

MilestonesTM

News and Possibilities for Seniors

January 2015 • Free

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Multicultural Philadelphia

Teaching and learning at Graterford prison

By Marcia Z. Siegal

“It’s been an amazing experience, finding my teaching voice inside a maximum-security prison,” says Marjorie Jones, 74. She teaches a weekly “Women in American History” class to 20 convicted felons. Her class takes place on Tuesdays, at Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution at Graterford (commonly referred to as Graterford Prison) - a formidable concrete building set in the midst of a stretch of farmland. Nothing about the experience is ordinary - including getting into the classroom. Once inside the prison, she waits for the first set of sliding steel doors to open. One or more guards accompany her everywhere she goes. She shows her driver’s license; her right hand is stamped; and she is given a plastic bracelet and a visitor’s badge to wear. She walks through a metal detector while her books, papers and watch are scanned separately. Another metal door slides open, and she enters a waiting area. Soon after, guards escort her down a long hallway to the school, and then to her classroom. Her students are waiting, each wearing a dark brown jumpsuit with DOC in large letters stamped on the back.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen,” she says as she begins the class.

She began teaching this college history course at the prison two and a half years ago as an adjunct professor for the college degree



Photo courtesy of Marjorie Jones

Marjorie Jones teaches a weekly class on women in American history to all-male students in prison.

Villanova’s program at Graterford shortly after moving to Philadelphia. She’d previously taught in a similar program, sponsored by Mercy College at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, a men’s maximum security state prison located in Ossining, N.Y. Students in the Mercy College and Villanova University prison programs follow the same rigorous curriculum used at the campus sites. “Nothing is changed or ‘dumbed down,’” Jones says.

The author of a biography on British scholar and historian Frances Yates and an upcoming biography of Philadelphia Quaker Mary Vaux Walcott, known as the “Audubon of Botany,” Jones is passionate about women’s history. Her prison course highlights women’s rights issues and the lives of both famous and ordinary women who helped to shape the American story, from the Revolutionary War era to modern times. Students make use of Sara

program sponsored there by Villanova University. “The students are so smart, so eager to learn. I look forward to class,” she says, adding, “Often it doesn’t go where I think it will go.”

Located in a remote area of Skippack Township, Montgomery County, surrounded by high walls topped with barbed wire, Graterford Prison houses 4,000 male inmates, considered to be among the most dangerous and violent in the state prison system. The college program enrolls a maximum of 65 students at any one time.

Jones connected with

Resolutions

Change habits, be well

By Alicia M. Colombo

The old adage, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail,” especially rings true when it comes to resolutions about your health. You may want to lose weight or lower your blood pressure, but if you don’t determine the steps to that will help you achieve these goals, they will likely be abandoned within a few weeks.

“Most people fail at losing weight because they don’t have a concrete plan,” said Sharon Congleton, health promotion nurse consultant at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. “To successfully achieve any health-related goal, you have to make a long-term plan. Your goal can be overall improvement and disease prevention, or to stabilize existing health conditions and reduce symptoms. Even just losing 10 pounds can be significant for anyone with high blood pressure,” she said.

Getting started

For any health change, set a start date and write it on your calendar.

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Photo by Linda L. Riley

Fitness classes and full fitness centers, like this one at West Philadelphia Senior Community Center, help seniors build healthy habits.

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Health Tips

With effort, you can beat the winter blues



Milestones file photo

If you think it may be more than the blues, see your doctor.

Shorter days and cold temperatures often contribute to seasonal affective disorder (SAD), sometimes called "the winter blues." This is a type of mild depression that usually occurs during cold months when there is less daylight. The condition is characterized by feeling sad, moody or tired. One in five Americans experiences SAD and 75% are women, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

It is important to distinguish between the winter blues and clinical depression. The term "depression" is often used generically to describe feeling sad, unhappy, stressed, fatigued or unwell. But this characterization can be misleading. While feelings associated with the blues can be unsettling, they are often temporary and mild. Depression is a serious condition with symptoms that linger, occurring nearly every day for at least two weeks. It causes a level of distress or impairment that interferes with work, self-care and social activities. If you think you might have depression, see a medical professional to discuss treatment.

Feeling blue?

There is a scientific basis for SAD, which has to do with a decrease in sunlight during the winter. Sunlight enters the brain through the eyes, stimulating the production of a neurotransmitter, serotonin, that supports nerve cell functioning and mood, according to the Mayo Clinic. Less light results in lower serotonin levels. Darkness prompts the production of melatonin, which promotes sleep. The combination of lower serotonin and increased melatonin levels often results in SAD. Here are some

tips to help fight the winter blues.

Lighten up: Get as much exposure to sunlight as possible. Use artificial light to mimic more hours of daylight. Keep curtains and blinds open as much as possible to let the light in. If you have trouble waking up in the morning, consider using a light timer to simulate natural dawn.

Stay active: Exercise helps to raise serotonin levels. Staying busy can help keep your mind off negative thoughts. Try a new hobby or learn a new skill. Activities, such as photography and nature walks, will keep both your mind and body active.

Eat healthy: Take a multivitamin high in Vitamin D. Certain herbs may also help to improve your mental state. Fight the urge to load up on carbs or sweets that will only make you feel worse later.

Mix things up: Tackle a goal or prepare for an exciting event in the future. Experiment with a new hairstyle, lipstick or outfit.

Improve your mood: Volunteer or do something good for someone. Treat yourself to something you enjoy. Do things that make you laugh.

Seasonal depression will be discussed at "Touching Lives Over 55" groups to be held at 14 senior centers in Jan. and Feb. For details, contact David Young at 215-487-1750, ext. 1214.

Information provided by Journey's Way's "Beating the Winter Blues" program.

Solutions to the *Milestones* Crossword puzzle

(see page 15)



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Health resolutions

• continued from cover

"Think of it as a commitment you make for yourself that can't be cancelled," said Congleton. The next step is to write down your long-term and short-term goals, and be as specific as possible. Your overall goal may be an improvement in health, such as lowering your cholesterol level to reduce the need for medication; or losing a significant amount of weight.

"It's great to have a big goal, but don't expect too much too soon. You aren't going to lose 25 pounds in a month, but you can make progress towards your goal by focusing on positive changes," said Congleton. She suggests breaking goals up into smaller steps that are spread out over several weeks or months, so they are realistic and attainable. "If my goal is to eat healthier, and I'm a bread and butter person, my first goal could be to put less butter on my bread. It's not realistic to say, 'I'm never going to eat butter again.' But you may discover that, over time, you get used to eating less of a specific food and the result will be better health," she said.

Strategies for success

Once you've created a plan, discuss it with your health care provider and develop a personal support system. Consider family members, friends, neighbors and others who know you and your habits well. Choose someone to share your goals and plan of action with, and then discuss whether it's realistic for you. Based on this feedback, you may want to make some changes to your plan. Once your start date arrives, choose someone you can talk with regularly, to help keep you motivated and accountable.

"Be patient with yourself. Research shows it takes 21 times of consistently doing something to develop a habit or to change a behavior. I recommend keeping a daily journal. It helps to reinforce good behaviors and also documents unsuccessful days, so you can learn to handle things differently in the future. A journal also allows you to keep some aspects of your life personal, such as your emotions and health problems," said Congleton.

Below are some common health-related

goals, along with tips for each. No matter your goal, participation in regular health promotion discussions and activities is likely to help assure success.

Shed the pounds

Weight loss and eating better are among the most common New Year's resolutions. "The key is controlling portions and eating basic, healthy foods. When you make a meal, fill your plate halfway with fruits and vegetables. Lean protein and whole grains should fill your remaining plate. Choose low-fat dairy as a snack or drink low-fat milk with your meal," said Congleton.

Want to get healthy in the new year? Check out your local senior center!

Every local senior center has a regular schedule of nutrition, chronic disease prevention and management, health education, and exercise programs that are available to Philadelphia seniors for free. Call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit www.pcaCares.org to find a senior community center in your neighborhood.

Know what a serving size looks like. One serving of protein is equal to three ounces or the size of a deck of cards. A serving of grains is a ½-cup or the size of a tennis ball. Eat whole wheat bread and whole wheat pasta, sweet potatoes or brown rice, which are filling foods and high in fiber. For more information about portions and healthy foods, go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

"Be open and willing to try new things. You may find that you like something that you normally wouldn't eat. Many soy-based meat substitutes and new condiments are lower in fat, sugar and salt. Fresh herbs are a great way to add flavor without fat or sodium. I recommend making some meals from scratch each week, so you can control what goes into it, as well as have leftovers for another meal," said Congleton. Try cooking without added fat. Grill, bake or broil meat and fish. Baked potatoes and steamed vegetables are healthy alternatives

to cooking with oil or some form of animal fat. (See article on page 5 for cooking classes.)

Exercise has a multitude of health benefits, including lowering blood pressure, reducing the risk of falls, and improving mood. If you groan at the thought of exercise, there's good news. Research shows that physical activity doesn't have to be strenuous to be effective. "The daily recommendation for older adults is 30 minutes of activity a day, five days a week," said Congleton. But that doesn't mean you have to join a gym.

Senior centers offer a variety of no-cost exercise classes weekly, including yoga, tai chi, chair exercise, Zumba and low-impact aerobics. Don't forget the best exercise of all, walking. A stroll around the neighborhood, the local high school track, or at an indoor shopping mall are great ways to get exercise. Park farther away from buildings or get off the subway/bus one stop earlier to allow a chance for walking. In bad weather, take your workout indoors. You can use exercise videos/DVDs and TV exercise programs to get in exercise. If you want to increase your upper body strength, you can work out with hand weights or canned foods to provide resistance and promote muscle strength.

Time to quit

Quitting smoking is one of the hardest health goals to achieve, especially if you've been a longtime smoker. "Understand that smoking is an addiction and that it's difficult to quit," said Congleton, who advises seeking medical advice or joining a smoking cessation program.

Most people experience withdrawal symptoms in the beginning, which can include irritability, tiredness, dizziness, increased appetite, headaches and cravings. There are medications, such as nicotine replacement patches, gum and prescription medications, to help the body gradually decline from its dependence on nicotine and ease withdrawal symptoms.

The PA Free Quitline offers the following tips when trying to resist the urge to smoke. Take several deep breaths to calm down; exercise; go for a walk; or take a nap. Drink plenty of liquids, but avoid caffeine. Cough

drops, mints or chewing gum can help with dry mouth. Holding a drinking straw or cut vegetables can replace the sensation of having a cigarette in your mouth or hand. To avoid weight gain, be aware of the difference between the urge to smoke and being hungry. Eat small meals and snacks of nutritious, low-fat foods. Above all, be patient with yourself and remember that the uncomfortable feelings will pass with time.

All Pennsylvanians can receive free tools, coaching, research-based information and connection to others trying to quit from the PA Free Quitline. Coaches can discuss overcoming common barriers, such as dealing with stress, fighting cravings, coping with irritability and controlling weight gain. Telephone program participants may be eligible to receive a free, two-week supply of patches or gum. Access the PA Free Quitline at <https://pa.quitlogix.org>; and daily, by phone, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1-800-784-8669 or 1-855-335-3569. Information is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips.

Continue the journey

Monitor your progress periodically, using a variety of methods. If your goal was to lose weight, don't just look at the number on the scale. Take body measurements and notice if your clothes fit differently. For any change, you should take time to evaluate how you feel emotionally and physically. Have you noticed an increased level of pride or positivity? How have your energy, endurance, flexibility, balance, strength and hunger levels changed? At your next doctor's appointment and blood work, compare your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose A1C level (for diabetes management and pre-diabetes screening).

Know that committing to a health-improvement strategy is only the first part of the process. "After the first few weeks or months, pat yourself on the back. It's now time to evaluate your progress. Take a look at your journal and where you stand in relation to your established goals. Write down what worked and what didn't. You may want to adjust your current goals or set new ones," said Congleton.

Contact Alicia Colombo at: acolombo@pcaphl.org

Free Library can help you get cookin'

By Alicia M. Colombo

Resolutions often include improving health and trying, or learning, something new. The Free Library of Philadelphia's new Culinary Literacy Center can help you accomplish all of these goals.

"We're harkening back to an older way of cooking," said Liz Fitzgerald, culinary literacy specialist. "We want to take people back to when food was pure, before everything was pre-packaged and processed. We focus on whole food ingredients." Even if you're a seasoned chef, Fitzgerald believes there's still room to learn some new tricks.



Photo courtesy of Free Library of Philadelphia

Nutrition Links Supervisor Suzanne Weltman (right) offers food preparation tips to Debbie Ann Powell

For example, if you loved a dish you had at an Asian-fusion restaurant, or want to try some new flavors or ingredients, here's your opportunity to learn how.

The center, which opened June 2014 in the Parkway Central Library at 1901 Vine St., was created with a vision of helping people build literacy skills through cooking. "Over half of the adult population in the city of Philadelphia is at a 4th grade reading level," said Fitzgerald. "We teach literacy skills through a curriculum that includes not just reading, but also the math and science that is involved in using recipes and bringing them to life in the kitchen. We support healthy lifestyles for people of all ages through nutrition education and by helping people to understand how cooking can support disease prevention. People learn best by doing, and the doing here is cooking."

Overcoming roadblocks to cooking is also part of it. "Just like anything else, you need to have a space to make mistakes. It can be scary, especially if you're on a limited income. People may fear wasting money on special ingredients, if the recipe doesn't turn out well," said Fitzgerald.

The Culinary Literacy Center gives people of all ages the opportunity to learn hands-on and ask questions in a judgment-free environment. All events held at the center are free, including cooking classes, demonstrations and chef/cookbook author signings. Previous events have included well-known local celebrity chefs Marc Vetri and Jose Garces. A range of topics and cooking styles are regularly featured, such as Indian meals; classic Italian cooking; baking, pies and cookie-making; soups and stews; and winter favorites.

"Every bite of food we eat has a story, and food is such a big part of our cultural identity. It can even bring people of different backgrounds together," said Fitzgerald.

For more information about the Culinary Literacy Center and a schedule of upcoming events: www.freelibrary.org/cook; e-mail kitchen@freelibrary.org; or 215-686-5323. The website features online registration (required for all events) and a food blog.

January events

Meatless Monday: Jan. 5 at 6 p.m. – Class on preparing vegetarian meals with cooking demo, food samples, discussion and healthy diet resources.

Taste of African Heritage Series: Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 and Feb. 3, 10 at 6 p.m. Popular course for people of all backgrounds on plant-based nutrition, with a cultural flair. Attending all classes is recommended.

Chow Down on Wellness with Veterans: Wed. Jan. 14 at 11 a.m. (2nd Wednesday of each month) – In cooperation with the U.S. Veterans Administration, learn about plant-based nutrition. Participants need not be veterans.

Cooking with Ethnic Herbs and Spices: Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. – If you're watching your fat and sodium intake, this class is perfect for you. Go beyond salt, pepper and old stand-bys.

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Resolutions

Is now, my retirement, the time to catch up with my dreams? Yes... Incrementally



By Dick Goldberg

In 2004, when I became director of the national age 50-plus civic engagement initiative, Coming of Age, I was asked to develop a program to help people plan engaged retirements. "Why?" I asked. "People have been planning their retirements forever without help."

And then I tried some of the exercises under consideration. One took me on a guided visualization that beckoned my subconscious to draw a picture of what my next chapter might look like.

A colleague's soothing voice asked me to call up an image of where I might live. "Woods" popped into my mind's eye. (I

wanted to live in the woods? I had always thought Santa Fe.) And then I "saw" a path ... a covered bridge ... and then ... Forbidden Drive!

Ohmygosh, the inner me was telling the conscious me that I wanted to retire right here in Philadelphia; specifically, in my house near Fairmount Park.

We had to create this program, I now insisted (I am famous for having the zealotry of the convert). And then I started guiding the development of what became "Explore Your Future," which now consists of four interactive sessions that help participants define a rewarding future.

Once we had the program, I started presenting it and training others. We built a national cadre of 150 trainers and had 9,000 participants. But guess who wasn't

among the 9,000? Me.

So last year, I became a participant/observer in the sessions I led. I did the full schmear – identified role models, engaged in life reflection, assessed strengths and dreams, chose goals, and determined what I needed to help me realize those goals.

And I asked myself, "Is now the time to catch up with my dreams?" "Well, yes." I thought.

Little by little

As a teenager I had been an avid classical pianist. But most of my adult life I played "The American Songbook" from "cheat sheets" – the melody and chord symbols that allow you to make those songs your own.

Ever one to set a high bar, I decided I would learn to play a concerto. There's a CD program called "Music Minus One" that provides a full orchestral accompaniment for you, the soloist. I chose the Bach F minor concerto, got our woefully-out-of-tune spinet tuned and sat down to practice.

Ohmygosh, again. This was way harder than it was when I showboated Rachmaninoff and Chopin as a kid. Not only did my left hand not know what my right hand was doing, they frequently seemed totally estranged.

Clearly, before I could tackle the concerto, I needed to learn easier pieces, then work my way up incrementally to the complexity of the concerto. By late 2015?

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Resolutions

Resolve to get your legal matters in order: Plain facts about probate, wills and trusts

By Linda L. Riley

Depending on where you live, what you own, and how many potential heirs you have, you may not need a will. But, says attorney Paul Feldman, "It's always better to have a will." Most peoples' lives have at least one complicating factor that makes a will advisable, if not crucial. More than one child, more than one marriage, even contentious cousins – all can result in long, drawn-out and costly legal battles.

And, he says, despite all that you may have heard about how important it is to avoid probate, in Pennsylvania that is really not an issue. Although in some other states, such as Florida and California, the probate process is both expensive and complex, in Pennsylvania it is fairly straightforward.

The truth about probate

"Probate is simply the process of gaining authority from the Registrar of Wills and Estates," says Feldman, a partner with Feldman & Feldman, LLP in Jenkintown. "Probate is necessary when you have to establish who has the authority to handle the decedent's affairs."

Paying bills, disposing of property, distributing the estate – in order to do any of this, Letters Testamentary (if there was a will) or Letters of Administration (if there was no will) are needed from the county Register of Wills. To obtain these, the person who is acting as executor of the will takes a death certificate, the original will, and an estimate of the value of the estate to the Register of Wills in the county where the deceased person lived. There is a fee paid based on the estate's value which, if it turns out to be greater or less than originally estimated, will be adjusted later in the process.

For almost any estate in Pennsylvania, one must file a Pennsylvania Inheritance Tax return. "You have to figure out the value of all the assets, collect information

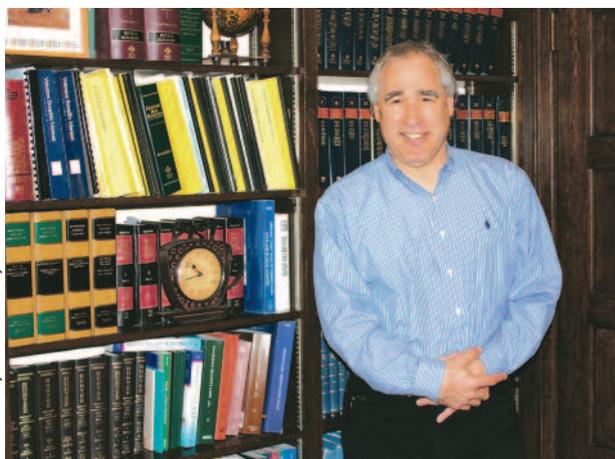


Photo by Linda L. Riley

Attorney Paul Feldman says probate in Pennsylvania is not a complex or costly process, but most people do need a will.

on the debts, and file an inheritance tax return," Feldman says.

There is one exception. "If you own everything jointly (with your spouse) there is no need for probate, nor do you need to file an Inheritance Tax Return," he says. The surviving spouse inherits those assets automatically, and is also responsible for any debts. And in Pennsylvania, a spouse does not owe any inheritance tax.

Trust – or not?

If a living trust has been set up, the trust directs the distribution of the assets and payment of bills after the person dies. In some places, this streamlines the process of settling the estate, and is less costly. "In places like California and Florida, a trust is really important because the probate process is very lawyer-intensive," Feldman says. But, says Feldman, in Pennsylvania, that isn't the case; and setting up a trust and transferring assets, such as real estate, into it, can be costly.

One reason to set up a trust in Pennsylvania would be if your situation is complicated by more than one marriage with competing interests of the surviving spouse, children and stepchildren; or if there are extremely contentious relations between siblings. In the case of a second marriage, if you die

before your spouse, Feldman says, "don't assume your spouse will carry out your joint plan."

For example, if you and your spouse own a house, and you each have a child – you may agree that, after you both have died, they should inherit equal shares in the house. But whoever is the surviving spouse may not go along with that when the time comes. One way to ensure that your intentions

are carried out is to create a joint trust, where the assets belong to the two spouses, he says. While both of you are living, it is revocable, (meaning, it can be changed) – so that if you decide to sell your house and move to an apartment, or use your assets in some other way, you can do that. But once either of you dies, it becomes irrevocable. The assets are for the benefit of the surviving spouse, but when he or she dies, they will be divided however you set it up originally in the joint trust. As added precaution, you may name both the spouse and the child of the deceased spouse as co-trustees, to make sure the trust is administered fairly, protecting the interests of all parties.

You may also want to set up a trust if

you are concerned about your children fighting over your estate; if your child has a gambling problem or other issues that make you hesitate to leave a large chunk of money at one time; or if one child has special needs.

Another reason for setting up a trust would be if you are concerned about losing your ability to manage your affairs, according to Gerald E. Darling, author of "Pros and Cons of Living Trusts." Darling says that this is primarily an issue if you have substantial assets, or if there is no one that you want to give power of attorney. In this case, you and the bank or trust company could be co-trustees; if you subsequently lose capacity to manage it, the co-trustee will do so.

Darling points out that there is no tax advantage to setting up a trust; it is subject to the same inheritance tax as assets outside of the trust.

Having someone who understands the laws in your state, and has experience and expertise in estate law, is crucial when making these kinds of decisions, Feldman says. To find the right lawyer for you, he says, "Ask around, ask questions – you have to be a good consumer."

For information about finding a lawyer, see page 15.

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Sunday

City Food Tours Presents: Ethnic Eats. The Italian Market is a treasure trove of outstanding Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese & Mexican culinary delights. Take an exotic journey of rich flavors & vibrant cultures, includes a visit to the Buddhist temple. 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Various locations throughout South Phila. Register: 800-979-3370. (Sundays through Jan. 25) \$

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Culture Films Series: Local Color – Netherlands. "Pront in't Kleed / In a State of Dress" (2010), a film about a few very old ladies in a small town in Holland who still painstakingly dress in 16th century clothes. 2 p.m. Univ. of Pa. Museum. 215-898-2680. \$

18

Philadelphia Home Show. Innovative products, ideas, practical advice, & discounts on remodeling, home improvement & decor from experts. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pa. Convention Center, Exhibition Hall F. 855-856-7469. (Jan. 19 & 23-25 @ various times) \$

25

Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Works by Lutosawski. Wheelchair seating & large print programs. 3 p.m. Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall. 215-893-1999. \$
Music for the Mystery of Silents. New score by Mike Stambaugh for Ernst Lubitsch's silent film, "The Eyes of the Mummy" (1918). Tour of Egypt Gallery: 2 p.m.; program: 3 p.m. Univ. of Pa. Museum. 215-898-2680. \$

Monday

Healing Moments Series Begins. Gentle, healing movements of the ancient Chinese art of Qigong, the practice of moving energy through the body for good health & well-being. 2 p.m. Center on the Hill. Register: 215-247-4654. (Continues Jan. 12, 26 & Feb. 2) \$

12

Gentle Therapeutic Yoga. Slow, gentle movements to stretch the body & relax the mind. Designed for people with fibromyalgia, MS, back injuries, chronic pain or fatigue & other physical challenges. 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Mondays) \$
Pals for Life. Pet therapy session. 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day 19

20th Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service. Volunteer service & civic engagement projects provide services to thousands of people throughout the tri-state area, including children, seniors & families. To volunteer: 215-851-1811 or www.MLKdayofservice.org.

26

Letting Go of the Old & Creating New. Memories often keep us living in a past that no longer suits our needs or future lifestyle. Program offers tips & solutions. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Center on the Hill 215-247-4654.
Spiritual Journey Class. A class for the mind, body & spirit. 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.

Tuesday

Behind the Scenes at the New York City Opera. Discussions of opera, opera & musical theatre. 2 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Continues Jan. 13, 20 & 27) \$
Experiences in Mindfulness. Enjoy life, one moment at a time. Classes will explore & expand ways to practice mindfulness in our daily lives. 10 to 11:15 a.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Continues Jan. 13, 20 & 27) \$

13

Chow Down on Wellness with Veterans. Join local veterans for a cooking class on clean, plant-based eating. A "greener" diet can support disease prevention & heart health, lower blood pressure, help with weight loss. 11 a.m. Parkway Central Library. Open to the public, not limited to veterans. Register: 215-686-5323.

20

Celebrate the Life of Martin Luther King. Explore the life of MLK, eat great food & enjoy entertainment. Noon to 2. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.

27

Celebrate Your Birthday. Cake, ice cream, lunch & live entertainment. 11:45 p.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.
Movie Night for Adults: "All is Lost." Screening on 63" flat screen with popcorn. 6:45 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$

Wednesday

Emergency Preparedness for Senior Citizens Workshop Series. 11 a.m. Presented by American Red Cross. St. Anne's Senior Center. 215-426-9799. (Continues Jan. 14 & 21)

14

The Academy of Vocal Arts Presents: An Evening of Duets & Arias. Vocalists perform beloved operas. 6:30 p.m. Phila. City Institute. 215-685-6621.

21

History Series @ The Library: Remember the Alamo? Librarian Steve Wright discusses 13-day siege of the Alamo in March 1936, dispelling folklore, myth & speculation. 6:30 p.m. Free Library of Phila., Bustleton Branch. 215-685-0472.

28

Live Right With ShopRite: Cooking Through the Alphabet. Healthy ingredients that begin with the letter K. 11 a.m. St. Anne's Senior Center. 215-426-9799.

Thursday

New Year's Day 1
2015 Mummers Parade. Comics, fancies & string bands: 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Broad St., Washington Ave. to JFK Blvd. Fancy Brigades: Noon & 5 p.m., Pa. Convention Center. Parade is free. Fancy Brigade tickets: 1-800-298-4200. \$
Free at the Kimmel: New Year's Day Celebration. Children's activities & live performances. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Kimmel Center, Commonwealth Plaza. 215-790-5800.

Healthy Habits Demonstration. Case worker prepares healthy foods & discusses benefits of ingredients. 1:30 p.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.
Speaker Series: David Thornburgh, Executive Director for the Committee of Seventy. Discussion of community watchdog organization's work. Dessert & coffee provided. Noon. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$

15

Soul Line Dancing for Beginners. Old favorites & new dances designed for stress relief, weight loss & fun. 5:45 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Thursdays) \$

22

Aging: Control & Change. Presentation on the aging process, how control & change influences decision making, factors causing resistance, & promoting positive outcomes. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.
Healthy Habits Demonstration. Case worker cooks healthy foods & discusses benefits of ingredients. 1:30 p.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.

29

The Obesity Epidemic. Bariatric Surgeon Dr. John Meilahn discusses why we're experiencing an increase in obesity. 12:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

Friday

'Beauty & the Beast.' New version of classic tale, where Belle & her sister Cassandra leave London to start life anew after their father loses the family fortune. Recommended for families with children 4 & younger. Noon & 7 p.m. Arden Theatre Company. 215-922-1122. (Through Feb. 1 with various dates & times) \$

9

Golden Yoga. Positions adapted for chair or standing. Includes stretching, breathing, relaxation & meditation techniques. 2:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Wednesdays & Fridays) \$

16

Cookology Class. Demo & samples. 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.
Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute. Celebrate Dr. King's life & the Civil Rights Movement. 10:30 a.m. St. Charles Senior Community Center. 215-790-9530
Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre. Performance based on theme of aging reflects diverse culture of Miami. 10:30 a.m. Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Univ. of Pa. 215-746-7997. \$

23

Art After 5: Randy Ingram. Young jazz pianist on New York music scene who is critically acclaimed for finesse, thoughtfulness & passion. 5 to 8:45 p.m. Phila. Museum of Art. 215-763-8100. \$

30

Voices of a People's History of the United States. Brings to life speeches, letters, poems & songs from historic U.S. movements. 10:30 a.m. & 8 p.m. Plays & Players Main Stage. 215-735-0630. (Jan. 31 @ 8 p.m.) \$

Saturday

Cirque de la Symphonie. The Philadelphia Orchestra provides a soundtrack to acrobats, aerialists & jugglers. 8 p.m. Kimmel Center. 215-893-1999. (Jan. 4 @ 2 p.m.) \$

10

Broadway Philadelphia: Motown the Musical. The story of Motown founder Berry Gordy's journey from featherweight boxer to the music mogul who launched the careers of Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Smokey Robinson & others. 2 & 8 p.m. Academy of Music. 215-893-1999. (Through Jan. 18 @ various times) \$

17

Philadelphia Orchestra Presents: St. Petersburg Festival. Conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Works by Russian composers Glazunov ("Winter") & Tchaikovsky ("The Nutcracker" & Symphony No. 5). 8 p.m. Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall. 215-893-1999. \$

24

One Book, One Philadelphia Workshop: Objects that Connect Us. Behind-the-scenes Native American object exploration, discussion & reflective personal writing program based on "Orphan Train" by Christina Baker Kline (2013). 2 p.m. Univ. of Pa. Museum. Register: 215-898-2680. (March 4 @ 6 p.m.) \$

31

Chinese New Year Celebration. Family-friendly activities, including music, dance, Tai Chi & Kung Fu demos, calligraphy & tangram workshops, language presentations, children's activities, art, crafts & lion dance parade. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Univ. of Pa. Museum. 215-898-2680. \$
Philadelphia International Auto Show. More than 700 vehicles on display. Presented by Automobile Dealers Assn. of Greater Phila. 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Pa. Convention Center. 610-279-5229. (Through Feb. 8 @ various times) \$

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Graterford

• continued from cover

Evans' "Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America" and the U.S. Constitution as basic texts; watch films; and study select U.S. Supreme Court cases and contemporary news events.

A course about women might seem an odd fit for the tough guys Jones teaches. Not so, she points out, calling her students "thoughtful and avid, engaged and caring." Many are quite interested in women's issues, having been raised by women and in fatherless households, she says. One of her students told her, "I've never met a feminist before," expressing grudging appreciation of his new experience.

"The class has to be some relief from the monotony of prison life," Jones says. "Many of these men were never told they were smart. I think they are so turned on by the life of the mind and being awakened intellectually."

Having her students contemplate history from a feminist perspective is a natural for Jones, who is accustomed to considering different sides of an issue. Prior to obtaining her graduate degree in history, she spent 25 years as an attorney/banker. "My first day of law school, a professor told us that the answer to every question is 'it depends,'" she says. "It depends on who is doing the telling, what their experience is, their background and so many other factors. I tell my students that obviously things will look different to me than they will to each of you. The important thing is to come here and learn how to think critically or you're wasting your time."

Jones has taught in a more traditional classroom setting, at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. However, she says it is teaching at maximum security prisons that has transformed her life and spurred her to be an advocate for prison education and reform.

One of her most profound experiences occurs when she attends graduation ceremonies for prisoners who are receiving their college degrees. Many have spent 10 years or more pursuing this goal. For graduation, they are dressed impeccably in graduation robes over their prison garb. Their family members sit proudly in the audience. "I have never been to a prison graduation without having wept," Jones says.

The college program can also transform the lives of men convicted of serious crimes, she says. The 2011 documentary "University of Sing Sing," by Timothy Skousen, broadcast in 2014 on HBO, showcased the college program at that maximum security prison. Of the 90 program graduates released from Sing Sing, only one was re-imprisoned.

One man in Jones' class will be 75 when he is eligible for release from Graterford. He tells her that she inspires him about the possibilities ahead. "God bless you, Doc," he says at the end of each class. "Thank you for coming."

Information about Jones' books is available on her website, www.marjoriejones.com. For more information about "The University of Sing Sing" documentary, visit www.hbo.com/documentaries/the-university-of-sing-sing#.

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at:
msiegal@pcaphl.org

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A child and volunteer enjoy the Kids Carnival during the Girard College signature event of the 2014 Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service.

Photo courtesy of Global Citizen

Martin Luther King Day of Service

By Marcia Z. Siegal

The 20th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service takes place on Monday, January 19. Greater Philadelphia's celebration is once again expected to shine. Last year, the event, which spans Pennsylvania, South Jersey and Delaware, drew more than 125,000 volunteers of all ages and offered 1,700 service projects, making it the largest King Day of Service event in the country, according to Todd Bernstein, founder and executive director of the Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service and president of Global Citizen, the nonprofit which runs the event.

For the fifth year in a row, Girard College will host our region's King Day of Service signature site event. It will include approximately 150 service projects, workshops and presentations and is expected to draw at least 5,000 volunteers.

However, most people need go no further than their own neighborhood to connect to the special activities that day. Throughout the region, there are community book, food and clothing drives; indoor and outdoor clean-ups of schools, parks, community centers and houses of worship; and service-learning projects and discussions highlighting King's legacy and other relevant topics. A number of concerts will add to the celebration of what King called the "beloved community."

Find activities

Global Citizen's website, www.globalcitizen365.org, offers a comprehensive, easily searchable resource for the day's activities and volunteer opportunities. Organizations can also register service projects to recruit volunteers.

The local Martin Luther King Day of Service is the nation's oldest such celebration, dating back to 1996, when 1,000 volunteers participated.

Local pride can claim yet another key historic connection. While King's birthday has been celebrated as a federal holiday since 1983, it was Pennsylvania's then-U.S. Senator Harris Wofford and Georgia Congressman John Lewis, both of whom had served in the civil rights movement with King, who co-authored the King Holiday and Service Act in 1994. Signed into law by President Clinton later that year, their efforts transformed this federal holiday from a day off to the only nationwide day of service.

In addition to Global Citizen's website, information about the Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service and Global Citizen's year-round civic engagement projects is available by calling 215-851-1811 or by e-mailing mlkdayofservice@globalcitizen365.org.

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at: msiegal@pcaphl.org

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Readers' Milestones

110-year-old is back in dancing shape after hip surgery

On September 7, 2014 – just five days after her 110th birthday – Philadelphia resident Viola Toomer successfully underwent surgery for a hip fracture at Mercy Philadelphia Hospital. The procedure was historic for the hospital, and the decagenarian was back on her feet the following day.

Toomer, the oldest of eight siblings, was a career seamstress and fashionista in the city. Always impeccably dressed, she arrived for her post-op visit with Mercy Philadelphia Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Menachem Meller in a sharp crimson red suit and matching shoes.

With no physical health problems or the need to take any medications, Toomer easily conquers stairs without assistance from a cane, and looks forward to practicing her favorite dance moves post-surgery. She lived on her own until age 100, and now lives with a niece in South Philadelphia.

Philadelphia. She grew up at 8th and Berks in North Philadelphia and attended William Penn High School. She graduated from University of Pennsylvania with a Masters degree in Spanish and went on to teach Spanish in the public school system for 35 years. She then taught at Temple University for another 10 years. Her linguistic abilities extend to singing — she can sing in six different languages.

Mercy LIFE participant celebrates 100th birthday

Compared with Esther Eilberg and Viola Toomer, she's just a youngster, but Edica "Neva" Tompkins is a centenarian. She celebrated her 100th birthday surrounded by family, friends and Mercy LIFE staff at the program's facility on South Broad Street. One of nine siblings, she was born in North Carolina, where she loved fishing and spending time outdoors on her family farm in the 1920s.

A current member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Tompkins still loves to cook, sing and sew clothing. She maintains a vibrant and independent life – even voting for the very first time at age 94.

Way to thrive at 105!

Esther Eilberg (née Gross) was born in 1909, the second of six children, and has lived every one of her 105 years in

Retirement

• continued from page 6

I'm hoping.

Incrementally, by the way, has become my retirement theme.

Project #2: Running a marathon

Running one isn't the dream here – I have run marathons before. But my choice of venue is. Berlin. Over the years, since I first learned that Germans bang pots along the race route to spur runners on, I have developed an image of myself as a Jew running free through the streets of Berlin. My personal expression of ascendancy.

My plan is to run Berlin in Sept. 2015 as a fundraiser for a local Jewish organization. But first I have to get up to speed. Literally. Which is where incrementally comes in. At 67, I need to elongate my training schedule to twice what it was for my last marathon – 17 years ago.

In other words, increase my speed and distance a little at a time. "Bit by bit," as Stephen Sondheim tells us, is "the art of making art."

Speaking of which, Project #3:

For the 25 years before Coming of Age, I was a freelance writer, doing mostly scripts (theatre, film and TV). Whenever in the last decade anyone who knew about my "past" expressed surprise I wasn't still writing – my last play in Philly was 10 years ago; my off-Broadway drama, 30 years ago – I adamantly stated I had no interest in writing a new play.

But lately, I've been day-dreaming about one. It's about this 67-year-old retired pianist/runner who ...

Is late 2015 a realistic target? Well, perhaps proceeding incrementally, I could produce a first draft ... of the first act.

Dick Goldberg is director of Coming of Age, and a member of PCA's Board of Directors

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In Season

Horseradish adds zip to roasted parsnips

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Roasted Parsnips

Ingredients

1 ½ pounds of parsnips peeled and cut into 2 ½ in. strips
4 tsp olive oil
Salt and ground pepper to taste
⅓ cup of low sodium chicken stock
3 Tbsp unsalted butter
4 tsp of drained horseradish
½ Tbsp finely chopped parsley leaves
½ Tbsp minced chives

½ small garlic clove minced

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400° F. In large roasting pan, toss parsnips with olive oil,

Add chicken stock, cover with foil and roast about 25 to 35 minutes (stir once or twice) until stock has evaporated and parsnips are tender.

Combine softened butter, horseradish, parsley, chives and garlic, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Toss warmed parsnips with sauce and serve. (Serves 4)

This recipe for Roasted Parsnips is from www.simplyrecipes.com, and will be featured as the Marconi Older Adult Program's "Fruit and Vegetable of the Month" on Monday January 26 at 10 a.m. at 2433 South 15th St. in South Philadelphia. For more information, call 215-218-0800.



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Breakthrough “bionic eye” restores some sight, offers her sons hope for future

By Marcia Z. Siegal

At 67, Frances (Fran) Fulton's personal journey has taken her from light to darkness and back again. Diagnosed at age 24 with the eye disease retinitis pigmentosa (RP), she lost functional vision in her late 30s and became completely blind 10 years ago. However, in recent months that trajectory has been reversed. Following surgery for a retinal implant at Wills Eye Hospital, she became one of the first patients in the United States to pioneer a breakthrough artificial vision system, often referred to as a “bionic eye.” “It's very exciting. I'm on the cusp of a new horizon,” she says.

Estimated to affect 100,000 people nationwide, RP is a hereditary degenerative eye disease that causes cells in the retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the inner eye) to gradually die. The retina converts light images to nerve signals and sends them to the brain. As more retinal cells die, the patient's eyesight deteriorates from loss of night vision and the ability to distinguish

colors, to the loss of peripheral, then central vision, and eventually light perception. “I felt I was going through losses without end,” says Fulton. “When I finally became totally blind, I said to myself, ‘It can't get any worse. It can only get better.’”

A former writer and editor until her increasing visual impairment caused her to give up this line of work, Fulton says her disability led to a career rebirth. Her passion is evident as she describes working as manager of independent living services for Liberty Resources, Inc., a nonprofit that advocates for and promotes independent living for people with disabilities. “The consumers are inspiring to me,” she says.

Collaborative effort

The Argus II Retinal Prosthesis System was developed through the collaborative efforts of medical, scientific and engineering professionals. As one of the first six patients in the U.S. to receive this system, Fulton hopes to inspire others, including her sons, Eric and Jonathan Fulton, who inherited RP and have already experienced vision



Photo by Paola Nogueiras

Frances (Fran) Fulton credits a new retinal prosthesis system with changing her life.

loss. Over the years, she followed stem cell and other kinds of medical research related to her condition, Fulton says. While the “bionic eye” might seem the stuff of science fiction, she was eager to take a chance on it.

Last July, she became the first person in Philadelphia to undergo the groundbreaking procedure. Dr. Allen Ho, Wills Eye Hospital's retina research director, led a team of surgeons and technicians to implant a microelectrode device in her right eye. As of Dec. 1, she was one of only 99 people to

receive the Argus II worldwide.

Fulton wears specialty glasses with large, dark pointed lenses she likens to “something out of Star Trek.” Equipped with a miniature camera and a video processing unit, these glasses serve as a vehicle for her wireless artificial vision system. Images captured by the camera are converted to electrical signals and sent to the microelectrode implanted at the back of her eye. From there, the signals are relayed to the brain, which interprets them. A battery pack on her belt powers the system.

The Argus II does not provide 20/20 vision. “My vision is like looking at snow on an old TV, except the snow has shape. I still have to use my cane to navigate,” she says. Fulton works with a Wills Eye low-vision therapist to learn to use the new system. “I expect my vision will get better as my brain learns to interpret what I see,” she says.

“My sons are very excited,” Fulton says. “I have given them hope.”

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at: msiegal@pcaphl.org

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Don's Column

Recalling jobs of youth in his "maturity"



By Don Harrison

Waiting on tables is skilled labor (I never could carry plates up my arm). It takes physical stamina, knowledge of the menu and keeping your cool when diners are (to be kind) a little unreasonable.

In most cases, you're woefully underpaid and must depend on tips. I was outraged when, to protest the service, that pro athlete left a 20-cent tip.

Outraged, but not surprised. Even as a youngster, I wouldn't have been.

I was a newspaper carrier boy, and we used to collect door to door. You'd be surprised how many people try to chisel a little kid out of pennies.

Collecting wasn't all bad. Other kids would join me, and after I had finished, we'd share sodas or malteds at the local pharmacy's soda fountain. This cut into profits, slim as they were, but I never was much of a businessman.

Later, as a teenager, I saw that soda fountain as a job opportunity. Being a soda jerk was a good job unless "Doc" (all pharmacists were "Doc") noticed that you were serving your friends a little extra ice cream.

During those years, other jobs were around for a teen. For example, a church in my neighborhood – as a source of funds – housed card and billiards tables and two bowling alley lanes in its basement. "The Dungeon," as we called it, often needed a pinboy.

Most of those jobs no longer exist. Morning newspapers (the only kind left) are delivered by adults in cars, not kids with wagons. The soda fountain is long gone (so is the corner pharmacy). In bowling alleys, mechanical pinsetters have replaced the pinboy.

But there are many more restaurants, which means many more waiters and waitresses. So, eat hearty, but be generous to whoever is waiting on you...

Even if he can't carry plates up his arm – like one, who will remain nameless.

All conspiring to keep me alive

Remember when the doctor was a wise older man? Today's health care provider looks 14 years old (so does almost everyone else) – and may very well be a she.

One of my many doctors (for years, I saw only one, once a year; now there's one for every inch) referred to my "maturity level." I suppose he was being diplomatic; to many people, "old" is a four-letter word.

In these hard economic times, health care is one of the few growth industries. That's because of the "maturity level" that so many of us have reached.

Milestones Editor Emeritus Don Harrison served as deputy editor of the Daily News opinion pages and as assistant managing editor and city editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin

Finding legal help

The Philadelphia Bar Association: Free lawyer referral service; initial consultation with the lawyer to whom you are referred costs \$35 for half an hour. For a referral, call 215-238-6333, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.; or visit the website: www.philadelphiabarlawyers.com.

PA SeniorLAW Helpline: Free and confidential telephone legal service operated by SeniorLAW Center for any Pennsylvania senior age 60 and older. Call 1-877-727-7529, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. through 2 p.m.

Free legal services for low-income Philadelphia seniors:

SeniorLAW Center: Wills; powers of attorney; advance health care directives; administration of small estates. 215-988-1242.

Community Legal Services Aging and Disabilities Unit: Probate, estates and fiduciaries; long-term care planning. 215-227-2400

Temple University's Elderly Law Project: Probate, estates and fiduciaries; powers of attorney; long-term care planning; wills and living wills. 215-204-6887

The Milestones Crossword

Great Lake ports

ACROSS

- 1 German composer
- 5 Sort of battery
- 10 Worship object
- 14 Hawaiian isle
- 15 Dish
- 16 *Clair de* ____
- 17 Where Tralee is
- 18 Additional
- 19 French islands
- 20 ____ room
- 21 Canadian tribe
- 22 Apparel item
- 24 Foreign
- 26 Ferber novel
- 27 Zealots
- 29 String
- 30 Presidential monogram
- 33 Mexican abode
- 34 Prepared
- 35 Ms. Farrow
- 36 Garlands
- 37 Liquid measures
- 38 Fine fur
- 39 Chemical salt
- 40 Throws
- 41 Use an *Épée*

- 42 On ____ fours
- 43 Mining products
- 44 Type of 15 Across
- 45 Man from Muscatine
- 47 Gettysburg general
- 48 History
- 50 Register
- 51 Old saying
- 54 Aussie animals, for short
- 55 Frightfully fat
- 57 Fountain fare
- 58 Mine passage
- 59 Romeo
- 60 At the summit
- 61 Wife of 30 Across
- 62 Garment
- 63 Poverty

DOWN

- 1 South African
- 2 Swiss river
- 3 See 11 Down
- 4 Barbarian
- 5 Is merciful
- 6 Ancient
- 7 Take on cargo
- 8 Was corrosive
- 9 Tanagers or cardinals
- 10 Ancient Troy
- 11 Great Lakes port

- 12 Folding money
- 13 ____ majesty
- 21 Quote
- 23 Duke's daughter
- 25 Evert specialties
- 26 Farm animals
- 27 Ultralight wood
- 28 Perfect
- 29 Lucre
- 31 Because
- 32 Acceptor
- 34 Up
- 37 Sun screens
- 38 Repair
- 40 Monk's hood
- 41 Decree
- 44 Forsake
- 46 Kilns
- 47 Lucre lover
- 48 Swift horse
- 49 Swelling
- 50 Son of Jacob
- 52 Presently
- 53 Showed sorrow
- 56 American editor
- 57 Bird call

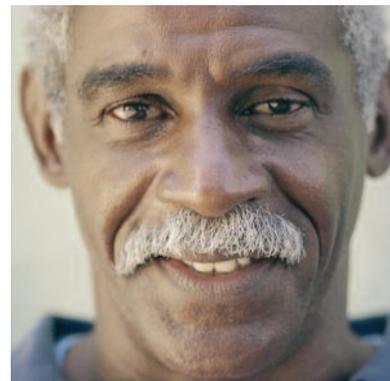
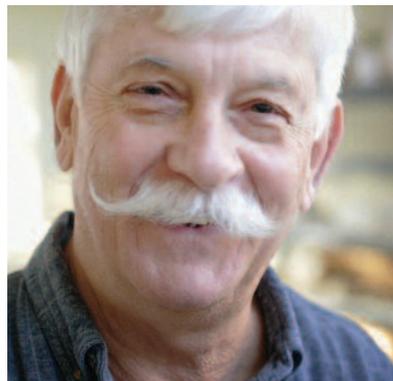
Solution

The solution for the crossword puzzle can be found on page 2.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
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61						62					63			

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