership covering 38 states and two provinces in Canada.

Senior Perspectives submitted several entries this year in various categories. All entries were independently judged by the prestigious University of Missouri School of Journalism, widely considered one of the top journal-

ism schools in the country. Awards were presented in a wide variety of categories, including writing/editing, design, advertising, content, concept, photography, and website excellence.

This year's Senior Perspectives winners are:

- 1st Place - Joe Stapel How-To Feature Article
- 2nd Place - Janet Hasselbring Personal Essay Article
- 2nd Place - Tricia McDonald Column Review Articles
- 2nd Place - Glenn Rutgers Best Overall Use of Photography



Other awards included:

- 1st Place Best Black and White Ad
- 1st Place Color Ad
- 2nd Place Best Use of Color

This year's *Senior Perspectives* Annual Fall Harvest left us in a bit of a predicament. In years past, an informal event provided the entire staff of Senior Perspectives a chance to get together and enjoy warm cider and pumpkin donuts, and a time to present that year's awards. However, 2020 has been a bit unpredictable, and the pandemic caused two cancellations and generated a different type of gathering. With so-



Joe Stapel



Janet Hasselbring



Tricia McDonald



Glenn Rutgers

cial distancing and face coverings in place, this year's event consisted of curbside pickups and front door deliveries. Even though it wasn't our normal get-together, it was wonderful to see almost everyone.

Not all attendees could be pictured this year, but I'll squeeze in as many as possible.

Wishing our readers, a safe, healthy and happy New Year!

Michelle Fields is the Editor & Publisher of Senior Perspectives newspapers and has been part of the Senior Resources team since 2009. She enjoys fishing and camping with her husband Mike and GSP pup Tigo.



Dick and Shirley Hoffstedt



Gil Boersma



Clif Martin



Joel and Merijo Dulyea



Keith and Pam Sipe



Jerry Mattson



Louise Matz



BY
ASHLEY
BIEBER

Confessions from a Family Caregiver

When you sign on and agree to be the caregiver for a loved one, you do it with your heart and not your brain. That decision comes from a place of love. You think you are making an informed decision, but the day will

come where you realize you had no idea what you were signing up for. There is no timeline for when that day will come and it is different for everyone, but it is only human to have that day. It is a day of crisis where you feel alone, trapped in your decision, and you're certain that you cannot do it anymore. At least that is how it was for me.

No one told me that making meals and managing medication was going to mean more than filling pill boxes and cooking. I didn't realize it meant becoming an expert on my loved one's illnesses so I could provide the right meals and medications at the right times and know if they were working. I was told that help is available, but no one told me how to get it or when to ask for it, so I learned to adapt.

Before you know it, what was hard is now easy. It is just simply a new routine. However, the next hard thing is around the corner and some days it is all hard. Some-



how you power through what seems impossible. But in caregiving, there is always another crisis and you're never sure if it is time to ask for help.


A job like that takes heart, and if you're a caregiver I am sure you have been told a million times that you have such a huge heart. But what people don't realize is that it takes more than heart. It takes everything. It is missed meals, body aches, and headaches which may be from the impossible problem solving, lack of sleep, too much or too little caffeine, or simple dehydration. If these words

resonate with you or if a person comes to mind when you read them, then I assure you, it is past time to ask for help.

I recently learned that help is not scary and that the sooner I get help the more options there are. During a caregiver support meeting it was mentioned that if you let others do the things that don't really matter in the big picture, like the grocery shopping, bathing, and laundry, then suddenly you have time again to do the things with your loved one that do matter. You have time to do the things that made the decision to be a caregiver so easy in the first place.

My confession is that I waited too long and now I have less time to do those things with my loved one. My suggestion is not to wait. The day after that day of crisis, where you feel alone, trapped in your decision, and you're certain that you cannot do it anymore, ask for help.


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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BY
DAVE
KAMPFSCHULTE

Bits of *Wisdom* Picked Up Along the Way



There are a few downsides to getting older. I am not as quick as I was on the basketball court. I need to write notes to myself for reminders. I can still pretty much do what I used to, but the aches and pains afterwards are greater and last longer. But on the up side, I think I am wiser.

In my career with teaching and facilitating groups, the subject of wisdom often comes up. How do you define it? How do I acquire it? Can it be taught? It is one of those elusive qualities that is difficult to put a handle on. I am pretty sure I did not all of sudden grow super potent "wisdom brain cells." Or I

can't say that I have been eating or drinking anything special. What happened?

One person came up with, "I think wisdom is the practical application of my accumulated experiences in life." Not a bad starting point. But there is a step that is missing. That step is taking time to *reflect* on what happened, what I learned, and what I would do next time. That reflection is not automatic, it takes a conscious decision and time to do it.

When we are younger it seems like life is like a pinball machine. We are so busy as the flippers constantly bounce us from one spot to another in a seemingly random sequence. But as we get older, we are farther up the hill and can look down, see some of the dots we have visited, and maybe even connect some of them. As psychotherapist Carl Jung wrote, the first half of life is doing, the second half is reflection.

To help jump start this dormant process, I do an exercise with my classes where I ask them to complete the following sentence, *As I have gotten older, I have come to realize _____*. Participants often start off by saying, "This is different. I never thought about this before."

Of course you haven't! Our education system is built around receiving information and regurgitating it on a test so you can move on, and doing it all over again. Now and then we might get a parent saying to us when we were little and had screwed up and were sitting in time out, "Think about what you just did!" But that was about it.

I have had plenty of time to reflect on what I have learned, as I do this exercise right along with my groups. Here are a few of my greatest hits:

- I have learned that I can't control what happens to me. I can only control my reaction to it. That was a hard one, because I like being in charge. Being in charge means I get to run the show, or so I thought. I can only choose my attitude

along with my reaction.

- It is the small things in life that count. I ran into a former student years later. He said I was one of his favorite teachers. Lucky for me I learned a long time ago to ask "why" he thought that. My mind was patting myself on the back of whatever enlightenment I may have provided him, while waiting for him to respond. He simply said to me, "You smiled all the time." It is true I do smile a lot, but after that I did it with the wisdom of knowing that there was an effect to my small effort of smiling.
- I often limit myself with self-talk that goes like this. "I can't do this because: I am stupid. clumsy, it is rigged, I am shy, or I might fail." These are messages about ourselves that chances are we have all received over the years. Part of wisdom is taking the time to revisit them and edit these messages as needed so you are very sure of what you believe about yourself, your beliefs, and the world.
- Go to the funeral. Never realized that until people came to the funerals of my parents and sister. You don't have to say anything. Having seen you was a huge booster shot of support when I really needed it. Thank you! It is really a twofer. It has the added plus of getting you more acquainted with what we are all going to face – death.

The list is endless. Try completing *I've Come to Realize* by yourself, with a friend, or dedicate a group Zoom session to it. I guarantee you a very interesting time and I think you will come to realize that you have indeed picked up quite a few bits of wisdom along the way!

Additional Reading

Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart
Gordon Livingston

Becoming Wise
Krista Tippet

Kitchen Table Wisdom
Naomi Remen

Dave Kampfschulte has been a hospice volunteer for 32 years with Spectrum Health Hospice and Harbor Hospice. He is the founder and Director of Amazing Circle Workshops and is the author of I'm Dying to Talk with You: 25 years of end of life conversations. He can be reached at dave@amazingcircles.net



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How Can the 2021 Kent County Senior Millage Help You?



BY
EMILY
ARMSTRONG

If you live in Kent County, then you likely pay the senior millage tax, but you may not know much about it. What happens to these funds after taxpayers pay them? This is where the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan comes in. We administer the millage on behalf of Kent County, ensuring that funds go to programs that positively impact older adults in the community. The Kent County Senior Millage (KCSM) has helped fund vital services for older adults in the county since 1999 with the goal of enabling them to stay in their homes and communities as they age.

About the 2021 Millage...

Kent County residents approved a renewal and increase to the millage in August 2014 and it is currently in an 8-year millage cycle. **For 2021 there is over \$12 million in place to positively impact seniors' lives.** The 2021 funding will support a variety of services throughout Kent County with special attention to priority services; which includes meal delivery, transportation, in-home services, adult day, and outreach and assistance. For 2021 there are 34 agency partnerships and 56 unique services funded with an additional 26 purchase of service agreements in place, all coming together to provide resources for older adults in need. Services such as these, and the variety of others in place for 2021, not only give older adults the ability to remain independent, but they also come alongside to support the care that families and friends are providing to their loved ones during this crisis and beyond.

So, what does this mean for you?

For Older Adults

If you are an older adult 60+ in Kent County and find yourself struggling, then the KCSM is there to help. Services directly benefit you and the wide variety of partners and programming means there is likely a resource available to meet your unique needs. **Over 50% of KCSM funding goes towards priority services for the most vulnerable older adults to help maintain their care and independence in their own homes.** Priority services include adult day care, home-delivered meals, in-home care, and transportation. Other services provided by the KCSM are home repair, care management, outreach and assistance, adaptive equipment, wellness programming, dental, vision, home chores, senior center staffing, and more. Each year, special attention is paid to making sure the various services all come together in the most efficient way possible so that gaps in care are eliminated and older adults are given the resources they need to best thrive at home.

For Caregivers

The KCSM also works to support caregivers. If you are feeling overwhelmed by the care of an aging or disabled loved one, services provided by the KCSM can help to ease some of this burden. Services come alongside you to support the vital care you give and can provide much-needed relief. This could be in the form of transportation to doctors' appointments and the like, respite (companionship or assistance for your loved one while you are away), respite certificates (to be used at adult day centers), and various support groups.

COVID-19 Senior Support

With the current COVID-19 crisis, these services are more important than ever to the seniors

who rely on them. Our Older Americans Act and Kent County Senior Millage Partners have stepped up to the challenge of continuing to serve seniors at this time. COVID-19 support services have included home-delivered meals, virtual support groups, check-in phone calls, and vital in-home care. Through wellness checks via phone, partners can determine client needs and deliver essential items to those who are isolated due to coronavirus. Not only does this aid those who may be home-bound, ensuring their health and safety, but it can also relieve some of the burdens from the caregiver as well.

How to Get Started...

To begin the process, reach out to the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan at (616) 456-5664 or email aaainfo@aaawm.org. Our team would be happy to connect you to the support that is the best fit for your needs!

You can find out more about the KCSM at www.aaawm.org/kcsm.

Emily Armstrong is the Public Relations and Communications Specialist at AAAWM. 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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The Graying Globetrotter

A Long London Weekend



BY
JAY
NEWMARCH

In 2018, I found myself with an opportunity to visit London, England, in early June. I was able to purchase a reduced-price ticket on KLM and did a little online research to find a small, boutique hotel. I prefer to have some of the amenities of a major hotel, but without the impersonal, crowded atmosphere.

I found a small hotel in a row house in Pimlico. A London neighborhood, Pimlico is a residential area outside of London proper, but still close enough to many things you'll want to see. The Eccleston Square Hotel is located just a short distance from Victoria Station where you can catch a bus, train or access the London Underground.

I landed in London late at night and had booked a driver ahead of time. He was unfamiliar with the hotel, but with a little work we found it. I climbed into one of the most comfortable hotel beds I've ever had and went instantly to sleep. The next morning, I knew I had chosen well. It was great to wake up in a quiet neighborhood, grab breakfast and then walk a couple of blocks to Victoria Station.

And, bonus, the hotel gets its name from a private garden square across the street from the hotel. While the garden is only accessible to owners who have property surrounding the square, because the hotel is family owned, they have a key which guests can use to gain access. As if the neighborhood wasn't quiet enough, you can wander the private garden and find a nice place to sit and relax.

Fun fact, London covers more than 45 square miles, but the actual City of London is only 1.1 square miles. If you stay in any of the surrounding neighborhoods, it's entirely possible to walk to most destinations. Partner that with an Underground or bus pass and you can get anywhere you want to. It can seem daunting, but by the second or third day, you'll feel at home. In fact, on my third day, I was actually approached and asked for directions. The fun part was that I was actually able to give them!

On my treks from my hotel, I'd head out in different directions, depending on what I wanted to see. One mile in one direction took me to the Knightsbridge area. Home to high-end shopping, restaurants, stately Victorian homes and garden squares, it's a great place to gawk. I had purposely



headed that direction to celebrate my birthday with a trip to the Victoria & Albert Museum. The museum itself is a crown jewel. I was told that it was built for Queen Victoria to house all of her wedding gifts. It's something to see.

In the same area is the famous Harrod's department store. Even if you don't plan on doing any shopping, be sure to visit. An incredible piece of architecture with amazing design inside. I was definitely out of my element, but it was worth the trip. I even decided to dine at one of their restaurants. They have several with price points at all levels.

I had planned on visiting Buckingham Palace, but found out on my first day in London that I had arrived just ahead of the Queen's yearly Trooping the Colour birthday celebration. While her actual birthday is in April, the monarch's birthday is always celebrated in June as the weather is more

conductive to outdoor events. Well, that day was just beautiful. I left the hotel early and walked to palace, which was just under a mile walk from my hotel.

Trooping the Colour is a highly choreographed production. Military on horseback, guards marching in unison and the royal family on display. It's quite something to behold and many do. I decided to arrive early in the morning to take in the area and find my place. There were already crowds lining Buckingham Palace and the Mall. The royal family leave Buckingham Palace and, by horse-drawn carriage, travel down the Mall to inspect the troops. I watched as Duchesses Camilla and Kate left the palace, then Meghan Markle, along with Prince Harry, made her first of only two appearances at the Trooping of the Colour. Lastly, the queen, alone in her open carriage, headed down the Mall. After quite a wait, everyone returns to the Palace, including the troops, culminating with the royals on the balcony of the Palace watching a flyover of military plans and jets. What luck that I happened to be there that weekend!

The Mall runs alongside St. James's Park. After the Trooping of the Colour, with massive numbers of people attempting to get out of this small space, I headed for the park. I had enjoyed its quiet serenity the day before. That day, however, it was swarming with people. But using it to head away from the crowd worked like a charm. I was able to head over and out into one of the surrounding and much quieter neighborhoods.

While that's hard to top, London is a great city to visit. In all directions, there's history to see. I took in all of the famous sites like Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Big Ben and Westminster. Tower Bridge, an old Victorian Bridge is further down the River

Thames. I actually took the underground to Monument station to London Bridge from which you'll get a spectacular view of Tower Bridge. That reminds me, make sure to take a cruise down the Thames. It's a great way to really take in some of the great London architecture from a different vantage point.

While I had close to four days in London before heading out to explore the south of England, it was not nearly enough time to enjoy all that London has to offer. I definitely plan on returning at some point to resume my tour.

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
CARLY
WHETSTONE

What Is In-Home Care?

Navigating options as a loved one's needs change can be overwhelming and confusing. However, with a few good insights, the decision between in-home care options can become much more approachable.

What is in-home care?

In-home care defines itself: care that is hired to come into your home. This is most commonly thought of as just housekeeping, but it can also include keepings such as private duty nursing care, help with personal care (taking a shower, using the toilet, etc.), meal preparation, and companionship among others.

Private Duty Care

To get in-home care, you may need to hire a private duty care agency. There are LOTS of agencies in Kent County and all across

the state, and each offers something a little different from the next. Things to keep in mind while "shopping" for an agency are: what your budget is (most range from \$20-\$30/hour), what your needs are (they may only do housekeeping, for example), and that some agencies require a minimal number of hours before they will send someone out.

Care Management

Care Management is a program that offers a nurse and social worker to take care of your in-home care arrangements. Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and Reliance Community Care Partners both offer care management programs to those who are 60+ and in need of assistance with personal care, homemaking, and/or in-home respite, as well as ongoing management of their care. This program is funded by both the Kent County Senior Millage and the Older Americans Act. Most indi-

viduals who participate in this program qualify for services at little to no cost.

MI Choice Medicaid Waiver

This is a long-term care program that provides services to individuals in the community to prevent or delay nursing facility placement. It offers in-home care including personal care, home modification, medication management, nursing services, and more. It's a great and very inclusive program for those who are at a nursing home level of care, have Medicaid, and meet financial criteria. Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and Reliance Community Care Partners both share this program as well.

Home-Delivered Meals

Most counties have some form of home delivered meals program, and in Kent County we rely on Meals on Wheels of Western Michigan and Kent County Com-

munity Action. Both programs require a person to be 60 or older, to live in Kent County, and to be considered homebound. For those who are not homebound, both agencies also offer congregate meal sites.

Kent County Senior Millage

In addition to these programs, the Kent County Senior Millage offers a directory that includes information on several other resources such as adult day centers, transportation, legal assistance, and more! These programs and services (list can be found at aaaw.org/kcsm) are free or provided at a reduced cost.

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



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**Kent County
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Is It Time to Plan a Family Legacy Trip?



BY
CINDY
HOGG

There are trips and then there are family legacy trips. What is a family legacy trip, you may wonder? Simply put, it is any trip you take with your grandchildren that shares and builds a sense of family history with them.

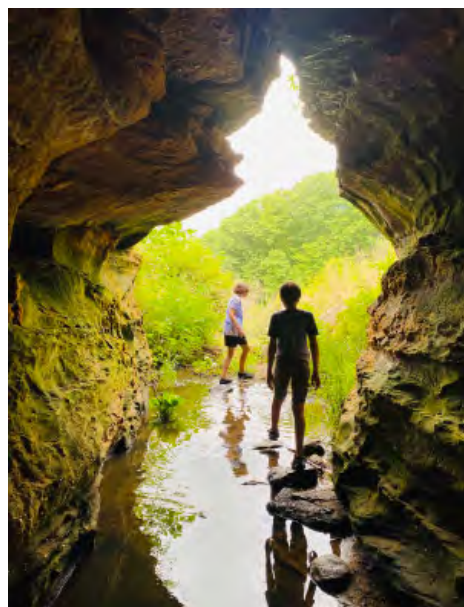
Did you know that studies have shown that children who have a strong sense of family are more resilient as adults? Parents obviously play an important role in developing a strong sense of family but these same studies show that grandparents provide a deeper and broader connectedness to the family narrative. Add to this the fact that grandparents often have more time and opportunity available than busy parents, and your role becomes apparent.

In a previous issue I described a trip my husband and I took with our 10-year-old grandson to Bastogne, Belgium, for the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. We saw the tree planted in memory of my father-in-law, and heard and met people he actually knew when a tank gunner in World War II. It was a dramatic, once-in-a-lifetime kind of trip.

But family legacy trips don't have to be on that scale. This past summer I took three of my grandchildren (ages 8-12) on a tour of my childhood in a small town in northeastern Ohio. We stopped at the two homes I lived in during the course of my childhood, and drove by schools and the church.

But most important, I took them to all my favorite haunts, including the waterfall in the center of town, the stone bridge and caves at the end of my road, and down to the Chagrin River to catch crayfish. I taught them how to catch crayfish the same way my mother taught me: carefully lift a rock and place your cup right behind any crayfish you see because they always shoot backwards!

At one point I said to my grandchildren, "Do you know who you're meeting today in this river?" Because of COVID, we had chosen a spot where no one else was around, so they looked around perplexed. "My mother," I told them. They smiled and, I think, understood. By nightfall, my 12-year-old granddaughter had proclaimed



my childhood as "the childhood of her dreams." Imagine how good that felt! I have told them stories from my childhood but actually taking them to my hometown made the stories come alive.

This past Father's Day, our best friends took their 7-year-old grandson on a fishing trip because they have such fond memories of fishing with their dads. They didn't go to any of the same old "fishing holes" but as they completed the familiar tasks of baiting the hooks and casting, they shared stories that made their own fathers come more alive to their little grandson. They thought it a fitting way to spend Father's Day—and I agree!



Patricia Washburn of Omaha has a different take on a family legacy trip. In 2017 her husband, Marlyn, a former high school principal, died of breast cancer at the age of 66. Devastated, she decided to carry on his legacy of education. She professionally wrapped his last car, a 2014 Dodge Dart, with his picture and information about how men can also develop breast cancer. She often takes one of her grandchildren with her on her educational road trips. Along the way, she shares stories about her husband—their grandfather—to keep his memory alive*.

But what if you can't travel or even get together with your grandchildren? Does it mean a family legacy trip is beyond your reach? By no means! All it takes is a little creativity—and maybe mutual access to the internet. Explain to your grandchild that you are going to take a "trip down memory lane." Bring out old family pictures. If they're not already in albums, work on organizing and putting them in albums while sharing related family stories. If you're far apart, share the photos and stories over the internet.

Have you done a DNA test? They're easy to do and fairly inexpensive. Perhaps this is the time to introduce your grandchild to genealogy—and a little "armchair travel." Trace your family roots and then explore the countries your ancestors may have come from. There is so much information on the internet and you can personalize it with family anecdotes which you—and maybe only you—might know.

We grandparents have an important role in sharing and grounding our grandchildren in the family history. There are *so many* ways to do this—so why not start planning your family legacy trip today!

*https://omaha.com/livewellnebraska/health/one-mile-at-a-time-omaha-woman-raises-awareness-about-male-breast-cancer-after-husbands/article_83ce9480-f0dc-5f6e-9963-8fd6c74d3d9.html

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

Humor in Caregiving

How Can I Laugh at a Time Like This?



BY
KENDRA
SCHUMAKER

When we think of caregiving, very rarely do we think of laughter. After all, it is laughter that brings us back into the joy of the present moment, usually in an unexpected way. Famous actor Bob Newhart once stated that, "Laughter gives us distance. It allows us to step back from an event, deal with it, and then move on." Isn't that just what we need as a caregiver? As a family caregiver, it is often too

common to leave our sense of humor behind. After all, what is funny? At serious times, we tend to focus on the sickness, disability, or care needs of the person we love. Research has shown us that even in the grimmest situations, laughter and humor are good for us.

Finding humor in our day will allow us to lighten up, relax, and become more likely to find an improved mood. Many studies have shown that laughter is good for our health. Laughter is life's natural relaxant. When we laugh our whole body relaxes. Our immune system is boosted, and antibodies are increased which defend our body against abnormal cells. Blood flow to the heart is increased, providing a better air exchange, which oxygenates the entire body and is a very good thing for our brain. This natural blessing also helps us deal with the challenges of caregiving and can help protect you, a caregiver, from a heart attack. Laughter also is a natural form of exercise for many of our large and small muscles including facial, thoracic, abdominal, and pelvic muscles. If we are optimistic about our daily activities, it is likely we will be better prepared to find the blessings in our caregiving journey. Humor can help us do this by shifting our focus off ourselves and on to other people. Laughter often is the best medicine. Laughter is contagious and helps us connect with others, especially the one we are caring for.

We have all heard the saying, "I laughed so hard I cried!" It turns out that there is strong evidence to support that these emotions are much more closely related than we once thought. *The Magic of Humor in Caregiving* by James

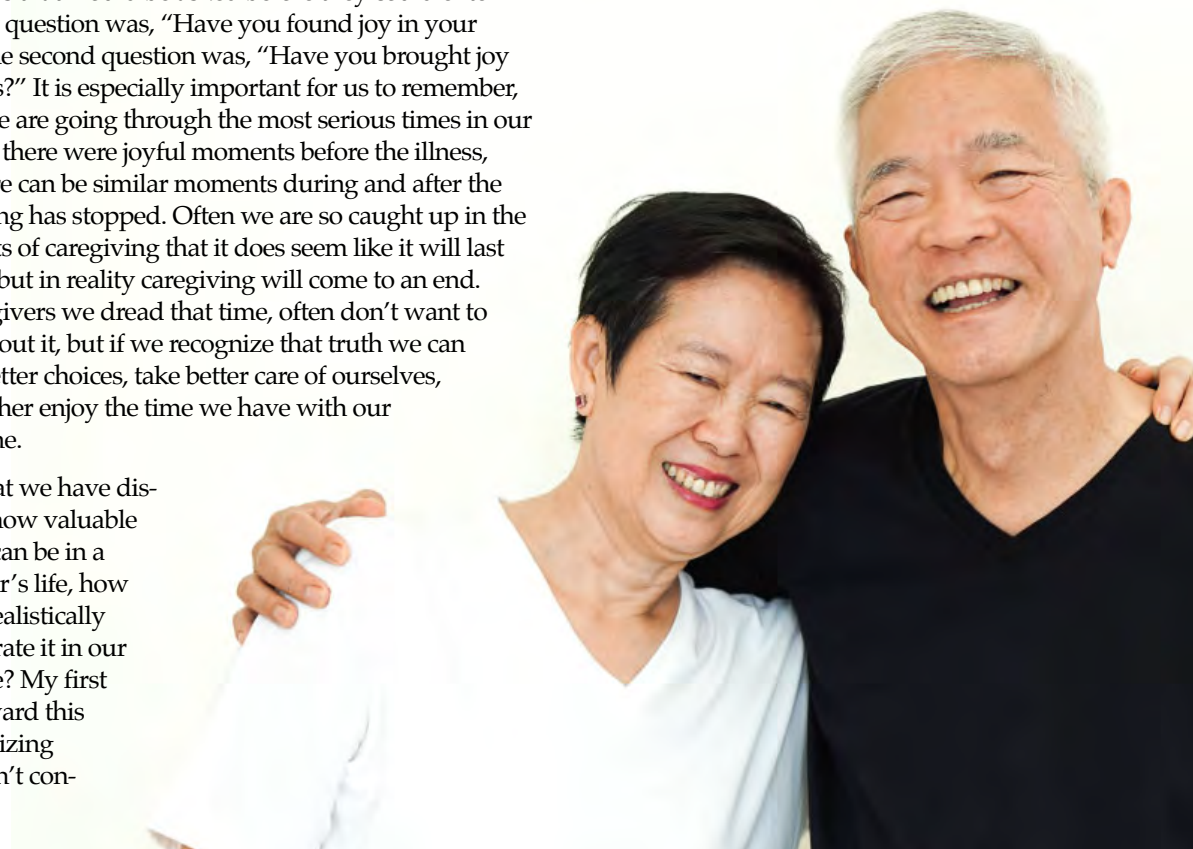
R. Sherman discusses the therapeutic effects of humor in the caregiver situation. In his book, there is a story about an adult son who gave his father (whom he was caring for) a Super Soaker. The two ended up laughing and playing in a way that they had not done in years. It was a way for the father and son to connect in a very intimate, yet non-verbal and very powerful way. This was especially important for the adult son, because his father had lost many of his word-finding abilities due to dementia. In that time of play his son really felt that he and his father were "on the same page." Often as caregivers, we miss the reassurance from our care recipient that we are doing a good job. We want reassurance that they know who we are, and that they know we love them.

If you have seen the movie *The Bucket List*, you may remember the discussion of the ancient Egyptian belief that when their souls got to heaven, there were two questions that would be asked before they could enter. The first question was, "Have you found joy in your life?" The second question was, "Have you brought joy to others?" It is especially important for us to remember, when we are going through the most serious times in our life, that there were joyful moments before the illness, and there can be similar moments during and after the caregiving has stopped. Often we are so caught up in the moments of caregiving that it does seem like it will last forever, but in reality caregiving will come to an end. As caregivers we dread that time, often don't want to think about it, but if we recognize that truth we can make better choices, take better care of ourselves, and further enjoy the time we have with our loved one.

Now that we have discussed how valuable humor can be in a caregiver's life, how do we realistically incorporate it in our daily life? My first step toward this was realizing that I can't con-

trol the world around me, nor can I control my mother's physical health. I can do everything I can to help her on her life's journey, but ultimately I am not in control. This is where people often turn to their higher power for help. Next step: Be nice to yourself. Use positive self-talk, treat yourself as you would your best friend. Don't always notice what you have not done as you think you should, instead focus on your best. Live as though you want to have "no regrets" with your caregiving at the end of your journey. Realize that this journey is uniquely yours. Learn to laugh now, rather than waiting for "someday" to laugh about life's little quirks. Don't take yourself too seriously. Think about creating a file of funny jokes, special cards, and other positive reminders that your time on earth as a caregiver will ultimately be brief, although sometimes it may not feel like it! Lastly, make time for a special friend(s) to spend time with. Fill your emotional bucket whenever you can and remember that without you, your loved one would have a deep void in their life. You are special. You are important. Take care of yourself.

Kendra Schumaker has 27 years' experience working in the field of aging. As former caregivers, she and her husband, Brian, realized the need for an additional resource for Home and Community Based Care. As a result of this, SarahCare Adult Day Center opened in 2008 to families of West Michigan. Kendra is a Certified Dementia Practitioner, facilitates several support groups locally, and is the Ambassador to West Michigan for the Alzheimer's Association. Kendra's passion is not only Home and Community Based Care Services, but specifically Caring for the Caregiver!



AAAWM Eats



BY
STACI
GERKEN



Homemade Chicken Broth

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 whole chicken, approx. 3-5 pounds | 2 onions (white or yellow), quartered |
| 2-3 pieces of celery | 1 teaspoon black peppercorns |
| 2-3 carrots, cut into large chunks | 2 bay leaves |
| 5-6 cloves of garlic | |

1. Place all of the ingredients in a large stock pot (8-12 quarts) and cover with water. Check the chicken cavity first and remove the pouch with giblets if it was included.
2. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for 3-4 hours. You can add more water as some evaporates during the process.
3. Take chicken out and pull meat off the bones. This meat will be very tender and flavorful and can be used in soup, salads, or any other chicken dish you have planned.
4. At this point your broth could be done, but if you have time, return the bones to the pot and boil for 1-3 more hours.
5. Strain the broth to get out the bones, veggies, and seasonings. I like to use a slotted spoon to scoop out the big chunks and then dump the rest of it through a colander with a towel on the bottom that will strain out any leftover pieces of food. The veggies at this point will be very mushy and should be discarded.
6. Let the broth cool. What I am not using for cooking in the next 1-2 days, I place into mason jars in 1 and 2 cup quantities and put in the freezer to enjoy over the winter months.

I also make smaller quantities of broth with my "Broth Bag" method. This is a bag I keep in the freezer where I put any veggies or extra meat that are nearing their expiration date. When the bag is full enough, place the contents into a pot and follow the steps listed above. With this method, I use a smaller pot (usually a 5 qt size) and do not use the chicken later in another dish. All of the ingredients are discarded after I've strained and stored the broth.

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



Quick Chicken

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 package (6-8) chicken tenderloin strips
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh basil, divided
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, or more to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup chicken stock

Heat olive oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Add to skillet and cook until no longer pink in the center. Remove chicken and place on a plate. Add garlic to skillet and cook for about 30 seconds. Add the honey, chicken stock, balsamic vinegar, and half of the basil; stir. Bring mixture to boiling, stirring, for one minute. Add chicken back to mixture and cook for one more minute. When serving, garnish with the rest of basil. Serve over rice or pasta, or with a side salad.

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.

Little Libraries



BY
JERRY
MATTSON

In May of 2020, about three months into the pandemic, I ran out of books to read. With the public libraries and Goodwill stores closed, along with no yard sales being held, my sources for used books had dried up. I had seen stories on the

Little Free Libraries in the area, but never visited one. Now was the time.

I chose the one in Whitehall located near the Chamber of Commerce building at the south end of the causeway to Montague. I picked up two books there and left three of mine. The ones I got were both writing related. *The Cutaway* by Christina Kovac was about crimes covered by a TV news crew. The other, *The Boys on the Bus*, was about the press covering presidential campaigns during the 1960s and 1970s. Different times and places, but both worth reading.

This Little Free Library was maintained by the Lions Club. To find one near you, go online with littlefreelibrary.org and search by city or zip code. The map for Muskegon had 20 locations. I clicked on a couple of them and a photo of the little library showed up along with the latitude and longitude for its location. I guess that lets you find it with a GPS, which I haven't tried yet.

The second one I visited was the Rocket Exchange Library located at the east (garden supplies) end of the North Muskegon Meijer parking lot. Here, I picked up *Power and Empire*, a Tom Clancy book, written by Marc Cameron. This was a fat paperback with 627 pages, but with many businesses closed I had the time.

I visited little libraries six times and found something worthwhile on three visits. Ruling out Reader's Digest Condensed Books, children's books and romance novels, my choices were sometimes limited. I did end up reading books I would not have normally selected, but the situation forced me to try something new.

The Pines, by Blake Crouch was a pretty quick read while *The Dante Club* by Matthew Pearl was not. I put this one aside while I read another book, then had to start again, rereading about 30 pages.



The non-fiction book *Bloody Falls of the Coppermine* by McKay Jenkins covers the murder of two Catholic priests in the Arctic barren lands of Canada's Northwest Territories in 1913. Two Eskimos were charged in the case and had to be transported hundreds of miles south to face a trial in Edmonton, Alberta. Nothing happens quickly and outcomes are unpredictable in this book.

Book sources are now back open, but that does not mean I will never visit a little library again. I keep a few books in my car for trading stock. If the spirit moves me, I'll stop again. Sometimes the adventure starts with the selection of a book from the limited supply.

Think of these little libraries as rest stops for traveling books. I read *On Dangerous Ground* by Jack Higgins and found "Brown Memorial Libr. P. O. Box 24 East Baldwin, Maine 04024" rubber-stamped on its last page.

Jerry enjoys reading non-digital books and has been reading about one each week for the past few years. Some he keeps, but most he donates to libraries, both large and small, or to Goodwill stores.

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Varicose Veins

How to tell and what can be done



BY TARIN
PAPARELLA,
DPM

A common cause of leg swelling is varicose veins with venous insufficiency. Veins are part of the blood flow system that carry deoxygenated blood from the tissues back to the heart and lungs to pick up new oxygen. Arteries are vessels that carry oxygenated blood from the heart and lungs to the tissues. As we age, the valves in our veins begin to wear out, and it's the valves

that help prevent backflow of the blood as it moves against gravity from the legs back up to the heart. Bad valves allow the blood to pool in the veins, causing swelling. The more fluid or venous blood sitting in our legs, the more swollen they appear. Over time the veins take on a twisting worm-like shape, blue in color, and that is what we call varicose veins. These veins are near the surface of the skin because they are part of the superficial system. There is also a deep venous system, but these typically do not cause problems.

Another thing to look for is brown patches of pigmentation on your skin called hemosiderin deposits. The iron in your bloodstream leaks out of the veins when the blood pools and deposits in the skin, causing discoloration. This discoloration is usually permanent. A similar concept is your skin turning a dark color when you have a bruise after an injury. However, bruising goes away as the body reabsorbs the iron. This does not happen in venous insuffi-



ciency because the blood continues to stay pooled in the legs. In severe venous insufficiency, the legs may become so swollen the skin can no longer stretch enough to accommodate the swelling. Clear fluid then begins to leak out of the skin causing an open sore or ulceration.

But good news! There are treatment options for this condition, with the mainstay being compression therapy. Compression socks come in over the counter (15-20 mmHg) or prescription strength (greater than 20 mmHg). You can have open toe or closed toe, knee high or thigh high. Some have zipper or Velcro closures. However, those are typically not covered by your insurance and are difficult to find. You should consult with your family doctor before trying compression socks because it is dangerous to wear them with certain health conditions.

Unna boots are also an option but will need to be applied by your podiatrist or wound care specialist. Unna boots are medicated compression wraps worn for about four days to reduce swelling. They are one of the most common treatment options for patients with open ulcers on their legs due to venous insufficiency.

Other treatment options are vein stripping or sclerosing procedures, which can be performed by a vascular surgeon. Obtain a referral from your family doctor or podiatrist for a consultation. Further testing is needed to see if you are a candidate for these procedures.

Dr. Tarin Paparella is trained in both forefoot and rear-foot reconstructive surgery, correcting conditions such as bunions, flatfeet, and traumatic injuries. She is physician at Shoreline Foot & Ankle Associates with offices in Muskegon, Fremont, and Ludington. www.shorelinefaa.com

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Soul Food

New Year's Resolution

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

I find the tradition of making a New Year's Resolution a thoughtful idea but hard to keep. However, if you are inspired, as in a spiritual awakening, it would not matter what day or month it was, you would have great motivation to follow through. If you have great courage, just do it! If you want to seek a special friend or relative with whom to share the inspiration, in order to get some feedback before starting, go ahead. Keep in mind, the Spirit has given you a personal direction, and therefore the Spirit will be with you for guidance every day, and your faith will grow step by step.

If you are unfamiliar with the inspiration I have shared above, you can look for books or other teaching material that introduces "spiritual formation." If you have a relative or a special friend with whom you love to discuss just about anything, meeting with them may be a better start.

Walking is a great interruption from quiet reading or television at home. I often see a lady who uses a walker with wheels taking long walks in our neighborhood. I know you will be reading this article in the winter, and the icy side-

walks are something to avoid. However, when they are dry, and if you have good footwear, it can be very refreshing, especially if the sun is out! My wife and I do not have a fenced-in yard, so I have to take my dog for numerous walks daily, and he loves the winter! I often walk on the terrace (where the grass grows between the sidewalk and the street) when I am wearing hiking boots in the winter; it's much more comfortable.

Do you struggle with decisions? Have you been feeling discouraged about your life, or concerned about relationships for which you have been praying? If you can still walk, and the weather looks sunny; put on good walking shoes/boots plus your winter clothing and take a walk outside. Notice how it helps your mood, clears your mind, and inspires you about decisions which need to be made. The walk does not have to be long and walking regularly will lift your spirit. Wear your mask for your safety, and the air you breathe will be warmer. Peace be with you.

Rev. Gilbert Boersma, BBA, MDIV, is an Elder in the United Methodist Church, and a retired board-certified chaplain. His wife Sara is retired from Muskegon Community Mental Health and offers counseling privately, part-time. Their two sons, one daughter-in-law and four 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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ACROSS

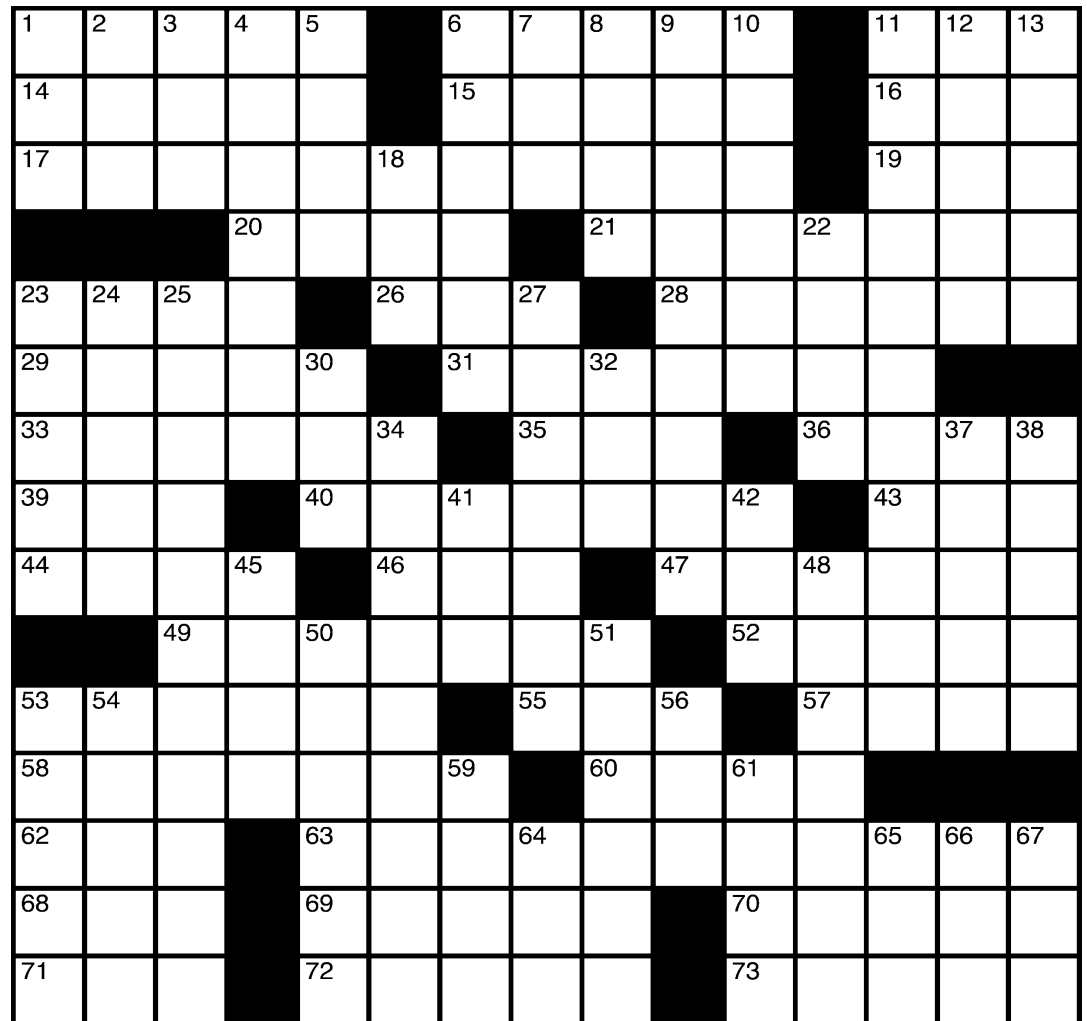
- 1 Seminary book
- 6 E-cigarette output
- 11 Media-monitoring org.
- 14 ___-proof: easy to operate
- 15 How the cheese stands, in a kids' song
- 16 "___ be in touch!"
- 17 *Fruity ice cream treat
- 19 Be litigious
- 20 Grandstand group
- 21 Cough syrup, e.g.
- 23 Chad or Rob of movies
- 26 Practical joke
- 28 Lacking a downside
- 29 Immobile
- 31 Chafing result
- 33 Smart set member
- 35 "Great Leap Forward" Chinese leader
- 36 Storybook fiend
- 39 Upside-down sleeper
- 40 Fixed, like the ends of the answers to starred clues
- 43 Put a jinx on
- 44 Messy roomie
- 46 Nourished
- 47 House speaker Nancy
- 49 Luggage tie-on
- 52 Shops with slicers
- 53 Gondolier, e.g.
- 55 Deviate from a course, at sea
- 57 MASH shelter
- 58 Declares to be true
- 60 Carpentry wedge
- 62 Nautical pronoun
- 63 *Knock one out of the park
- 68 Afternoon social
- 69 Chopin piece
- 70 Marble mineral
- 71 Write "mispell," say
- 72 "Jurassic Park" critters, briefly
- 73 Well-known

DOWN

- 1 Highchair wear
- 2 Wash. neighbor
- 3 TSA checkpoint container
- 4 Shoes sans laces
- 5 Sicilian volcano
- 6 Seven Sisters college
- 7 Tyrolean peak
- 8 C-SPAN figures, informally
- 9 French crockful with a cheesy crust
- 10 Captured back
- 11 *Place for rural anglers

12 Crossword hints

- 13 Checkout worker
- 18 "Life of Pi" director Lee
- 22 Common jazz combo
- 23 Tree branches
- 24 Shaq of NBA fame
- 25 *Won 10 in a row, say
- 27 2/2/20, for Super Bowl LIV
- 30 Many coll. lab instructors
- 32 Roll of bills
- 34 Egyptian queen in Tut's time
- 37 Amber, for one
- 38 Be
- 41 Like fresh nail polish
- 42 ___ XING: crosswalk sign
- 45 Restrain, as one's breath
- 48 Captive's plea
- 50 Worked together perfectly
- 51 Serious cuts
- 53 Keep moist, as turkey
- 54 [none of the above]
- 56 Grinch victim
- 59 Zap with a Taser
- 61 Somali-born model
- 64 Pointless bother
- 65 Squeal on the mob
- 66 Rugged vehicle, for short
- 67 "Game of Thrones" patriarch Stark



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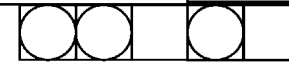
PILGRIM
MANOR

A United Church Homes Community

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HURES

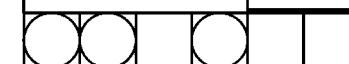


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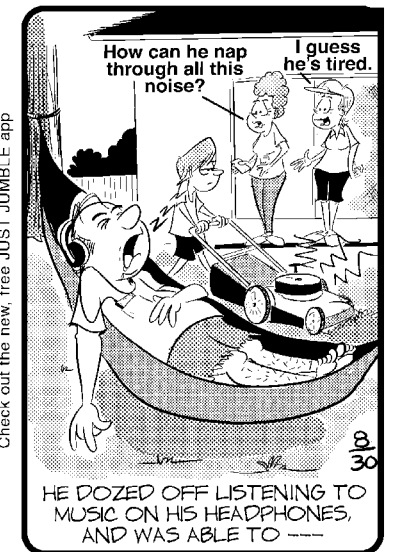


DSOETD



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



HE DOZED OFF LISTENING TO MUSIC ON HIS HEADPHONES, AND WAS ABLE TO ---

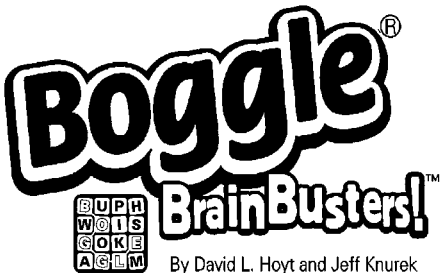
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



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

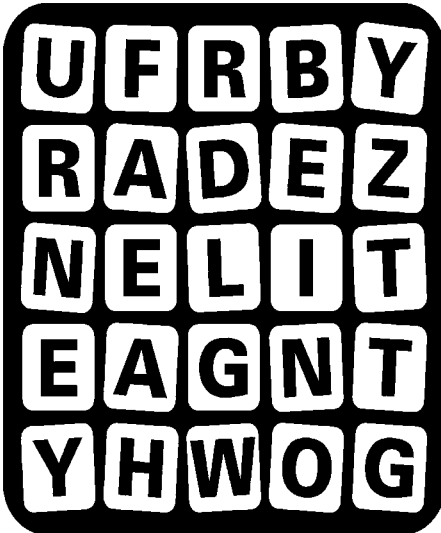
SENIOR PERSPECTIVES GAME PAGE

Answers on Page 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.

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6 letters = 4 points	31-60 = Gamer
7 letters = 6 points	21-30 = Rookie
8 letters = 10 points	11-20 = Amateur
9+ letters = 15 points	0-10 = Try again



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BY
SHEILA
CARNEY

Tips to Consider When Looking for a Senior Living Community

Whether we like it or not, winter is here. How wonderful

would it be to forget about the stresses of shoveling snow and ensuring paths and driveways are free from ice? That is why so many seniors move to an independent or assisted living community this time of year.

• **City or country?** You know instinctively whether you are a city person or country person at heart. Especially as we age, everyone wants to feel comfortable in familiar surroundings. If you love nature and the outdoors, you'll want to choose a community with scenic, peaceful surroundings and the ability to sit outside and relax. Likewise, if the hustle and bustle of an urban setting feels more

like home to you, you'll want to seek out a community in a downtown locale close to shopping, restaurants and more.

• **Community life and activities.** Make a list of must-have attributes and activities that are most important to you. If you know you need access to golf, gardening or a hobby room to be happy, you'll want to select a community that meets those requirements. As you research communities, you will see a wide variety of amenities and features that are nice but not mandatory to one's health or well-being. Figure out what your non-negotiable requirements are so that you can immediately eliminate communities that don't meet your needs.

• **Levels of care.** We don't like to

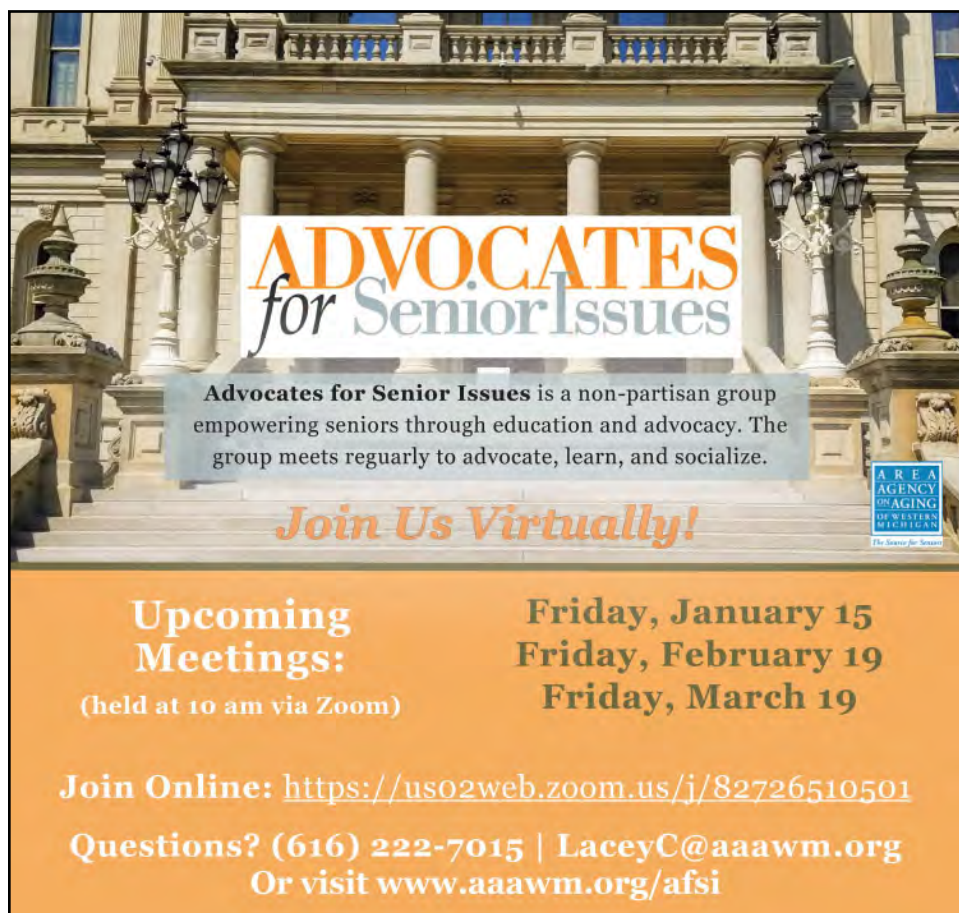


think about it, but there may come a time when we all need a little more help getting around or accomplishing daily activities. Every assisted living community is unique, and some only provide assisted living accommodations while others offer varying levels of health-care services that you can step up to as needed. If health care needs change or short-term rehabilitation care is needed, are those services available within the community or do residents need to move elsewhere? These are important questions to ask up front.

• **Proximity to family.** You want your own place to live where you'll be well looked after as you age—but you

also want to be close to family. Does it make sense to choose an assisted living community near where you live, or closer to where your kids and grandkids live? Many individuals opt to settle down in a community that is welcoming to visitors and makes it easy for them to pop in and see you.

Sheila Carney is the Marketing Director for United Church Homes - Pilgrim Manor in Grand Rapids, MI. Helping the senior population is a passion and conviction of Sheila's. Her goal is to enrich the lives of families during the aging process; to give guidance and support. For more information, call 616.940.5498 or www.unitedchurchhomes.org/pilgrim-manor/



ADVOCATES
for Senior Issues

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 Virtually!

Upcoming Meetings:
(held at 10 am via Zoom)

Friday, January 15
Friday, February 19
Friday, March 19

Join Online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82726510501>

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Making it a Good Day!



BY
ROLINA
VERMEER

Last year was a tumultuous year. Every New Year, especially this one, is welcomed with the promise of better days ahead. Looking back, I know most of us have done our best to

count our blessings and realize all the ways life is still good for us. And that's good! Still, we all crave "getting back to normal."

There's the rub, as the bard would say. My doubts are that we will ever have the life we had before the global pandemic, the politicizing of almost everything and the insecurity that comes with both. Those of us with positive, upbeat attitudes are exhausted and the negative nay-sayers have exhausted everyone around them and themselves as well.

So, I resolve, in this New Year, to light a candle every day to remind myself to intentionally send out hope and compassion and love into the world. It's very powerful! Even as I write these words, my spirit lifts and I shift into a gentler, kinder frame of mind.

My mother's early life was not easy, living through the five horrific, hungry years of the Nazi occupation of her birth country. After the war, she was challenged to learn a new language and new way of life in a country foreign to her as she and my father emigrated to the United

States. But she found her way and created the best and most beautiful life she could.

My mother's outlook, her language and her daily mantra came from the Psalms: **This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Psalm 118:24** In her last years, as dementia and physical limitations took hold of her, this verse came easily to her lips. I watched carefully as she navigated difficult moments and confusing situations and came to rest in that verse. I believe it soothed her spirit and wrapped her in a special kind of peace and love.

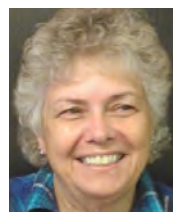
Mom was a big fan of David Hartman. Remember him as a host of Good Morning America? At the end of every episode, as he signed off for the day, his send-off was, "**Make it a good day!**" I had occasion to speak with him and tell him how my mother had raised us with that attitude and he was delighted to hear it! "Empowering us was his goal," he said. Rather than passively taking what the day doled out, empowering ourselves to make it a good day might net more significantly positive results!

I think he's right. I know my mother thought so.

In that spirit, I am going to light my candle every day and enter this New Year with the empowering spirit of making each day a good day and rejoicing and being glad in it.

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

Do Something Smart for Yourself: Create a Smart911 Profile



BY
CHRISTINE
WISTROM

If you don't do anything else for yourself this year, perhaps you'll consider creating a Smart911 Profile. Smart911 is a program for anyone who wants first responders to have up-to-date, accurate information about them in the event of an emergency. You decide what information you want entered into your Smart911 Profile. Then, if a call goes out, your information is automatically pulled up so the dispatcher has it on hand immediately and can relay it to first responders. You create your profile with as much or as little information as desired.

Smart911 is a national service, so your Smart911 Profile travels with you and is visible to any participating 9-1-1 center nationwide.

Your Smart911 Profile can include information about:

- The people living in your household
- Phone numbers associated with your family
- Pets, service animals, and livestock
- Medical conditions and allergies
- Medications and medical equipment
- Property details, layout, and utility information
- Vehicle descriptions
- Emergency contacts

You can create your Smart911 Profile by going online to www.Smart911.com. It helps if you have the following information to enter into your profile before you start:

- Blood type
- Allergies
- Medications (not specific names, but types of medications such as beta-blockers, etc.)
- Others who live in your household
- Pets (names, species, and how many)
- Detailed directions to your home
- Any other information you want first responders to know

It takes approximately an hour to complete your profile, and if you're not good on the computer, it may take some persistence. If you'd like help entering your information into your profile, Disability Network/Lakeshore is available to help! Please call 616-396-5326 and ask to speak to Chris.

Chris is an advocate for the elderly 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.



Question: I want to sign up for a Medicare Part C and D plan, but I'm not sure which plan I want. Is there a resource to help me find a plan?

Answer: Yes. Medicare.gov has an online plan finder and instructions available on how to use this tool. To access the Medicare Plan Finder, please visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan/questions/home.aspx.

Question: If I retire at age 62, will I be eligible for Medicare?

Answer: No. Medicare starts when you reach 65. If you retire at 62, you may be able to continue medical insurance coverage through your employer or purchase it from a private insurance company until you become eligible for Medicare. For more information, read Medicare at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs, or call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Question: I have medical coverage through my employer. Do I have to take Medicare Part B?

Answer: You are not required to take Medicare Part B if you are covered by a group healthcare plan based on either your employment or the employment of a spouse. When



BY
VONDA
VANTIL



your coverage ends, you may contact Social Security to request a special enrollment for Medicare Part B. We will need to verify your coverage through your employer in order for you to be eligible for a special enrollment. For more information, visit www.medicare.gov.

Question: I lost my Medicare card. How can I get replacement?

Answer: The easiest and newest way to get a replacement Medicare card is by using your my Social Security account. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount for more information on how to create an account. You also can get a replacement Medicare card by calling us toll-

free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Keep your card in a safe place. You don't want anyone getting hold of your Social Security number. They could steal your identity.

Question: I'm 65, not ready to retire, but I want to apply for my Medicare coverage. How can I do that?

Answer: The easiest and most convenient way is to apply online. Use our online application to sign up for Medicare. It takes less than 10 minutes. In most cases, once your application is submitted electronically, you're done. There are no forms to sign and usually no documentation is required. Social Security will process your application and contact you if we need more information. You'll receive your Medicare card in the mail. It's convenient, quick, and easy. There's no need to drive to a local Social Security office or wait for an appointment with a Social Security representative. Get started today at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/medicare.

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.

Three ways to fight scammers who target your Social Security benefits

Scammers are always finding new ways to steal your money and personal information by exploiting your fears. The most effective way to defeat scammers is to know how to identify scams and to ignore suspicious calls and emails.

One common tactic scammers use is posing as federal agents and other law enforcement. They may claim your Social Security number is linked to a crime. They may even threaten to arrest you if you do not comply with their instructions. Here are three things you can do:

- Hang up right away or do not reply to the email.
- Never give personal information, money, or retail gift cards.
- Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov immediately to Social Security's law enforcement team at the Office of the Inspector General.

You should continue to remain vigilant of phone calls when someone says there's a problem with your Social



Security number or your benefits. If you owe money to Social Security, we will mail you a letter explaining your rights, payment options, and information about appealing.

There are a few ways you can identify a scam call or email. Remember that we will never:

- Threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other

legal action unless you pay a fine or fee.

- Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.
- Require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card.
- Demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem.
- Send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

If you do not have ongoing business with our agency, it is unlikely we will contact you. Again, if you get a suspicious call claiming to be from Social Security, you should hang up and report it right away to our Office of the Inspector General at oig.ssa.gov.

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.

Martin's Meanderings

The Price of Fame



BY
CLIF
MARTIN

What could turn a sweet old guy like me into a cranky sourpuss curmudgeon? It was early August, and we had a bit of a cold snap. I was trying to get warm. My tendency to get cold might be a throwback to the strange promotions and appearances I got into when I was a big radio star.

Have you been in a doghouse on the ice? There I was on frozen Anchor Bay of Lake St. Clair over on the Southeast side

of Michigan. As far east as you can go without getting wet or being in Canada. It was an annual fishing event. My job was to sound warm and friendly for the vast WDOG listening audience. I told them to come on down, cut a hole on the ice, drop a line and pull out a big fish. There was a Miss WDOG but she was not there to keep me warm. Most fortunately, the ice held up and I am here to tell the tale.

WDOG is now "Big Dog Radio" in Allendale, South Carolina. I don't know if they have the Doghouse or ice to park it on.



From Southern Michigan to North Montana. In radio you go where there is a job. The dry cold wasn't that bad. But Midge and I had a rattlesnake to deal with. So, it was back to Michigan as far west as you can go without getting wet. High humidity but no rattlers in the yard.

February. 20 degrees. Downtown Muskegon. Playing a calliope on a pickup truck.

An annual winter thing which I think they still do. The only song I remember playing is "Here Comes the Showboat." It just seems like that's what calliopes are for.

Summer in Michigan was warmer but no kinder. I found myself in a media putting contest. That has something to do with golf. First and only time on a golf course. Apologizing to one of the LPGA ladies who asked what I was doing there. Thank goodness there's no photo of me swinging a putter.

Oh, the terrible price of fame.

Clif says he is grateful for the old timers who remember his good radio days and forget the bad ones.



Who can help keep you
safe at home?



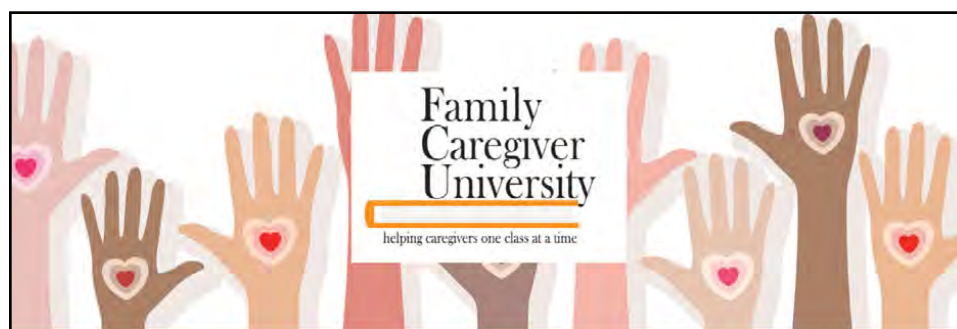
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About: Family Caregiver University (FCU) provides practical education and support to caregivers in West Michigan, one class at a time. With the current coronavirus crisis, we realize this support is now more important than ever so classes are being offered virtually.

Classes are currently being held virtually:

From 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Further details & schedule at www.caregiverresource.net



Registration Required:

Call: (616) 222-7032

Email: registration@aaawm.org



Winter Is Wonderful!



BY
LOUISE
MATZ

I love a fresh snowfall, especially the wet snow that sticks to all the trees. It's a beautiful sight. The ground is covered with a clean, white blanket. The trees are dressed for a wedding. And, if a cardinal shows up against that white backdrop, it's pure eye candy! What's not to like?

Winter cold causes us to cherish a hot drink. It suggests we sit by the fireplace and read a book. Winter

cold invites us to stay in bed a few extra minutes in the morning. It encourages us to enjoy home-made soup, a hot toddy, and other comfort foods. Winter turns off the sunlight early, making us feel perfectly justified to retire to bed at 7:00 p.m.! Again, what's not to like about



winter? No yard work. No sunburn. No mosquitoes. No beach sand. No ants.

So, is there anything wrong with winter? **Only that it is far too long!**

November and December are great months for winter. They fit well with our Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Of course we want snow for Christmas. But three more months is overkill. We can do without it. Most of us will come down with a bad case of the "Februarys."

If you can't travel to a warm destination, here's my first recommendation for a cure: Select four vacation spots, one for each week in February. Then select a day to spend immersed in that vacation spot. Pick up a book

or brochure at the library or at a travel agency or go on line. Spend the day checking out the highlights of the area and choosing what you would do if you were there. You could invite a friend or a family member to join you either personally or remotely. You may even want to take photos and share with others.

My second recommendation is similar. Most of us have enjoyed many vacations and most of us have oodles of photos. Select one of those trips. Dig out the photos. Notify people that you will be re-taking the trip on a particular day. Would they like to take the trip again with you? Use Zoom, or Facebook, or other options to review and share the memories of this trip. What did you enjoy the most? What would you do differently? Would you go back again? I guarantee it will be uplifting and afterwards you will be ready to select your vacation trip for the next week.



After four weeks of "vacation trips," the "Februarys" will be behind you. The worst of winter is over. Next comes March with a few inspiring hints of spring. Congratulations, you made it through another Michigan winter!

Louise has been writing for Senior Perspectives for over ten years. She

enjoys family time, reading, walking, biking, and golf. Pickleball and mahjongg have been added to the list since retirement. She also loves to join her husband for turkey hunting and fishing in the Florida Keys





BY
LISA
TYLER

Understanding ageism is the key to combatting it

Jokes about “senior moments.” Comments about two “old men” running for president or a virus that “only” affects the old and ill. Referring to some as “still” driving.

Most of us have done or said one of these things, or more. They are the more subtle forms of ageism. Many of us are aware of ageism in housing discrimination, forced retirements, and job demotions. We don’t necessarily think of those comments or jokes as ageism—but they are.

When COVID-19 was in its early stages in 2020, you may have heard that it “only affects the elderly and the ill”—a statement that those people are less valuable than others.

Ageist statements are concerning, but not at all unusual, according to Ashton Applewhite, author and speaker on ageism. She recently spoke to a virtual audience at the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and said that almost everyone is ageist—“no judgment.”

Where it becomes concerning is when someone won’t use a walker or cane they need because of the associated stigma. When we do not realize that experience is an asset, not a liability, that is a problem, Applewhite said. We should realize what the true concerns are; it isn’t the wheelchair, it’s the stairs that don’t allow you access that are the problem, she said.

A poll earlier this year found that more than 80% of 2,000 U.S. adults aged 50 to 80 said they had experienced some form of ageism—messaging, portrayals of older adults as unattractive or worthy of ridicule, assumptions that they are technology-challenged or have poor memory, and more.

Also concerning was the one-third of respondents who indicated they have negative beliefs about aging. “They think that being lonely is an inherent part of aging, and that depression and worry are unavoidable and just a natural part of aging when research actually shows that they’re not,” said Julie Ober Allen, a postdoctoral research fellow at University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, which conducted the poll. The good news? About 80% responded that they have a strong sense of purpose, and 2/3 said life after 50 is better than they expected. And older adults contribute a great deal to our country’s economy, and are a great resource in the workplace. They care for grandchildren, volunteer often, vote, and often work well into their “golden years.”

Help us reframe the message. Watch yourself for ageist language. (I know I was guilty about talking about two old white men running for president, and I have joked about memory loss coming with aging, although I should know better.)

A key message is that experience is an asset, not a liability. Fact-based views of aging, rather than fear-based, are healthier for all of us. As Ashton Applewhite reminded us in her talk, “Fools come in all ages.”

For more information on ageism, visit thischairrocks.com, or oldschool.info.

Lisa Tyler is the Communications Director for Senior Resources. She and her husband Aaron are the proud parents of Hannah, a sophomore at Hope College, and Nicholas, a recent graduate of MSU. Lisa is also a proud alumnus of MSU, loves scrapbooking and travel, and being involved in her community. She is treasurer of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Board of Education, chair of the Kids’ Food Basket Muskegon advisory committee, and a member of the Muskegon Rotary and Greater Muskegon Service League.

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

B	I	B	L	E		V	A	P	O	R		F	C	C
I	D	I	O	T		A	L	O	N	E		I	L	L
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1	6	7	2	4	9	8	3	5
6	1	9	4	5	2	3	7	8
8	7	2	3	1	6	4	5	9
3	5	4	8	9	7	2	6	1

Boggle Answers:

TIGER WHALE HYENA OTTER
DINGO ZEBRA

Jumble Answers:

USHER YIELD PLUNGE ODDEST

ANSWER:

He dozed off listening to music
on his headphones, and was
able to — SLEEP SOUNDLY



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- Information & Assistance
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- Medicare/Medicaid Assistance
- Nursing Facility Transition
- Adult Day Services
- Congregate Meals
- Counseling
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Services are funded through Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Michigan Aging and Adult Services Agency and the Kent County Senior Millage.