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Senior Perspectives

KENT COUNTY EDITION



JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2020

Pg. 7 – Why It Pays to Volunteer ■ Pg. 11 – The Power of Communication
Pg. 12 and 13 – Game Pages ■ Pg. 23 – Social Security Q & A

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Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
Information & Assistance

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Mission:

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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NOV./DEC. WINNER: STEPHANIE KENNEDY OF GRAND RAPIDS
The Tom Turkey was found on page 15 in the maze story.

A First Responder Guide for End of Life Conversations



BY
DAVE
KAMPFSCHULTE

In my role as an educator, hospice volunteer, and Making Choices Michigan facilitator, I have had the privilege of working with hundreds of patients and volunteers. On a parallel path, I have discovered something I had not anticipated. I have become known as the “expert” on death and dying in my circle of family and friends.

The overwhelming fear of death in our society often inhibits a person who is terminally ill from starting a conversation about death, even though inside they desperately want to. They may have had the opportunity to talk with a social worker, but sometimes that is not the case. So the fallback is for someone else – and it might just be you – to fill that gap by initiating that conversation. It will even be more likely if you have had a hospice experience in your family and you are now seen as the go-to person or, as I say, a first responder. The potential to be a first responder is endless. Most of us would be happy to start the ball rolling, but just need a few guidelines to assist us.

Over the years, I have developed a check list of what to cover in a conversation regarding end of life decisions with a patient and family.

- Acceptance of prognosis – How does the patient’s reality match up against what the physician is saying? After the preliminaries, my opening is always, *“I understand things have changed and the doctors have said that cure is no longer an option. Is that your understanding?”* This sends the message that it is OK to mention death and bring it up in a conversation. If the answer is in the affirmative, then it is easy to proceed. If denial of the situation exists, it may not be time yet.
- Denial can be further explored with statements like, *“This is what I am seeing, (hearing, feeling.) How does that compare to what you are experiencing?”*
- My next question is, *“If your time is limited, how would you like to spend your remaining days?”* For my dad that opened the door immediately. He emphatically told me that he did not want to be in a nursing home, or in a hospital. He wanted to be at home. That was breakthrough moment, because he clearly communicated what he wanted. He just needed someone to ask him or, as I say, be “invited into the conversation.”
- This is a perfect lead in to: *“In order for your family to do everything in their power to make that happen we need to have a plan because I know you might feel pretty good right now, but when people are terminally ill, things change in a hurry*

and without a plan, one is just reacting when that happens. You may not end up getting what you want. Together we can make that plan. Would you like to explore that?”

- *“Part of that plan involves hospice care which can help you stay at home. I am curious, what is your concept of hospice?”* Having them talk about their concept, rather than me explaining it right away, provides me with the opportunity to find out what their misconceptions are.
- Do they have an advance directive or have they named a patient advocate? If not, time in the near future needs to be spent in that area.
- Is the family on the same page? It is not uncommon to have two camps – one to let nature take its course and the other to do everything possible to keep the patient alive. A simple, *“Help me to understand your thoughts on this”* allows others to articulate their reasons and, more importantly, their feelings.



- Finding out the group dynamics is helpful because it is going to take all involved to work as a team. Is the patient a take-charge planning type of person or a procrastinator? Are they open to talking about themselves and expressing their needs or are they more reserved? Who is the go-to person in the family who gets things done? All this is helpful to know as the plot unfolds.

Once that inventory is taken, it is hoped that all involved have had a chance to talk and ask questions. The wishes of the patient are laid out in the open and reality of approaching death has been brought into the conversation. The end result is that meeting with hospice is not so intimidating and they can go into it with

knowledge and a list of questions.

Take a look at the inventory questions. One does not have to have extensive hospice experience to initiate a conversation like this. Anyone can do it with the attitude of listening and non-judgment. Talking about death is an unknown experience for many. The reaction to this is fear and avoidance. Before turning down your potential award-winning role of first responder, think of all the unknowns you have faced in your life – almost everything. How did they come out? I bet you there are more positives than negatives. You can do it!

*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 *Ym 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.*



BY GIL
BOERSMA,
M.DIV.

Soul Food

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Luke 6:31 NRSV

It's time for New Year's resolutions, isn't it? The big confession from me is that this past year I have had trouble forgetting the words or actions from others that have hurt me most. I have done a lot of walking and thinking with my dog, Pastor. (Yeah, no kidding!) To “pastor” means to gather and to feed. Appropriate for my dog, an Icelandic sheepdog. I found him here in Michigan on a working farm, sheep and all.

Thankfully, the Spirit came through with an admonition for me, words like these: “So, what are you going to do about it?” (i.e. New Year's resolution) Well, the best thing we can do about our troubles, and care for our spirit at the same time, is to pray for the thing, or the challenge, or the person whose words or actions have most troubled us. It is amazing how this approach can remove your burden and prepare you for renewed friendships, or bring wisdom for future encounters for the days ahead.

It is true, we may never discover how our prayers and actions changed things in the lives of others, especially since as “seniors” we all are closer to the end of our journey on earth. However, I'd like my journey to continue in this life, and in the life to come. I'd like to be a blessing to the people, animals, and creation I meet. How about you?

Barack Obama moved to the South Side of Chicago after college. “I spent month after month working with church folks who simply wanted to help neighbors who were down on their luck—no matter what they looked like, or where they came from, or who they prayed to. It was on those streets, in those neighborhoods, that I first heard God's spirit beckon me.” (taken from *Barack Obama - His Essential Wisdom*, Fall River Press, NY, 2016, p. 110)

Rev. Gilbert Boersma, BBA, MDIV, is a retired United Methodist pastor and board certified healthcare chaplain, living with his wife Sara, in Roosevelt Park. Sara is retired from Community Mental Health and offers counseling privately, part-time. Their two sons and three grandchildren also live in Muskegon. Gil continues to study, write, and offer Spiritual Direction privately.

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Home Chore Services for the Winter Months

The Michigan climate allows residents to experience all four seasons to their fullest capacity. Each season has redeeming qualities that make it hard not to appreciate them. Fall ushers out the humidity and brings forth the crisp air that signals it is time to pull out the sweatshirts, get ready for football, and enjoy the fall colors. Winter signals that it is the holiday season and allows us the chance to enjoy cold weather activities once again. Spring brings forth new growth and reminds us that it can be sunny more than twice a week. Summer allows us the chance to get back on the water, go golfing, and enjoy the warmer weather. There are numerous benefits to each season; but there are also various challenges that each seasonal change presents. These challenges can include yard cleanup, snow removal, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance.

According to the *National Council on Aging*, "falls are the leading cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, and injury deaths. A quarter of hip fracture patients will be in a nursing home for at least a year." Many of these falls by seniors can stem from the physical exertion it takes to perform tasks like yard cleanup, snow removal, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance. Senior citizens have reported that they are reluctant to hire outside contractors to work around their house because they fear they are being taken advantage of financially. At the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) we strive, "to provide older persons and persons with a disability an array of services designed to promote independence



BY
KENDRICK
HEINLEIN

and dignity in their homes and their communities." AAAWM provides Kent County Senior Millage (KCSM) funding to Bethany Christian Service, Senior Neighbors, and Steepletown Neighborhood Services. These agencies use KCSM funds to provide home chore services throughout Kent

County to help mitigate the trials that come with seasonal changes.

Home chore services include snow removal, yard cleanup, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance tasks such as replacing windows, fuses, and cleaning out basements. These services aim to keep older adults in compliance with ordinances and help them age in place gracefully. To qualify for services, you must be 60 or older and live in Kent County. Please contact the agencies, listed below, for more information and to sign-up for services.

Home Chore Resources for Older Adults in Kent County:

Bethany Christian Services

Website: www.buildingbridgesgr.com
Phone: (616) 224-7409

Senior Neighbors

Website: www.seniorneighbors.org
Phone: (616) 459-6019

Steepletown

Website: www.steepletowncenter.org
Phone: (616) 451-4215

Kendrick Heinlein is a graduate of Grand Valley State University. He joined AAAWM in 2016 and started working on the LGBT Initiative in January, 2017. When he is not looking up new transportation options for older adults, he enjoys exploring new nature trails with his wife, son and dog.

Why It “Pays” to Volunteer



BY
EMILY
ARMSTRONG

For me, the New Year always brings a slew of new goals; things I want to achieve that perhaps I’ve been putting off. The start of a new year is the perfect excuse to challenge myself to try something new. One goal on my list for 2020? I’d like to volunteer more often. It is easy to make excuses not to and usually the main culprit is, “I don’t have enough time.” Yet volunteering’s numerous benefits should outweigh this, not to mention that you should always be able to make extra time to fit in things that matter to you and bring you joy.

Volunteering is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help others and it can be extremely gratifying. Rather than donating your money or other resources, when you volunteer you are seeing first-hand the positive impact you are making for the people you are serving. The beauty of volunteering is that its benchmark qualification is the desire to help others. Otherwise, volunteering comes in so many different forms and involves such a variety of tasks that you can pick the opportunity that best fits your abilities or interests.

Choosing a cause that is close to your heart or that you feel invested in is one of the first steps to having a rewarding volunteer experience. When you choose to volunteer for an organization with a mission that you can get behind, you are more likely to feel gratified in the time that you give to them. Additionally, when you are volunteering it is typically for an organization that is directly within your community, therefore you feel more plugged into your neighborhood because you can see the long term impact.

Aside from feeling that you are part of something bigger, volunteering has been proven to have a number of health benefits as well. According to the Mayo Clinic, volunteering reduces your risk of depression. The two main reasons? It increases your social interaction and helps build a support system with others based on common interest. Volunteering can also help keep you mentally and physically sharp. Often the duties you are performing when you volunteer have you moving in some capacity. They can also draw on your critical thinking skills, as you may need to complete a complicated task or solve problems. These benefits all come together to provide those who volunteer a strong base foundation for their health. Helping others indirectly impacts you for the better.

If you are like me, and also want to make volunteering a goal for 2020, it can sometimes be overwhelming to navigate the many volunteer opportunities out there and pinpoint the best ways to get involved. Luckily, there are some great resources you can use to find the volunteer experience that will be the best fit. The United Way has a helpful portal that allows you to filter by skill, category, and activity type. If you are local in Kent County, Serve GR is another fantastic resource where you are able to search based on your strengths, specific passion, and schedule. Let’s face 2020 with not only a goal to help others, but also ourselves. Hope to see you out there!



Emily Armstrong is the Public Relations and Communications Specialist at AAAWM. She recently moved to Grand Rapids 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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BY
CATHAY
THIBDAUE

Cathay's Cooking Corner



Stuffed Pepper Soup

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 lb. lean ground beef | 1 (16 oz) can crushed tomatoes |
| 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided | 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce |
| 1 tsp salt | 3 (14.5 oz) can beef broth |
| 1 tsp ground black pepper | 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 sweet onion finely diced | 1/2 tsp dried basil |
| 1 chopped red bell pepper | 1/4 tsp dried oregano |
| 1 chopped green bell pepper | 1/2 cup uncooked rice |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | |

In a large pot cook lean ground beef, stirring occasionally to break up beef, until browned. Drain beef and transfer to a plate lined with paper towels; set aside. Add olive oil to pan. Sauté onion, garlic, green pepper, and red pepper in oil until just tender. Do not brown. Stir drained cooked beef into vegetables. Stir in uncooked rice. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, beef broth, Worcestershire sauce, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring just to a light boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes. Freezes well.

Cathay is the Network Manager, Certified HIT Security Administrator and Certified HIPAA Security Professional Accelerated at Senior Resources of West Michigan. She also enjoys boating, fishing and spending time with her family.



BY
STACI
GERKEN

AAAWM Eats



Goat Cheese Pesto Marinara

This recipe is so easy, and is a crowd pleaser! It can be served as an appetizer or even as an entrée.

Ingredients:

- 1 log of Goat Cheese
- Marinara Sauce, store bought or homemade
- Pesto, store bought or homemade

Instruction:

1. Place goat cheese in the middle of an oven safe dish.
2. Pour marinara around the outside of the goat cheese
3. Put pesto on top of goat cheese.
4. Bake at 350 for 15-20 min, until goat cheese is warm.

Serve with crackers, bread, or vegetable

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.



The Source for Seniors



Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) connects adults to quality services that promote and preserve their dignity, independence and well-being, coordinates support and education for caregivers, and leads advocacy efforts on behalf of older adults.

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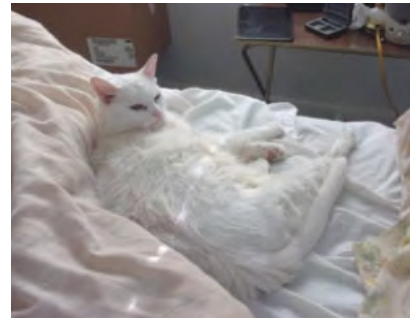


BY
CLIF
MARTIN

Martin's Meanderings Old Folks and Legend

As of the first day of 2020 I am 90. That's a lot of numbers and a lot of years. When you hit 90 you are a Nonagenarian. I really think they could have come up with a better word. "Octo" was OK. But the "Non" sounds like you're not much of anything anymore.

When your cat watches you crawl around on the floor, looking for your hearing aid and you get up with no problem, you feel pretty good. If it doesn't show up, you can try again later. There's nothing you need to hear anyway. It's time to lift Willie off of the bed so she



can help you take on the day.

You remove the couch cushion because that is where the TV remote lives. There it is, the lost hearing aid that you know you put on the bedside table! There are only two possible explanations. Willie

put it there. Cats are sneaky. Or more likely, one of your offspring is trying to gaslight you. You lost your marbles and it's time to move into the old folks' home.

Back in October I was one of eleven long-retired local radio broadcasters who met for lunch. Several had been in Muskegon radio before I arrived here. I'm not sure how I got legendary status. I guess you become a legend when you are older than everybody else.

Clif has a photo of those once famous radio stars with their names here: <https://canfeath.blogspot.com>



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The Power of Communication



BY
JOY
SPAHN

What comes to mind when you read the word “communication”? How many times have we identified “poor communication” as the root of a lot of problems in the workplace, our families, or even in the media, and how much easier life would be if we could all communicate “better” with each other?

I recently had a conversation about communication with a group of caregivers and persons in the early stages of Alzheimer’s. As we talked about the different stages of the disease, the language often referred to the “decline” in the ability to communicate by the person with dementia. When the person with dementia was asked how it made them feel when a person spoke too fast or asked them another question before they had a chance to answer the first one, they all agreed that it made them feel unheard and diminished as a person. They explained that it takes them longer to put the words together in order to answer the question, and when rushed for a response they become frustrated. That makes it harder to focus and answer the question. In other words, they just needed more time to answer the question. This came as a shock to their caregivers, who explained that they thought the lack of response to questions was because of the dementia.

So, is this really a decline in the person with dementia’s ability to communicate or a “change” in how

we communicate? If we impose our time frame for answering a question on someone who is capable of answering but needs more time, does that mean there is a decline in that person’s ability? Communication consists of a shared understanding of a situation or conversation. When there isn’t a shared understanding it’s like being in the same house but looking out different windows and getting angry because the other person is disagreeing with what you see.

We often assume that because someone with dementia is having trouble verbally expressing themselves it’s because they don’t know the answer. This is a wrong assumption. When someone is diagnosed with dementia, we expect the person to continue to communicate in the same way they always have. Rather than say that someone with dementia has a “decline” in communication skills, we need to describe it as a “CHANGE” in communication skills. We communicate with or without words and recognizing it as a change invites caregivers, friends, family and strangers to explore alternative ways of connecting with the person with dementia. A minor change in wording from “decline” to a “change” in communication can have a positive, empowering and much more hopeful influence on the way to stay connected with someone with dementia.

Joy Spahn has been the Regional Director for the Alzheimer’s Association since 2006. She has a Master’s degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Health Care. Additionally, she has over 40 years’ experience in geriatric care management.

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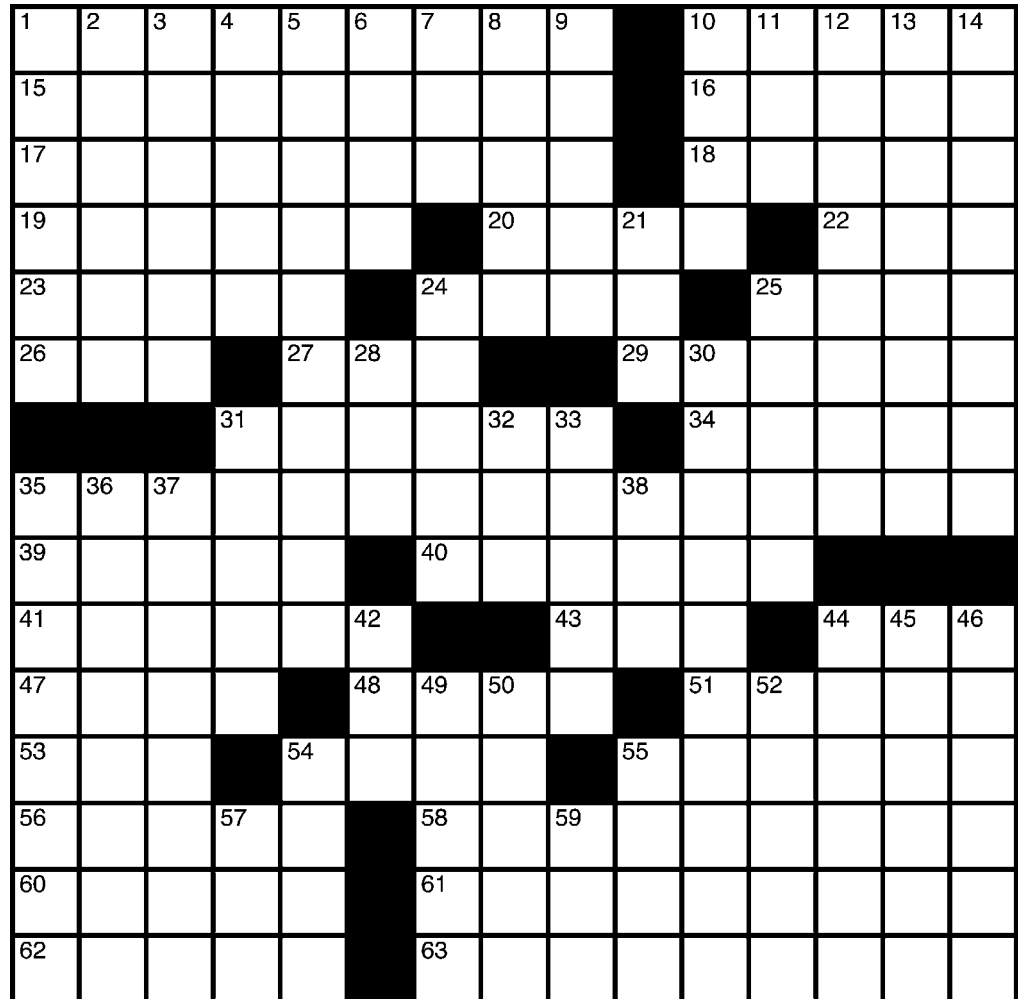
ACROSS

- 1 Money-saving characters
- 10 Complaints
- 15 Fade
- 16 Pitfall! platform
- 17 Hunt object
- 18 For real
- 19 "Break Free" singer Grande
- 20 Benihana founder Rocky —
- 22 USN officers
- 23 Early 20th-century first family
- 24 Wine commonly served chilled
- 25 Institute in whose logo the first letter is a stylized question mark
- 26 Snorting scene
- 27 Hosp. test
- 29 Flier with a large bill
- 31 Most Hong Kong Airport travelers
- 34 "Fab!"
- 35 Movie with the subtitle "Dawn of Justice"
- 39 First-stringers
- 40 Greetings from American Greetings
- 41 Showtime title vigilante
- 43 BBC World Service alternative
- 44 Loyal follower?
- 47 Enemy of an rat-n
- 48 Part of un drame
- 51 Grapevine planter?
- 53 2012 British Open champion
- 54 Work on a bone
- 55 "Time, Love and Tenderness" singer
- 56 More ready, in a way
- 58 Weathering
- 60 Duck
- 61 Refreshing espresso drink
- 62 Software giveaways
- 63 Historic sewer

DOWN

- 1 Kilt features
- 2 Find really funny
- 3 Harden
- 4 Used for a rendezvous
- 5 Classic access provider
- 6 "Around the World in 80 Plates" co-host Cat
- 7 Red state verb
- 8 Big name at the Musée d'Orsay

- 9 Rye blight
- 10 Denpasar's island
- 11 Dog days in Haiti
- 12 Big bird watcher
- 13 Quiche cousin
- 14 Audits
- 21 Parts for a model
- 24 Tequila plant
- 25 Court figures
- 28 Blood
- 30 Sale restriction
- 31 REO Speedwagon guitarist Dave
- 32 Situation Room gp.
- 33 Sophisticated
- 35 Nagged
- 36 Completely dominated
- 37 Cellphone annoyance
- 38 Expert
- 42 Took off
- 44 Completely
- 45 Dark drafts
- 46 Tours relatives
- 49 Suriname native
- 50 Now and again?
- 52 "Enigma Variations" composer
- 54 Hurdles for srs.
- 55 eBay action
- 57 Tokugawa shogunate capital
- 59 Crime solver: Abbr.



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JUMBLE

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

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

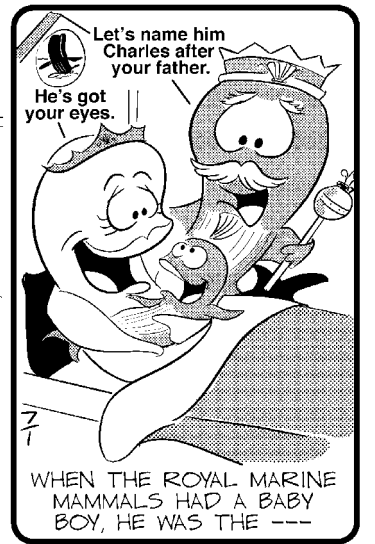
GNEUL

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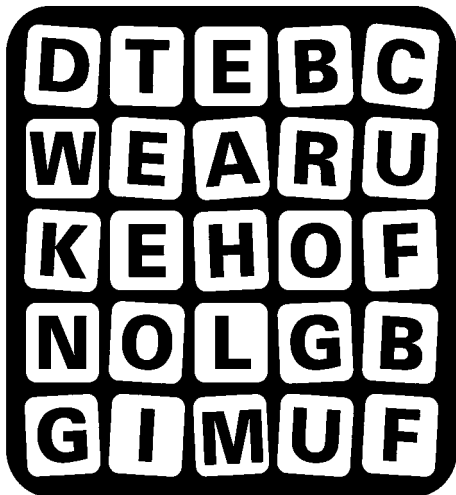


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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

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.

BOGGLE POINT SCALE

- 3 letters = 1 point
- 4 letters = 2 points
- 5 letters = 3 points
- 6 letters = 4 points
- 7 letters = 6 points
- 8 letters = 10 points
- 9+ letters = 15 points

YOUR BOGGLE RATING

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- 11-20 = Amateur
- 0-10 = Try again

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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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The Caboose



BY
JERRY
MATTSON

Most people do not have a full-size caboose in their back yard, but Jerry Tyler does. His, built in 1890, has been there for 34 years.

Jerry grew up in Muskegon near the railyard. He could see the trains from the family home, which included a bakery. As a youngster, Jerry sometimes took a paper bag of donuts to the crews. This often resulted in the tour of an engine or a short train ride. "As a kid, the railyard was my playground," he said.

He has been involved with railroading most of his life, and worked for Grand Trunk Western Railroad for 10 years. He began working on the railroad when he was 20, in 1955. In June of 1964 he was promoted to Locomotive Engineer. The locomotives were then steam powered but were being replaced by diesels. Fewer crew members were needed for diesels, so at age 29 he was laid off.

He has some exciting, if not fond, memories of being on the rails. As a teenager, he and a couple buddies decided to hop a train for a short, two-mile ride into Muskegon but ended up in Grand Rapids. They hitchhiked home the next day. Another time, not yet an Engineer, he drove three engines away from a burning building and successfully drove across a main street to save the equipment.

If collecting Lionel and Marx model trains and having a caboose was not enough, his most unusual collection may be recorded train sounds. He got these by taping the train sounds as they passed near his home.

His caboose was moved in 1975 from the Browne-Morse Company yard, where it had been for 15 years. The 21-ton car, with the inside stripped

clean, was moved with a semi and lowboy trailer. It was positioned on a short set of rails. The work on the caboose then began.

It took him five years to restore the exterior and even longer to get the essential interior appointments.

He also restored a caboose in Coopersville. Jerry was very busy for a few years. He worked at a tool shop in Muskegon all day, then drove 35 miles to work on the railcar for a few hours, returning home to work in his basement machine shop.

Jerry owned the Coopersville caboose for eight years, then sold it to a railroad museum in Saranac where it still remains.

“From scratch,” he built two 1:48 scale models of the cabooses he restored.

Over the years, he helped restore six other cabooses. Some of these had extra pieces he needed for his own. He got most of the things on the company’s required-items list for a caboose. These included a stretcher, mounted near the ceiling, three cots for the conduc-



tor and two brakemen and warning flares and flags to be used up-rail if the train was stopped. Nearly all items had the company initials on them, discouraging theft. A hand saw, hatchet and hammer were kept behind a glass panel for the same reason. There had to be a good reason for anyone to break the glass.

In all his years working on the rails, he only made one trip in a caboose. I told him that surprised me, as he had one in his back yard. He replied, “It would be too much work to get an engine down here.”

Jerry has had three train rides in his life. One was a family outing on the Coopersville-Marne Railway Bunny Train. Another was a round trip from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, to Agawa Canyon. The third was from Tokyo, Japan, to see Mt. Fuji and return. As Fuji was shrouded in fog that day, he never saw it.

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BY
JAY
NEWMARCH

The great thing about traveling when you get older is that you've had more experience navigating your way around unfamiliar places and have the common sense to look before you leap. I have been to Amsterdam a couple of times, but never for more than a day. While my main reason for visiting the Netherlands lay inland, I decided I would start my adventure with a couple of days exploring Amsterdam.

Getting from the airport, which lies to the south of the city, can be handled in a few different ways. Of course, if you're hitting the road, you can rent a car and leave

directly from the airport. In my case, I didn't plan on renting a car until I was ready to leave Amsterdam. That meant I needed to find a different means of transport.

If you're feeling more adventurous, you can take a train into the city right from the train station located in the airport. It will take you into the central station in Am-

sterdam. From there you can hire a taxi or jump on a tram to get you to your hotel. I have done that before, but this time 'round, I decided that I wanted something a bit less roundabout. Another option is to hire a taxi, Uber or Lyft. But be aware, this will be your most expensive option.

What is quickly becoming my favorite option is to take a shuttle into town. I have done this a number of times in several cities. A shuttle allows you to get a feel of the area without being behind the wheel of the vehicle. It's a relatively inexpensive way to get door-to-door transportation, but you will need to be patient as you aren't the only one being dropped off.

Amsterdam city proper is not sprawling, so it's easy to navigate. I'd suggest that you stay right within the city and utilize the water taxis, buses and street cars that crisscross the city. Additionally, you can use good old-fashioned



human power and walk or rent a bicycle. Be aware, Amsterdam is a very bike-friendly city. I would venture there are more bicycles than cars. In fact, the remodel of the famous Rijksmuseum includes a tunnel right through the first floor for bicycles to pass through. It's a virtual highway of bikes. Something to see.



I chose a small boutique hotel just outside the city center. It allowed me to wander Amsterdam in all directions, enjoying the sights, sounds, food and ambiance of the city. The older I get, the more I enjoy just allowing myself to flow with the current, letting the day take me where it will. Amsterdam is a great place to do that. While I would always set

out with a destination in mind, I allowed myself to be waylaid and visit whatever piqued my interest. Get a hop on, hop off pass for the canal cruise boats and let it take you around the ring of canals bisecting the city. You can get on and off as you wish, while taking in the city with a view from the canals.

Want to try what will probably be the best roasted chicken you've ever tasted? Stop into De Biertuin, grab a brew and order up their locally famous chicken. Or, visit De Carrousel for delicious little Dutch pancakes, called Poffertjes. A little powdered sugar and some strong coffee. Outstanding.

And, if museums are your thing, the selection is mind boggling. Take some time to do a little research and I'm sure you'll find a number you'd like to visit while you're enjoying the sights.

On the morning of the third day, I took the street car to the rental car location in Amsterdam and headed to Keukenhof, the huge tulip gardens just outside



the city. Think Meijer Gardens with more flowers and less sculpture. It is said that Fred Meijer got the idea for Meijer Gardens after a visit to Keukenhof.

Even though they have seven million tulips in the garden, there seemed to be more people than flowers. It was funny to see everyone taking group pho-



tos and selfies with the flowers. I couldn't help but think that adding yourself to the photos enhanced the flowers. But, to each their own. I do not have a selfie of me with the tulips.

While you're there, stop at one of the unique food vendors. I wandered the gardens while enjoying fresh strawberries, blanket and pigs in the blanket. Stop for a coffee and you'll get a little cookie, too. I love that European tradition. A little cookie or sweet to enjoy with your coffee.



After my visit I headed toward Haarlem and marveled at how much easier it is to navigate with a smart phone. Just make sure your phone is charged and there's no way you can get lost. I remember when the Triptik from AAA was the height of navigation. My mom would flip from page to page, playing co-pilot as my dad followed her audible directions. My co-pilot, my smart phone, never let me down as I wandered through the Dutch countryside.

Haarlem is a quaint, beautiful old Dutch city. Settle in and wander the narrow roads that meander out from the town square. While I only spent a day there, I was able to take in some museums and enjoy a great dinner at Ratatouille, a small Michelin Guide-recognized restaurant. It was a delicious, leisurely dining experience topped off by a chocolate mousse rat!



The next morning, I hit the highway and headed toward Rotterdam. On the way to tracking down my past, I decided to spend a night on the SS *Rotterdam*, a 1959 ocean liner that has

been renovated and turned into a hotel. My long-time fascination with ocean liners wouldn't let me pass this up. Don't pass it up either, if you are enamored of old ocean liners or just want to be impressed by the stunning design that has been meticulously returned to its former glory. That's a story for another time.

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.

Three reasons why Social Security is Important for Women



BY
VONDA
VANTIL

In the 21st century, more women work, pay Social Security taxes, and earn credit toward monthly retirement income than at any other time in our nation's history. Yet, on average, women face greater economic challenges than men in retirement.

Nearly 55 percent of the people receiving Social Security benefits are women. Women generally live longer than men while often having lower lifetime earnings. And women usually reach retirement with smaller pensions and other assets compared to men. These are three key reasons why Social Security is vitally important to women.

If you've worked and paid taxes into the Social Security system for at least 10 years and have earned a minimum of 40 work credits, you may be eligible for your own benefits. Once you reach age 62, you may be eligible for your own Social Security benefit whether you're married or not and whether your spouse collects Social Security or not. If you're eligible and apply for benefits on more than one work record, you generally receive the higher benefit amount.

The sooner you start planning for retirement, the better off you'll be. We have specific information for women at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/women. Email or post this link to friends and family you love.

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.

Keith's World

Time by the Big Lake

Lake Michigan, that is!



BY
KEITH
SIPE

There's a lot of enjoyment in spending time by the waters of Lake Michigan. In the early part of the year, January through March, the water has taken on a completely different shape, you might say. It's actually hard, it's frozen, and has taken on a shape of its own.

Parking by the Muskegon Water Filtration Plant, you can see the icebergs, and at times, they are so high you are unable to see the open waters. The beauty of the ice is that it has many different sizes and shapes. You may think it would be the same each year, and in some ways, it is, but in all actuality the shape of the ice changes as each year passes. For example, a couple of years ago there were the ice caves. I really don't remember off hand the last time I saw the ice caves. Maybe I wasn't paying much attention. I remember reading about the camera buffs who were out in force capturing the images in many different ways. Climbing over, around, under and in the caves. I like seeing the photos, but, it's just too cold and dangerous for me to climb around on the ice. Another thing I find interesting is that it seems the icebergs form overnight. I mean, you go to the lake and there's no ice, but the next day there's ice all over. Did someone wave a magic wand and the ice forms immediately? Just saying. Then the time comes where I start to get a little tired of all the ice, cold, and snow. (That's the second day of winter.) I'm longing for the warmer summer days.

Just as fast as the ice came, it's gone, then April comes in with a little warmer weather. April through June days are here, spring is in the air (usually). I think at times, these three months seem to drag on and on, and you are saying to yourself, "Come-on warmer weather, where's the 70s!?" For the most



part, everything is still without much color, just grey. The cover of snow is mostly gone and exposing some of the sins left during the winter months. Example: the toys, garden equipment and those stinking leaves that you didn't pick up last fall. Just a few days ago that stuff was covered with snow and out of sight, and of course, out of mind.

Spring is the best. It is the time of renewal. Flowers are beginning to take life. The trees are starting to lose their skeleton look with the birth of new leaves and color. The air is warmer, your attitude is changing and you find there is a new "skip" in your "do da."

Then, finally, summer is here. The warmer air and days of sunshine that you have been longing for. The lazy, crazy, hazy days of summer are here and it is now time to head to the beach to soak up the sun. You find

yourself sitting in your chair on the beach listening to the waves gently coming to shore. The cool breeze coming from across the waters of Lake Michigan. You are wishing this would last forever....

But soon that passes and before you realize it the trees are turning colors -- and they are beautiful. The air is a little crisper. School is back in session and occasionally you hear the sound of the people from Friday night high school football game cheering on their team. Yes, fall is here again, the leaves are falling and you've got to get up early Saturday morning to pick up the leaves. Yuck! The next thought that comes to mind is that you need to get the snow blower repaired.

But wait, you remember...you pile the kids into the car and head out to the water filtration plant. The fall storms are coming in from the lake. You've got to hurry, and if you are lucky you'll be able to find a parking place where the big waves of Lake Michigan clean your car one more time.

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

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BY
LOUISE
MATZ

And then the Birds Came

During the spring and summer months we enjoy the activity at two hummingbird window feeders – one in the living room and one in what we call the “sunroom.” The tiny birds entertain us all day. Because they come right to the window, we feel as though they are household pets. When the last hummer has headed south, the feeders are removed and stored for the winter.

While having our morning coffee a week or so later, I commented to my husband Tom how much I missed the hummingbird visits. Like a lightning bolt, it suddenly struck me that perhaps there were other window bird feeders that could be used for our winter birds. Google sent me to Amazon where I settled on one that I thought would be perfect for the sliding windows in our sunroom. (Only \$12.95!) It arrived in three days and we put it up immediately.

Then, we waited. It took about a week. Naturally, the fearless chickadees came first. A few days later we saw a tufted titmouse, a nuthatch, a sparrow. After a couple weeks, the cardinals and blue jays joined the party.

Placement of the feeder is perfect, easily visible from the kitchen, dining area, and my husband’s favorite chair in the living room. **A month later...** the avian restaurant is thriving. The birds come on a regular basis even if someone is standing within inches of the feeder. Again, we have “household pets.”

Golf, gardening and grandchildren were primary interests of retirement for Louise. Her interests have since expanded to include walking, biking, pickleball and mahjonn. Reading and travel are also high on her list. She and her husband both enjoy bow hunting for deer in the Upper Peninsula, hunting turkeys, and fishing in the Florida Keys.

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AGENCY
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MICHIGAN
The Search for Seniors

Ask the Provider

Why You Should Know Your Pharmacist



BY ANGELA GREEN, PharmD, BCPS



BY ARUNA JOSYULA, MD

Courtesy of Mercy Health

Question: Today's health care teams include many caregivers. How has the role of the pharmacist changed during the last decade or so?

Answer: The role of the pharmacist has changed in the last decade to include more focus on patient care. There are many practice settings where pharmacists care for patients, such as in community pharmacies, hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics.

Many community pharmacists are now giving vaccinations in pharmacies and counseling patients about medications. Instead of only working in the pharmacy, hospital pharmacists now work with doctors and nurses on a patient's care team to help with questions about medications. They also dose certain antibiotics.

One of the places you will increasingly find pharmacists is in ambulatory care. Ambulatory pharmacists work in a doctor's office or clinic, and they help educate patients about their medications. Pharmacists also help patients learn about and manage their chronic diseases, such as diabetes. Other ambulatory pharmacists work in anticoagulation clinics to help manage patients taking blood thinners.

Question: Are today's pharmacists trained/educated differently than pharmacists who were in school in the early 2000s?

Answer: In 2000, the educational requirements changed for pharmacists and required all pharmacy students to complete a minimum 6-year program to receive their doctorate. Pharmacists continue to be trained on how to distribute medications safely, but now they are also trained to educate patients about medications and disease states, while also ensuring that medications are safe and effective. The educational focus has moved from dispensing medications to patient care.

Question: Who are the other members on a pharmacy team besides the pharmacist?

Answer: Pharmacy technicians are important members of the pharmacy team. They help to support the pharmacist, patient, and clinic, depending on their practice site.

You will find pharmacy technicians in hospitals, emergency departments, community pharmacies and clinics. They aid pharmacists, patients and the health care team by accurately filling prescriptions, collecting a medication list and contacting patients and insurance companies to help patients receive medications. Pharmacy technicians in Michigan will see their role expanding in the future.

Question: How do pharmacists and primary care physicians work together to improve patient health?

Answer: An ambulatory pharmacist working in a primary care physician's (PCP) office plays an integral role in patient care. A PCP can comfortably refer his or her patients who do not have optimal control of various illnesses — such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol or COPD — to an ambulatory pharmacist in their clinic. The pharmacist can then counsel patients about the disease process and lifestyle modifications, while also recommending appropriate medication management for these diseases.

For diseases such as osteoporosis, anxiety or depression, pharmacists can work with the physician to identify the best medication and monitor the patient as changes are made.

Ambulatory pharmacists can complete a medication review with patients in a relaxed atmosphere that allows patients to ask questions about their medications and their effects. After completing the review, the pharmacist can help create an individualized medication plan and monitor the patient (in person and/or via phone) as medication changes are made, so that each patient can take the safest and smallest number of medicines possible.

Question: What types of services does a typical pharmacy offer now that weren't offered in past decades?

Answer: Community pharmacies offer vaccinations and medication management, and some are offering testing for various diseases, such as diabetes, high cholesterol and certain infections, like strep throat.

Today's pharmacists play a crucial role in the health of patients by working in various settings to offer patient-centered care. Ambulatory pharmacists help patients manage certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes, chronic pain, osteoporosis, COPD, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. They work with physicians, care managers, nurse practitioners and other members of the health care team to care for patients. They ensure that the medications patients are taking are optimal for their particular circumstances and work to help patients meet their health goals.

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Hospice 101 – An Overview of What You Need to Know



BY
SARA
LOWE

“I wish I would have called sooner.” It’s a phrase we hear too often in hospice care. Caregivers often wait too long before calling hospice in because it’s

perceived as scary – or as “giving up.” However, it doesn’t have to be, especially when you realize what a service hospice provides.

You don’t need to enroll in a class to educate yourself about hospice care, nor should you be shy about making inquiries on behalf of yourself or a loved one. Many of us don’t even think about it until it’s staring us in the face, but knowing the basics can help ensure your loved one has the end-of-life experience they wish.

Hospice is specialized care for someone with a life-limiting condition who has six or fewer months to live, as determined by a licensed physician. It focuses neither on prolonging nor ending life, but instead on delivering expert symptom management, maximizing comfort, and reducing pain.

Contrary to what you might have heard, hospice is not about giving up. Rather, it’s about providing a gift to your loved one so they’re able to enjoy their final days as pain-free as possible. Families and caregivers report reduced stress and feeling increased support when hospice is involved.

Hospice is often provided in the patient’s home, wherever that might be. It relies on a host of caregivers. A typical hospice team will be comprised of a hospice physician, primary care physician, nurse, social worker, aide, volunteer, spiritual caregiver, and therapists specializing in a wide variety of complementary therapies.

There is usually no direct cost to families for hospice care, as Medicaid and Medicare and most private insurers cover medicine, supplies, equipment, and the team providing care.

Hospice organizations treat not only the patient, but caregivers and families. Some continue to provide services even after death, including grief support and other types of support groups.

In some cases, patients in hospice become better to a point they no longer need hospice and “graduate” from it.

End of life brings out emotions we never knew we had, forcing us to confront fear head-on. You, your loved one, and your family don’t have to go it alone. If you’re unsure whether it’s time to call hospice, go ahead, make the call. Whoever answers on the other end will be there with answers – and hope.

Sara Lowe is the Executive Director of Emmanuel Hospice. Lowe helped form the organization in 2012. For information, visit www.emmanuel-hospice.org.



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BY
CHRISTINE
WISTRUM

Service Dogs: Making Life Easier

I love dogs! If the number of Americans who own a dog is any indication, a lot of other people feel the same. According to the 2017–2018 National Pet Owners Survey, over 60 million Americans owned one or more dogs. That’s a lot of tail wagging!

As an Independent Living Specialist, I field a lot of questions about assistance dogs. Assistance dogs include emotional support, and therapy dogs as well as service dogs. Many people tell me their dog is a service dog, but when questioned, it turns out they have a therapy dog or an emotional support dog, not a service animal. So, what’s the difference?

Emotional support dogs bring their owners great comfort during times of emotional distress, however, they are not specifically trained to do anything to help their owners live independently. They are not covered by the ADA laws. The dogs are prescribed by a licensed mental health profes-

sional, and primarily work with a single individual rather than groups of people.

Therapy dogs are trained to work with groups of people, bringing comfort and acceptance, but are not trained to do anything to diminish a disability. These are the dogs that visit nursing facilities and hospitals. They are required to have a good temperament and to enjoy interacting with people.

Service dogs are recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act as being an assistive technology item that allows the handler to live more independently; they are not considered pets. While they may also provide emotional comfort, a true service dog must be trained to perform a specific behavior that mitigates the disability of the owner.

So, how might a service dog help you? Dogs are so smart and can do so much! They can open and close doors, and block people from crowding you if you have PTSD. They can pick up objects you’ve dropped on the floor, or step on a button that will call 911 when you’re in trouble. They can help keep your balance as you walk up and

down stairs. They can go into a dark house, check to see no one is there, and turn on the lights. Some service dogs can recognize if you are going to have a seizure, or when your blood sugar is dropping. Some can help pull a person in a wheelchair, stop repetitive behaviors in autistic children, push a button to call the elevator, or wake you from a nightmare. It is absolutely amazing what these dogs can do!

Not every dog can be a service dog. It takes a steady, gentle temperament, the desire to help, and a nature that is willing to serve. The dog must also be able to perform the task you require. For more information about choosing or training a service dog, please contact Disability Network/Lakeshore at 616-396-5326.

Chris is a Gerontologist who works at Disability Network/Lakeshore in Holland, Michigan as an Independent Living Specialist. Current interests include assistive technology, veterans’ issues, emergency preparedness planning and service dog training.

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Question: What are the requirements for receiving disabled widow's benefits?

Answer: You may be able to get disabled widow(er)'s benefits at age 50 if you meet Social Security's disability requirement. Your disability must have started before age 60 and within seven years of the latest of the following dates: the month the worker died; the last month you were entitled to survivors benefits on the worker's record as a parent caring for a surviving minor child; or the month your previous entitlement to disabled widow(er)'s benefits ended because your disability ended. To learn more, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/disability/dqualify9.html.

Question: How do I appeal a decision on my application for disability benefits?

Answer: When we make a decision on your application, we'll send you a letter explaining our decision. If you don't agree with our decision, you can ask us to look at your case again, or appeal it. You must appeal within 60 days from the date you get our decision letter. You can: File a disability appeal online at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html and electronically provide documents to support your request, even if you live outside of the United States; or visit your local Social Security office. For more information, call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. To learn more about Social Security's disability programs, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/disability.

Question: How can I become a representative payee?

Answer: If you know someone who receives Social Security or Supplemental Security Income



(SSI), and who needs assistance managing their payments, contact your local Social Security office about becoming their representative payee. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/payee for more information.



BY VONDA VANTIL

Question: I applied for Medicare benefits last week. How can I check the status of my application?

Answer: You can check the application status online with your personal my Social Security account at www.socialsecurity.gov/signin, but you must wait five days from the date you originally filed. If you are unable to check your status online, call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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: Can I delay my retirement benefits and receive benefits as a spouse only? How does that work?

Answer: It depends on your date of birth. If you were born on or before 01/01/1954 and your spouse is receiving Social Security benefits, you can apply for retirement benefits on your spouse's record as long as you are at your full retirement age. You then will earn delayed retirement credits up to age 70, as long as you do not collect benefits on your own work record. Later, when you do begin receiving benefits on your own record, those payments could very well be higher than they would have been otherwise. If your spouse is also full retirement age and does not receive benefits, your spouse will have to apply for benefits and request the payments be suspended. Then you can receive benefits on your spouse's Social Security record. If you were born on or after 01/02/1954 and wish to receive benefits, you must file for all benefits for which you are eligible. Social Security will determine the benefits you are eligible for and pay you accordingly. For individuals born on or after 01/02/1954, there is no longer an option to select which benefit you would like to receive, even beyond your full retirement age. Widows are an exception, as they can choose to take their deceased spouse's benefit without filing for their own. For more information, visit www.socialsecurity.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.

Answers for Word Search , Crossword Puzzle and Suduko on Pages 12 & 13

P	R	O	M	O	C	O	D	E		B	E	E	F	S	
L	O	S	E	P	O	W	E	R		A	T	A	R	I	
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5	1	4	6	7	3	2	8	9
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Boggle Answers:

BEAR FROG HARE GOAT MINK
CRAB MOLE MULE NEWT DEER LION

Jumble Answers:

LUNGE WELSH CATNIP FORMAL

ANSWER:

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had a baby boy, he was the –
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The Tom Turkey was found on page 15 in the maze story.

A First Responder Guide for End of Life Conversations



BY
DAVE
KAMPFSCHULTE

In my role as an educator, hospice volunteer, and Making Choices Michigan facilitator, I have had the privilege of working with hundreds of patients and volunteers. On a parallel path, I have discovered something I had not anticipated. I have become known as the “expert” on death and dying in my circle of family and friends.

The overwhelming fear of death in our society often inhibits a person who is terminally ill from starting a conversation about death, even though inside they desperately want to. They may have had the opportunity to talk with a social worker, but sometimes that is not the case. So the fallback is for someone else – and it might just be you – to fill that gap by initiating that conversation. It will even be more likely if you have had a hospice experience in your family and you are now seen as the go-to person or, as I say, a first responder. The potential to be a first responder is endless. Most of us would be happy to start the ball rolling, but just need a few guidelines to assist us.

Over the years, I have developed a check list of what to cover in a conversation regarding end of life decisions with a patient and family.

- Acceptance of prognosis – How does the patient’s reality match up against what the physician is saying? After the preliminaries, my opening is always, *“I understand things have changed and the doctors have said that cure is no longer an option. Is that your understanding?”* This sends the message that it is OK to mention death and bring it up in a conversation. If the answer is in the affirmative, then it is easy to proceed. If denial of the situation exists, it may not be time yet.
- Denial can be further explored with statements like, *“This is what I am seeing, (hearing, feeling.) How does that compare to what you are experiencing?”*
- My next question is, *“If your time is limited, how would you like to spend your remaining days?”* For my dad that opened the door immediately. He emphatically told me that he did not want to be in a nursing home, or in a hospital. He wanted to be at home. That was breakthrough moment, because he clearly communicated what he wanted. He just needed someone to ask him or, as I say, be “invited into the conversation.”
- This is a perfect lead in to: *“In order for your family to do everything in their power to make that happen we need to have a plan because I know you might feel pretty good right now, but when people are terminally ill, things change in a hurry*

and without a plan, one is just reacting when that happens. You may not end up getting what you want. Together we can make that plan. Would you like to explore that?”

- *“Part of that plan involves hospice care which can help you stay at home. I am curious, what is your concept of hospice?”* Having them talk about their concept, rather than me explaining it right away, provides me with the opportunity to find out what their misconceptions are.
- Do they have an advance directive or have they named a patient advocate? If not, time in the near future needs to be spent in that area.
- Is the family on the same page? It is not uncommon to have two camps – one to let nature take its course and the other to do everything possible to keep the patient alive. A simple, *“Help me to understand your thoughts on this”* allows others to articulate their reasons and, more importantly, their feelings.



- Finding out the group dynamics is helpful because it is going to take all involved to work as a team. Is the patient a take-charge planning type of person or a procrastinator? Are they open to talking about themselves and expressing their needs or are they more reserved? Who is the go-to person in the family who gets things done? All this is helpful to know as the plot unfolds.

Once that inventory is taken, it is hoped that all involved have had a chance to talk and ask questions. The wishes of the patient are laid out in the open and reality of approaching death has been brought into the conversation. The end result is that meeting with hospice is not so intimidating and they can go into it with

knowledge and a list of questions.

Take a look at the inventory questions. One does not have to have extensive hospice experience to initiate a conversation like this. Anyone can do it with the attitude of listening and non-judgment. Talking about death is an unknown experience for many. The reaction to this is fear and avoidance. Before turning down your potential award-winning role of first responder, think of all the unknowns you have faced in your life – almost everything. How did they come out? I bet you there are more positives than negatives. You can do it!

*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 *Ym 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.*



BY GIL
BOERSMA,
M.DIV.

Soul Food

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Luke 6:31 NRSV

It's time for New Year's resolutions, isn't it? The big confession from me is that this past year I have had trouble forgetting the words or actions from others that have hurt me most. I have done a lot of walking and thinking with my dog, Pastor. (Yeah, no kidding!) To “pastor” means to gather and to feed. Appropriate for my dog, an Icelandic sheepdog. I found him here in Michigan on a working farm, sheep and all.

Thankfully, the Spirit came through with an admonition for me, words like these: “So, what are you going to do about it?” (i.e. New Year's resolution) Well, the best thing we can do about our troubles, and care for our spirit at the same time, is to pray for the thing, or the challenge, or the person whose words or actions have most troubled us. It is amazing how this approach can remove your burden and prepare you for renewed friendships, or bring wisdom for future encounters for the days ahead.

It is true, we may never discover how our prayers and actions changed things in the lives of others, especially since as “seniors” we all are closer to the end of our journey on earth. However, I'd like my journey to continue in this life, and in the life to come. I'd like to be a blessing to the people, animals, and creation I meet. How about you?

Barack Obama moved to the South Side of Chicago after college. “I spent month after month working with church folks who simply wanted to help neighbors who were down on their luck—no matter what they looked like, or where they came from, or who they prayed to. It was on those streets, in those neighborhoods, that I first heard God's spirit beckon me.” (taken from *Barack Obama - His Essential Wisdom*, Fall River Press, NY, 2016, p. 110)

Rev. Gilbert Boersma, BBA, MDIV, is a retired United Methodist pastor and board certified healthcare chaplain, living with his wife Sara, in Roosevelt Park. Sara is retired from Community Mental Health and offers counseling privately, part-time. Their two sons and three grandchildren also live in Muskegon. Gil continues to study, write, and offer Spiritual Direction privately.

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Home Chore Services for the Winter Months

The Michigan climate allows residents to experience all four seasons to their fullest capacity. Each season has redeeming qualities that make it hard not to appreciate them. Fall ushers out the humidity and brings forth the crisp air that signals it is time to pull out the sweatshirts, get ready for football, and enjoy the fall colors. Winter signals that it is the holiday season and allows us the chance to enjoy cold weather activities once again. Spring brings forth new growth and reminds us that it can be sunny more than twice a week. Summer allows us the chance to get back on the water, go golfing, and enjoy the warmer weather. There are numerous benefits to each season; but there are also various challenges that each seasonal change presents. These challenges can include yard cleanup, snow removal, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance.

According to the *National Council on Aging*, "falls are the leading cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, and injury deaths. A quarter of hip fracture patients will be in a nursing home for at least a year." Many of these falls by seniors can stem from the physical exertion it takes to perform tasks like yard cleanup, snow removal, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance. Senior citizens have reported that they are reluctant to hire outside contractors to work around their house because they fear they are being taken advantage of financially. At the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM) we strive, "to provide older persons and persons with a disability an array of services designed to promote independence



BY
KENDRICK
HEINLEIN

and dignity in their homes and their communities." AAAWM provides Kent County Senior Millage (KCSM) funding to Bethany Christian Service, Senior Neighbors, and Steepletown Neighborhood Services. These agencies use KCSM funds to provide home chore services throughout Kent

County to help mitigate the trials that come with seasonal changes.

Home chore services include snow removal, yard cleanup, lawn mowing, and minor home maintenance tasks such as replacing windows, fuses, and cleaning out basements. These services aim to keep older adults in compliance with ordinances and help them age in place gracefully. To qualify for services, you must be 60 or older and live in Kent County. Please contact the agencies, listed below, for more information and to sign-up for services.

Home Chore Resources for Older Adults in Kent County:

Bethany Christian Services

Website: www.buildingbridgesgr.com
Phone: (616) 224-7409

Senior Neighbors

Website: www.seniorneighbors.org
Phone: (616) 459-6019

Steepletown

Website: www.steepletowncenter.org
Phone: (616) 451-4215

Kendrick Heinlein is a graduate of Grand Valley State University. He joined AAAWM in 2016 and started working on the LGBT Initiative in January, 2017. When he is not looking up new transportation options for older adults, he enjoys exploring new nature trails with his wife, son and dog.

Why It “Pays” to Volunteer



BY
EMILY
ARMSTRONG

For me, the New Year always brings a slew of new goals; things I want to achieve that perhaps I’ve been putting off. The start of a new year is the perfect excuse to challenge myself to try something new. One goal on my list for 2020? I’d like to volunteer more often. It is easy to make excuses not to and usually the main culprit is, “I don’t have enough time.” Yet volunteering’s numerous benefits should outweigh this, not to mention that you should always be able to make extra time to fit in things that matter to you and bring you joy.

Volunteering is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help others and it can be extremely gratifying. Rather than donating your money or other resources, when you volunteer you are seeing first-hand the positive impact you are making for the people you are serving. The beauty of volunteering is that its benchmark qualification is the desire to help others. Otherwise, volunteering comes in so many different forms and involves such a variety of tasks that you can pick the opportunity that best fits your abilities or interests.

Choosing a cause that is close to your heart or that you feel invested in is one of the first steps to having a rewarding volunteer experience. When you choose to volunteer for an organization with a mission that you can get behind, you are more likely to feel gratified in the time that you give to them. Additionally, when you are volunteering it is typically for an organization that is directly within your community, therefore you feel more plugged into your neighborhood because you can see the long term impact.

Aside from feeling that you are part of something bigger, volunteering has been proven to have a number of health benefits as well. According to the Mayo Clinic, volunteering reduces your risk of depression. The two main reasons? It increases your social interaction and helps build a support system with others based on common interest. Volunteering can also help keep you mentally and physically sharp. Often the duties you are performing when you volunteer have you moving in some capacity. They can also draw on your critical thinking skills, as you may need to complete a complicated task or solve problems. These benefits all come together to provide those who volunteer a strong base foundation for their health. Helping others indirectly impacts you for the better.

If you are like me, and also want to make volunteering a goal for 2020, it can sometimes be overwhelming to navigate the many volunteer opportunities out there and pinpoint the best ways to get involved. Luckily, there are some great resources you can use to find the volunteer experience that will be the best fit. The United Way has a helpful portal that allows you to filter by skill, category, and activity type. If you are local in Kent County, Serve GR is another fantastic resource where you are able to search based on your strengths, specific passion, and schedule. Let’s face 2020 with not only a goal to help others, but also ourselves. Hope to see you out there!



Emily Armstrong is the Public Relations and Communications Specialist at AAAWM. She recently moved to Grand Rapids 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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BY
CATHAY
THIBDAUE

Cathay's Cooking Corner



Stuffed Pepper Soup

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 lb. lean ground beef | 1 (16 oz) can crushed tomatoes |
| 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided | 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce |
| 1 tsp salt | 3 (14.5 oz) can beef broth |
| 1 tsp ground black pepper | 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 sweet onion finely diced | 1/2 tsp dried basil |
| 1 chopped red bell pepper | 1/4 tsp dried oregano |
| 1 chopped green bell pepper | 1/2 cup uncooked rice |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced | |

In a large pot cook lean ground beef, stirring occasionally to break up beef, until browned. Drain beef and transfer to a plate lined with paper towels; set aside. Add olive oil to pan. Sauté onion, garlic, green pepper, and red pepper in oil until just tender. Do not brown. Stir drained cooked beef into vegetables. Stir in uncooked rice. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, beef broth, Worcestershire sauce, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring just to a light boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes. Freezes well.

Cathay is the Network Manager, Certified HIT Security Administrator and Certified HIPAA Security Professional Accelerated at Senior Resources of West Michigan. She also enjoys boating, fishing and spending time with her family.



BY
STACI
GERKEN

AAAWM Eats



Goat Cheese Pesto Marinara

This recipe is so easy, and is a crowd pleaser! It can be served as an appetizer or even as an entrée.

Ingredients:

- 1 log of Goat Cheese
- Marinara Sauce, store bought or homemade
- Pesto, store bought or homemade

Instruction:

1. Place goat cheese in the middle of an oven safe dish.
2. Pour marinara around the outside of the goat cheese
3. Put pesto on top of goat cheese.
4. Bake at 350 for 15-20 min, until goat cheese is warm.

Serve with crackers, bread, or vegetable

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.



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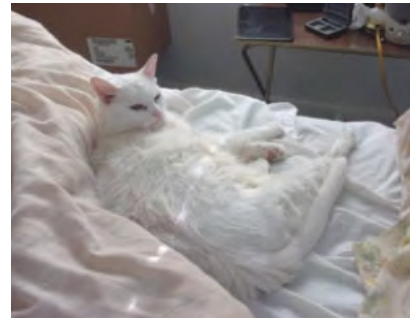


BY
CLIF
MARTIN

Martin's Meanderings Old Folks and Legend

As of the first day of 2020 I am 90. That's a lot of numbers and a lot of years. When you hit 90 you are a Nonagenarian. I really think they could have come up with a better word. "Octo" was OK. But the "Non" sounds like you're not much of anything anymore.

When your cat watches you crawl around on the floor, looking for your hearing aid and you get up with no problem, you feel pretty good. If it doesn't show up, you can try again later. There's nothing you need to hear anyway. It's time to lift Willie off of the bed so she



can help you take on the day.

You remove the couch cushion because that is where the TV remote lives. There it is, the lost hearing aid that you know you put on the bedside table! There are only two possible explanations. Willie

put it there. Cats are sneaky. Or more likely, one of your offspring is trying to gaslight you. You lost your marbles and it's time to move into the old folks' home.

Back in October I was one of eleven long-retired local radio broadcasters who met for lunch. Several had been in Muskegon radio before I arrived here. I'm not sure how I got legendary status. I guess you become a legend when you are older than everybody else.

Clif has a photo of those once famous radio stars with their names here: <https://canfeath.blogspot.com>



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The Power of Communication



BY
JOY
SPAHN

What comes to mind when you read the word “communication”? How many times have we identified “poor communication” as the root of a lot of problems in the workplace, our families, or even in the media, and how much easier life would be if we could all communicate “better” with each other?

I recently had a conversation about communication with a group of caregivers and persons in the early stages of Alzheimer’s. As we talked about the different stages of the disease, the language often referred to the “decline” in the ability to communicate by the person with dementia. When the person with dementia was asked how it made them feel when a person spoke too fast or asked them another question before they had a chance to answer the first one, they all agreed that it made them feel unheard and diminished as a person. They explained that it takes them longer to put the words together in order to answer the question, and when rushed for a response they become frustrated. That makes it harder to focus and answer the question. In other words, they just needed more time to answer the question. This came as a shock to their caregivers, who explained that they thought the lack of response to questions was because of the dementia.

So, is this really a decline in the person with dementia’s ability to communicate or a “change” in how

we communicate? If we impose our time frame for answering a question on someone who is capable of answering but needs more time, does that mean there is a decline in that person’s ability? Communication consists of a shared understanding of a situation or conversation. When there isn’t a shared understanding it’s like being in the same house but looking out different windows and getting angry because the other person is disagreeing with what you see.

We often assume that because someone with dementia is having trouble verbally expressing themselves it’s because they don’t know the answer. This is a wrong assumption. When someone is diagnosed with dementia, we expect the person to continue to communicate in the same way they always have. Rather than say that someone with dementia has a “decline” in communication skills, we need to describe it as a “CHANGE” in communication skills. We communicate with or without words and recognizing it as a change invites caregivers, friends, family and strangers to explore alternative ways of connecting with the person with dementia. A minor change in wording from “decline” to a “change” in communication can have a positive, empowering and much more hopeful influence on the way to stay connected with someone with dementia.

Joy Spahn has been the Regional Director for the Alzheimer’s Association since 2006. She has a Master’s degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Health Care. Additionally, she has over 40 years’ experience in geriatric care management.

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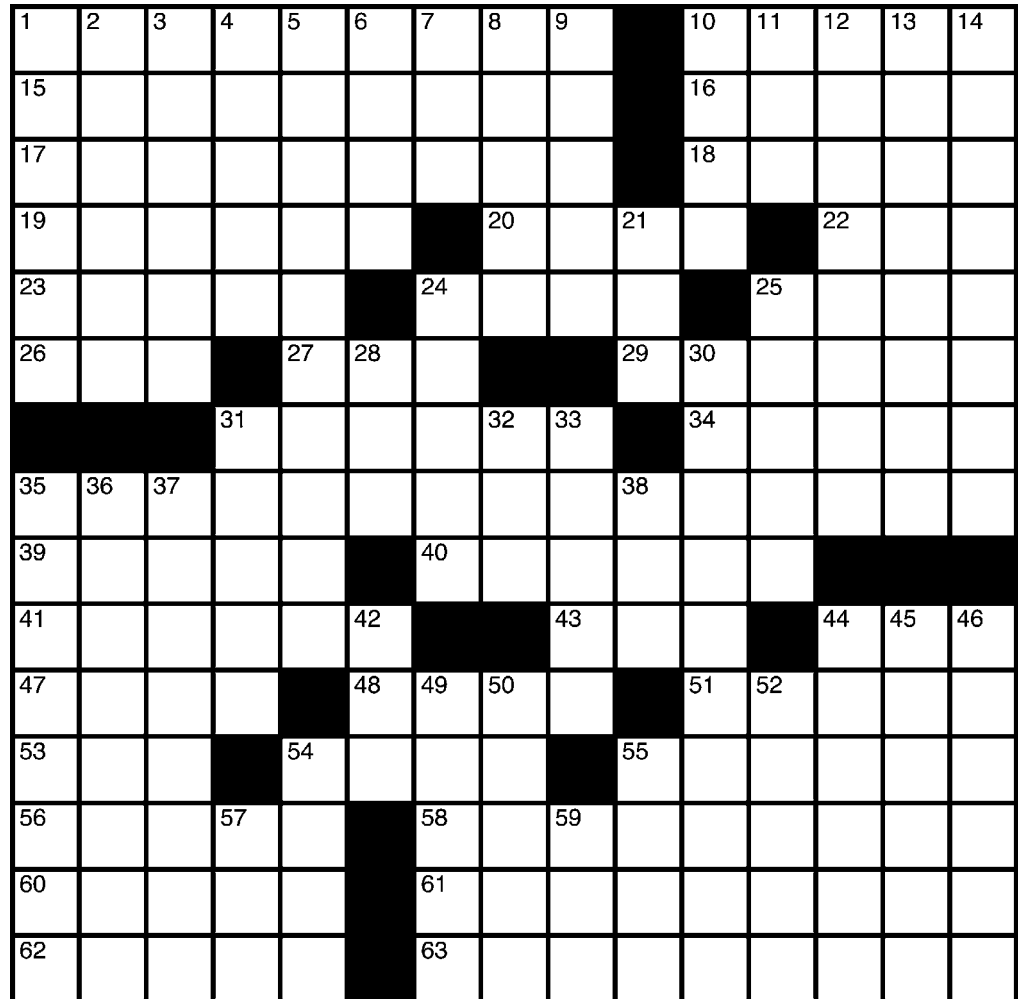
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ACROSS

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DOWN

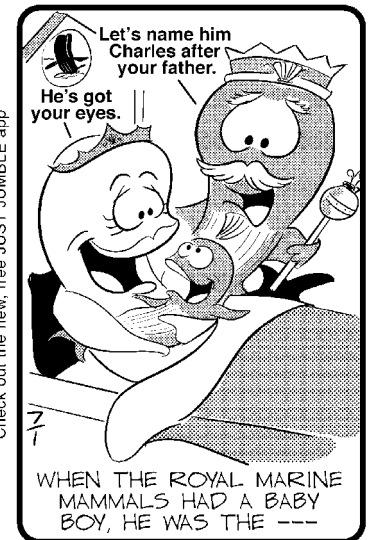
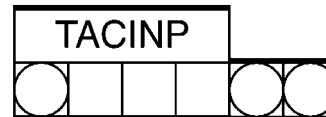
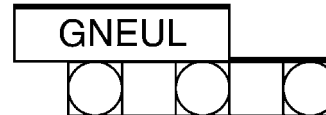
- 1 Kilt features
- 2 Find really funny
- 3 Harden
- 4 Used for a rendezvous
- 5 Classic access provider
- 6 "Around the World in 80 Plates" co-host Cat
- 7 Red state verb
- 8 Big name at the Musée d'Orsay



JUMBLE

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

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



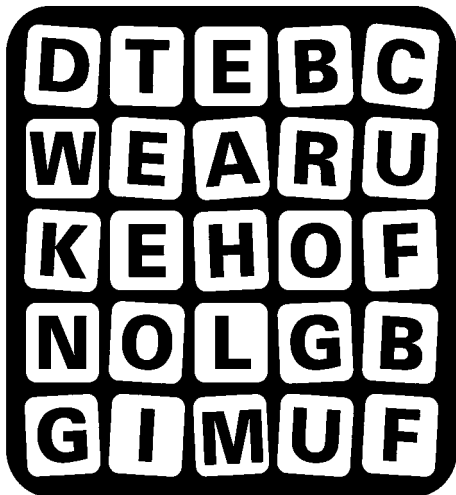
Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

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

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

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.

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- 4 letters = 2 points
- 5 letters = 3 points
- 6 letters = 4 points
- 7 letters = 6 points
- 8 letters = 10 points
- 9+ letters = 15 points

**YOUR BOGGLE
RATING**

- 151+ = Champ
- 101-150 = Expert
- 61-100 = Pro
- 31- 60 = Gamer
- 21- 30 = Rookie
- 11- 20 = Amateur
- 0- 10 = Try again

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The Caboose



BY
JERRY
MATTSON

Most people do not have a full-size caboose in their back yard, but Jerry Tyler does. His, built in 1890, has been there for 34 years.

Jerry grew up in Muskegon near the railyard. He could see the trains from the family home, which included a bakery. As a youngster, Jerry sometimes took a paper bag of donuts to the crews. This often resulted in the tour of an engine or a short train ride. "As a kid, the railyard was my playground," he said.

He has been involved with railroading most of his life, and worked for Grand Trunk Western Railroad for 10 years. He began working on the railroad when he was 20, in 1955. In June of 1964 he was promoted to Locomotive Engineer. The locomotives were then steam powered but were being replaced by diesels. Fewer crew members were needed for diesels, so at age 29 he was laid off.

He has some exciting, if not fond, memories of being on the rails. As a teenager, he and a couple buddies decided to hop a train for a short, two-mile ride into Muskegon but ended up in Grand Rapids. They hitchhiked home the next day. Another time, not yet an Engineer, he drove three engines away from a burning building and successfully drove across a main street to save the equipment.

If collecting Lionel and Marx model trains and having a caboose was not enough, his most unusual collection may be recorded train sounds. He got these by taping the train sounds as they passed near his home.

His caboose was moved in 1975 from the Browne-Morse Company yard, where it had been for 15 years. The 21-ton car, with the inside stripped

clean, was moved with a semi and lowboy trailer. It was positioned on a short set of rails. The work on the caboose then began.

It took him five years to restore the exterior and even longer to get the essential interior appointments.

He also restored a caboose in Coopersville. Jerry was very busy for a few years. He worked at a tool shop in Muskegon all day, then drove 35 miles to work on the railcar for a few hours, returning home to work in his basement machine shop.

Jerry owned the Coopersville caboose for eight years, then sold it to a railroad museum in Saranac where it still remains.

"From scratch," he built two 1:48 scale models of the cabooses he restored.

Over the years, he helped restore six other cabooses. Some of these had extra pieces he needed for his own. He got most of the things on the company's required-items list for a caboose. These included a stretcher, mounted near the ceiling, three cots for the conduc-



tor and two brakemen and warning flares and flags to be used up-rail if the train was stopped. Nearly all items had the company initials on them, discouraging theft. A hand saw, hatchet and hammer were kept behind a glass panel for the same reason. There had to be a good reason for anyone to break the glass.

In all his years working on the rails, he only made one trip in a caboose. I told him that surprised me, as he had one in his back yard. He replied, "It would be too much work to get an engine down here."

Jerry has had three train rides in his life. One was a family outing on the Coopersville-Marne Railway Bunny Train. Another was a round trip from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, to Agawa Canyon. The third was from Tokyo, Japan, to see Mt. Fuji and return. As Fuji was shrouded in fog that day, he never saw it.

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BY
JAY
NEWMARCH

The great thing about traveling when you get older is that you've had more experience navigating your way around unfamiliar places and have the common sense to look before you leap. I have been to Amsterdam a couple of times, but never for more than a day. While my main reason for visiting the Netherlands lay inland, I decided I would start my adventure with a couple of days exploring Amsterdam.

Getting from the airport, which lies to the south of the city, can be handled in a few different ways. Of course, if you're hitting the road, you can rent a car and leave

directly from the airport. In my case, I didn't plan on renting a car until I was ready to leave Amsterdam. That meant I needed to find a different means of transport.

If you're feeling more adventurous, you can take a train into the city right from the train station located in the airport. It will take you into the

central station in Amsterdam. From there you can hire a taxi or jump on a tram to get you to your hotel. I have done that before, but this time 'round, I decided that I wanted something a bit less roundabout. Another option is to hire a taxi, Uber or Lyft. But be aware, this will be your most expensive option.

What is quickly becoming my favorite option is to take a shuttle into town. I have done this a number of times in several cities. A shuttle allows you to get a feel of the area without being behind the wheel of the vehicle. It's a relatively inexpensive way to get door-to-door transportation, but you will need to be patient as you aren't the only one being dropped off.

Amsterdam city proper is not sprawling, so it's easy to navigate. I'd suggest that you stay right within the city and utilize the water taxis, buses and street cars that crisscross the city. Additionally, you can use good old-fashioned



human power and walk or rent a bicycle. Be aware, Amsterdam is a very bike-friendly city. I would venture there are more bicycles than cars. In fact, the remodel of the famous Rijksmuseum includes a tunnel right through the first floor for bicycles to pass through. It's a virtual highway of bikes. Something to see.



I chose a small boutique hotel just outside the city center. It allowed me to wander Amsterdam in all directions, enjoying the sights, sounds, food and ambiance of the city. The older I get, the more I enjoy just allowing myself to flow with the current, letting the day take me where it will. Amsterdam is a great place to do that. While I would always set

out with a destination in mind, I allowed myself to be waylaid and visit whatever piqued my interest. Get a hop on, hop off pass for the canal cruise boats and let it take you around the ring of canals bisecting the city. You can get on and off as you wish, while taking in the city with a view from the canals.

Want to try what will probably be the best roasted chicken you've ever tasted? Stop into De Biertuin, grab a brew and order up their locally famous chicken. Or, visit De Carrousel for delicious little Dutch pancakes, called Poffertjes. A little powdered sugar and some strong coffee. Outstanding.

And, if museums are your thing, the selection is mind boggling. Take some time to do a little research and I'm sure you'll find a number you'd like to visit while you're enjoying the sights.

On the morning of the third day, I took the street car to the rental car location in Amsterdam and headed to Keukenhof, the huge tulip gardens just outside



the city. Think Meijer Gardens with more flowers and less sculpture. It is said that Fred Meijer got the idea for Meijer Gardens after a visit to Keukenhof.

Even though they have seven million tulips in the garden, there seemed to be more people than flowers. It was funny to see everyone taking group pho-



tos and selfies with the flowers. I couldn't help but think that adding yourself to the photos enhanced the flowers. But, to each their own. I do not have a selfie of me with the tulips.

While you're there, stop at one of the unique food vendors. I wandered the gardens while enjoying fresh strawberries, blanket and pigs in the blanket. Stop for a coffee and you'll get a little cookie, too. I love that European tradition. A little cookie or sweet to enjoy with your coffee.



After my visit I headed toward Haarlem and marveled at how much easier it is to navigate with a smart phone. Just make sure your phone is charged and there's no way you can get lost. I remember when the Triptik from AAA was the height of navigation. My mom would flip from page to page, playing co-pilot as my dad followed her audible directions. My co-pilot, my smart phone, never let me down as I wandered through the Dutch countryside.

Haarlem is a quaint, beautiful old Dutch city. Settle in and wander the narrow roads that meander out from the town square. While I only spent a day there, I was able to take in some museums and enjoy a great dinner at Ratatouille, a small Michelin Guide-recognized restaurant. It was a delicious, leisurely dining experience topped off by a chocolate mousse rat!



The next morning, I hit the highway and headed toward Rotterdam. On the way to tracking down my past, I decided to spend a night on the SS Rotterdam, a 1959 ocean liner that has

been renovated and turned into a hotel. My long-time fascination with ocean liners wouldn't let me pass this up. Don't pass it up either, if you are enamored of old ocean liners or just want to be impressed by the stunning design that has been meticulously returned to its former glory. That's a story for another time.

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.

Three reasons why Social Security is Important for Women



BY
VONDA
VANTIL

In the 21st century, more women work, pay Social Security taxes, and earn credit toward monthly retirement income than at any other time in our nation's history. Yet, on average, women face greater economic challenges than men in retirement.

Nearly 55 percent of the people receiving Social Security benefits are women. Women generally live longer than men while often having lower lifetime earnings. And women usually reach retirement with smaller pensions and other assets compared to men. These are three key reasons why Social Security is vitally important to women.

If you've worked and paid taxes into the Social Security system for at least 10 years and have earned a minimum of 40 work credits, you may be eligible for your own benefits. Once you reach age 62, you may be eligible for your own Social Security benefit whether you're married or not and whether your spouse collects Social Security or not. If you're eligible and apply for benefits on more than one work record, you generally receive the higher benefit amount.

The sooner you start planning for retirement, the better off you'll be. We have specific information for women at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/women. Email or post this link to friends and family you love.

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.

Keith's World

Time by the Big Lake

Lake Michigan, that is!



BY
KEITH
SIPE

There's a lot of enjoyment in spending time by the waters of Lake Michigan. In the early part of the year, January through March, the water has taken on a completely different shape, you might say. It's actually hard, it's frozen, and has taken on a shape of its own.

Parking by the Muskegon Water Filtration Plant, you can see the icebergs, and at times, they are so high you are unable to see the open waters. The beauty of the ice is that it has many different sizes and shapes. You may think it would be the same each year, and in some ways, it is, but in all actuality the shape of the ice changes as each year passes. For example, a couple of years ago there were the ice caves. I really don't remember off hand the last time I saw the ice caves. Maybe I wasn't paying much attention. I remember reading about the camera buffs who were out in force capturing the images in many different ways. Climbing over, around, under and in the caves. I like seeing the photos, but, it's just too cold and dangerous for me to climb around on the ice. Another thing I find interesting is that it seems the icebergs form overnight. I mean, you go to the lake and there's no ice, but the next day there's ice all over. Did someone wave a magic wand and the ice forms immediately? Just saying. Then the time comes where I start to get a little tired of all the ice, cold, and snow. (That's the second day of winter.) I'm longing for the warmer summer days.

Just as fast as the ice came, it's gone, then April comes in with a little warmer weather. April through June days are here, spring is in the air (usually). I think at times, these three months seem to drag on and on, and you are saying to yourself, "Come-on warmer weather, where's the 70s?!" For the most



part, everything is still without much color, just grey. The cover of snow is mostly gone and exposing some of the sins left during the winter months. Example: the toys, garden equipment and those stinking leaves that you didn't pick up last fall. Just a few days ago that stuff was covered with snow and out of sight, and of course, out of mind.

Spring is the best. It is the time of renewal. Flowers are beginning to take life. The trees are starting to lose their skeleton look with the birth of new leaves and color. The air is warmer, your attitude is changing and you find there is a new "skip" in your "do da."

Then, finally, summer is here. The warmer air and days of sunshine that you have been longing for. The lazy, crazy, hazy days of summer are here and it is now time to head to the beach to soak up the sun. You find

yourself sitting in your chair on the beach listening to the waves gently coming to shore. The cool breeze coming from across the waters of Lake Michigan. You are wishing this would last forever....

But soon that passes and before you realize it the trees are turning colors -- and they are beautiful. The air is a little crisper. School is back in session and occasionally you hear the sound of the people from Friday night high school football game cheering on their team. Yes, fall is here again, the leaves are falling and you've got to get up early Saturday morning to pick up the leaves. Yuck! The next thought that comes to mind is that you need to get the snow blower repaired.

But wait, you remember...you pile the kids into the car and head out to the water filtration plant. The fall storms are coming in from the lake. You've got to hurry, and if you are lucky you'll be able to find a parking place where the big waves of Lake Michigan clean your car one more time.

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

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BY
LOUISE
MATZ

And then the Birds Came

During the spring and summer months we enjoy the activity at two hummingbird window feeders – one in the living room and one in what we call the “sunroom.” The tiny birds entertain us all day. Because they come right to the window, we feel as though they are household pets. When the last hummer has headed south, the feeders are removed and stored for the winter.

While having our morning coffee a week or so later, I commented to my husband Tom how much I missed the hummingbird visits. Like a lightning bolt, it suddenly struck me that perhaps there were other window bird feeders that could be used for our winter birds. Google sent me to Amazon where I settled on one that I thought would be perfect for the sliding windows in our sunroom. (Only \$12.95!) It arrived in three days and we put it up immediately.

Then, we waited. It took about a week. Naturally, the fearless chickadees came first. A few days later we saw a tufted titmouse, a nuthatch, a sparrow. After a couple weeks, the cardinals and blue jays joined the party.

Placement of the feeder is perfect, easily visible from the kitchen, dining area, and my husband’s favorite chair in the living room. **A month later...** the avian restaurant is thriving. The birds come on a regular basis even if someone is standing within inches of the feeder. Again, we have “household pets.”

Golf, gardening and grandchildren were primary interests of retirement for Louise. Her interests have since expanded to include walking, biking, pickleball and mahjonn. Reading and travel are also high on her list. She and her husband both enjoy bow hunting for deer in the Upper Peninsula, hunting turkeys, and fishing in the Florida Keys.

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Ask the Provider

Why You Should Know Your Pharmacist



BY ANGELA GREEN,
PharmD, BCPS



BY ARUNA JOSYULA, MD

Courtesy of Mercy Health

Question: Today's health care teams include many caregivers. How has the role of the pharmacist changed during the last decade or so?

Answer: The role of the pharmacist has changed in the last decade to include more focus on patient care. There are many practice settings where pharmacists care for patients, such as in community pharmacies, hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics.

Many community pharmacists are now giving vaccinations in pharmacies and counseling patients about medications. Instead of only working in the pharmacy, hospital pharmacists now work with doctors and nurses on a patient's care team to help with questions about medications. They also dose certain antibiotics.

One of the places you will increasingly find pharmacists is in ambulatory care. Ambulatory pharmacists work in a doctor's office or clinic, and they help educate patients about their medications. Pharmacists also help patients learn about and manage their chronic diseases, such as diabetes. Other ambulatory pharmacists work in anticoagulation clinics to help manage patients taking blood thinners.

Question: Are today's pharmacists trained/educated differently than pharmacists who were in school in the early 2000s?

Answer: In 2000, the educational requirements changed for pharmacists and required all pharmacy students to complete a minimum 6-year program to receive their doctorate. Pharmacists continue to be trained on how to distribute medications safely, but now they are also trained to educate patients about medications and disease states, while also ensuring that medications are safe and effective. The educational focus has moved from dispensing medications to patient care.

Question: Who are the other members on a pharmacy team besides the pharmacist?

Answer: Pharmacy technicians are important members of the pharmacy team. They help to support the pharmacist, patient, and clinic, depending on their practice site.

You will find pharmacy technicians in hospitals, emergency departments, community pharmacies and clinics. They aid pharmacists, patients and the health care team by accurately filling prescriptions, collecting a medication list and contacting patients and insurance companies to help patients receive medications. Pharmacy technicians in Michigan will see their role expanding in the future.

Question: How do pharmacists and primary care physicians work together to improve patient health?

Answer: An ambulatory pharmacist working in a primary care physician's (PCP) office plays an integral role in patient care. A PCP can comfortably refer his or her patients who do not have optimal control of various illnesses — such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol or COPD — to an ambulatory pharmacist in their clinic. The pharmacist can then counsel patients about the disease process and lifestyle modifications, while also recommending appropriate medication management for these diseases.

For diseases such as osteoporosis, anxiety or depression, pharmacists can work with the physician to identify the best medication and monitor the patient as changes are made.

Ambulatory pharmacists can complete a medication review with patients in a relaxed atmosphere that allows patients to ask questions about their medications and their effects. After completing the review, the pharmacist can help create an individualized medication plan and monitor the patient (in person and/or via phone) as medication changes are made, so that each patient can take the safest and smallest number of medicines possible.

Question: What types of services does a typical pharmacy offer now that weren't offered in past decades?

Answer: Community pharmacies offer vaccinations and medication management, and some are offering testing for various diseases, such as diabetes, high cholesterol and certain infections, like strep throat.

Today's pharmacists play a crucial role in the health of patients by working in various settings to offer patient-centered care. Ambulatory pharmacists help patients manage certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes, chronic pain, osteoporosis, COPD, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. They work with physicians, care managers, nurse practitioners and other members of the health care team to care for patients. They ensure that the medications patients are taking are optimal for their particular circumstances and work to help patients meet their health goals.

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Hospice 101 – An Overview of What You Need to Know



BY
SARA
LOWE

“I wish I would have called sooner.” It’s a phrase we hear too often in hospice care. Caregivers often wait too long before calling hospice in because it’s

perceived as scary – or as “giving up.” However, it doesn’t have to be, especially when you realize what a service hospice provides.

You don’t need to enroll in a class to educate yourself about hospice care, nor should you be shy about making inquiries on behalf of yourself or a loved one. Many of us don’t even think about it until it’s staring us in the face, but knowing the basics can help ensure your loved one has the end-of-life experience they wish.

Hospice is specialized care for someone with a life-limiting condition who has six or fewer months to live, as determined by a licensed physician. It focuses neither on prolonging nor ending life, but instead on delivering expert symptom management, maximizing comfort, and reducing pain.

Contrary to what you might have heard, hospice is not about giving up. Rather, it’s about providing a gift to your loved one so they’re able to enjoy their final days as pain-free as possible. Families and caregivers report reduced stress and feeling increased support when hospice is involved.

Hospice is often provided in the patient’s home, wherever that might be. It relies on a host of caregivers. A typical hospice team will be comprised of a hospice physician, primary care physician, nurse, social worker, aide, volunteer, spiritual caregiver, and therapists specializing in a wide variety of complementary therapies.

There is usually no direct cost to families for hospice care, as Medicaid and Medicare and most private insurers cover medicine, supplies, equipment, and the team providing care.

Hospice organizations treat not only the patient, but caregivers and families. Some continue to provide services even after death, including grief support and other types of support groups.

In some cases, patients in hospice become better to a point they no longer need hospice and “graduate” from it.

End of life brings out emotions we never knew we had, forcing us to confront fear head-on. You, your loved one, and your family don’t have to go it alone. If you’re unsure whether it’s time to call hospice, go ahead, make the call. Whoever answers on the other end will be there with answers – and hope.

Sara Lowe is the Executive Director of Emmanuel Hospice. Lowe helped form the organization in 2012. For information, visit www.emmanuel-hospice.org.



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BY
CHRISTINE
WISTRUM

Service Dogs: Making Life Easier

I love dogs! If the number of Americans who own a dog is any indication, a lot of other people feel the same. According to the 2017–2018 National Pet Owners Survey, over 60 million Americans owned one or more dogs. That’s a lot of tail wagging!

As an Independent Living Specialist, I field a lot of questions about assistance dogs. Assistance dogs include emotional support, and therapy dogs as well as service dogs. Many people tell me their dog is a service dog, but when questioned, it turns out they have a therapy dog or an emotional support dog, not a service animal. So, what’s the difference?

Emotional support dogs bring their owners great comfort during times of emotional distress, however, they are not specifically trained to do anything to help their owners live independently. They are not covered by the ADA laws. The dogs are prescribed by a licensed mental health profes-

sional, and primarily work with a single individual rather than groups of people.

Therapy dogs are trained to work with groups of people, bringing comfort and acceptance, but are not trained to do anything to diminish a disability. These are the dogs that visit nursing facilities and hospitals. They are required to have a good temperament and to enjoy interacting with people.

Service dogs are recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act as being an assistive technology item that allows the handler to live more independently; they are not considered pets. While they may also provide emotional comfort, a true service dog must be trained to perform a specific behavior that mitigates the disability of the owner.

So, how might a service dog help you? Dogs are so smart and can do so much! They can open and close doors, and block people from crowding you if you have PTSD. They can pick up objects you’ve dropped on the floor, or step on a button that will call 911 when you’re in trouble. They can help keep your balance as you walk up and

down stairs. They can go into a dark house, check to see no one is there, and turn on the lights. Some service dogs can recognize if you are going to have a seizure, or when your blood sugar is dropping. Some can help pull a person in a wheelchair, stop repetitive behaviors in autistic children, push a button to call the elevator, or wake you from a nightmare. It is absolutely amazing what these dogs can do!

Not every dog can be a service dog. It takes a steady, gentle temperament, the desire to help, and a nature that is willing to serve. The dog must also be able to perform the task you require. For more information about choosing or training a service dog, please contact Disability Network/Lakeshore at 616-396-5326.

Chris is a Gerontologist who works at Disability Network/Lakeshore in Holland, Michigan as an Independent Living Specialist. Current interests include assistive technology, veterans’ issues, emergency preparedness planning and service dog training.

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Question: What are the requirements for receiving disabled widow's benefits?

Answer: You may be able to get disabled widow(er)'s benefits at age 50 if you meet Social Security's disability requirement. Your disability must have started before age 60 and within seven years of the latest of the following dates: the month the worker died; the last month you were entitled to survivors benefits on the worker's record as a parent caring for a surviving minor child; or the month your previous entitlement to disabled widow(er)'s benefits ended because your disability ended. To learn more, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/disability/dqualify9.html.

Question: How do I appeal a decision on my application for disability benefits?

Answer: When we make a decision on your application, we'll send you a letter explaining our decision. If you don't agree with our decision, you can ask us to look at your case again, or appeal it. You must appeal within 60 days from the date you get our decision letter. You can: File a disability appeal online at www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html and electronically provide documents to support your request, even if you live outside of the United States; or visit your local Social Security office. For more information, call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. To learn more about Social Security's disability programs, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/disability.

Question: How can I become a representative payee?

Answer: If you know someone who receives Social Security or Supplemental Security Income



(SSI), and who needs assistance managing their payments, contact your local Social Security office about becoming their representative payee. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov/payee for more information.



BY
VONDA
VANTIL

Question: I applied for Medicare benefits last week. How can I check the status of my application?

Answer: You can check the application status online with your personal my Social Security account at www.socialsecurity.gov/signin, but you must wait five days from the date you originally filed. If you are unable to check your status online, call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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: Can I delay my retirement benefits and receive benefits as a spouse only? How does that work?

Answer: It depends on your date of birth. If you were born on or before 01/01/1954 and your spouse is receiving Social Security benefits, you can apply for retirement benefits on your spouse's record as long as you are at your full retirement age. You then will earn delayed retirement credits up to age 70, as long as you do not collect benefits on your own work record. Later, when you do begin receiving benefits on your own record, those payments could very well be higher than they would have been otherwise. If your spouse is also full retirement age and does not receive benefits, your spouse will have to apply for benefits and request the payments be suspended. Then you can receive benefits on your spouse's Social Security record. If you were born on or after 01/02/1954 and wish to receive benefits, you must file for all benefits for which you are eligible. Social Security will determine the benefits you are eligible for and pay you accordingly. For individuals born on or after 01/02/1954, there is no longer an option to select which benefit you would like to receive, even beyond your full retirement age. Widows are an exception, as they can choose to take their deceased spouse's benefit without filing for their own. For more information, visit www.socialsecurity.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.

Answers for Word Search , Crossword Puzzle and Suduko on Pages 12 & 13

P	R	O	M	O	C	O	D	E		B	E	E	F	S	
L	O	S	E	P	O	W	E	R		A	T	A	R	I	
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Boggle Answers:

BEAR FROG HARE GOAT MINK
CRAB MOLE MULE NEWT DEER LION

Jumble Answers:

LUNGE WELSH CATNIP FORMAL

ANSWER:

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