Reliving memories through song

A member of the Joyful Voices Chorus sings a patriotic tune at a recent rehearsal. The group is comprised of singers with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, as well as their caregivers and volunteers. Recent studies have found that our brains store music memory in an area that is unaffected by Alzheimer’s or dementia.

Photo by Dan Currier

www.fiftyplusrichmond.com
Home sweet home

The other day, we received a call from a gentleman who told us, in no uncertain terms, that our readers were staying in their homes for too long, and that they should sell their homes to younger families so that those folks could have a chance to live the suburban lifestyle, too.

His basic message was that older adults should not be so selfish as to stay in their nice big homes when there were Americans of childbearing age who could make better use of all that space. Instead, more of us should downsize and move to condos, apartments, smaller homes or retirement communities for the good of the country.

Not surprisingly, this would also be good for the caller himself, as his line of work turned out to be buying older homes, fixing them up and selling them for a profit to younger buyers.

Now there’s nothing wrong with that, as long as the homeowners are ready to sell. But pushing people out the door before they’re ready is, as Miss Manners might say, quite unacceptable.

This fellow is not a lone wolf, however. The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (which prefers going by the cuddly moniker “Freddie Mac”) recently decided to investigate why millennials (born between 1981 and 1997) have a significantly lower homeownership rate than prior generations.

Noting the rising propensity of older adults to “age in place” — choosing to remain in their homes and neighborhoods as they age — the report concluded that this behavior has significantly reduced available housing stock, thus raising home prices and keeping millennials from becoming the homeowners they’d like to be.

Well, to be fair, the report said aging in place is “one factor” contributing to the shortage of homes for sale, and it ended by calling for a boost in the production of new housing rather than booting boomers from their homes.

And in fact, just two months before, Freddie had published another “Insight Report” citing a number of other reasons for today’s inadequate housing stock. Those included a shortfall in home building dating back to the burst housing bubble and Great Recession, a shortage of skilled labor in the construction industry, rising land costs, opposition to new development in existing communities and many others.

You might wonder why the researchers didn’t ask the millennials themselves why they weren’t buying homes with the alacrity of earlier generations.

Many studies (including a recent one from the Urban Institute) point to their high student debt burden, years of inability to find work, and their own propensity to settle in trendy urban areas rather than old-fashioned suburbs as some of the causes for their currently lower rates of homeownership.

As for older homeowners, there are many reasons — financial, emotional, psychological — why we might want to remain in the homes where we’ve lived for decades, perhaps raised a family, and built ourselves a life.

As Freddie admitted at the end of their most recent report, “older Americans prefer to age in place because they are satisfied with their communities, their homes, and their quality of life.”

But that doesn’t mean we selfishly want to withdraw from society or prevent younger generations from having a good quality of life too.

On the contrary, many of us have embraced a variety of ideas that can help maintain and enhance the quality of life for us and younger generations at the same time, including neighborhood villages.

Dear Editor:

I read with interest Elliott Raphaelsen’s article in your February issue about the various scams inflicted on seniors.

The “IRS impersonation scam” [that I experienced] brought me to a standstill. There is a supposed Treasury hotline to which reports can be made. I called several times, but the voicemail was always full, advising to please hang up and call later.

I wrote to the Treasury Department; no answer. I wrote to Senator Cardin’s office. The person to whom I spoke was “not sure” it was a crime, and in any case did not seem to think it was Congress’ problem.

My sense is that trying to fight these things is hopeless, because no one in the federal government cares. Just one person’s frustrated opinion.

David M. Shea
Via email

Dear Editor:

Your March editorial, “Not in our family,” should be mandatory reading for the entire populace. It is so perfectly on point.

As a very young devotee of All in the Family, I laughed, not out of prejudice or malice, but because it made fun of all of us. No one was spared, and it wasn’t mean or ugly.

I’m afraid we have lost our ability to laugh at ourselves or poke good-natured fun at others for fear of being labeled something unpleasant.

Thank you for reminding us of who we once were.

Judy Massabney
Arlington, Va.
Raising voices with joy despite dementia

By Catherine Brown

In a bright, spacious meeting room at Salisbury Presbyterian Church, more than 20 singers gather to rehearse Broadway songs for their spring performance.

The Joyful Voices group harmonizes to The Sound of Music, lifting their voices as they sing the opening words: “The hills are alive.”

One member of the chorus arrives late, but the moment she walks in the door, her mouth is already moving to the words of the uplifting song.

Facing the chorus is an energetic and petite redhead who gestures emphatically as she conducts and shouts out praises to the singers.

The singers are an older group, but this isn’t your typical senior choir. Nearly a dozen of its singers have Alzheimer’s disease or another form of dementia.

The other half is made up of caregivers who accompany their loved ones, and volunteer singers who attend each rehearsal to support the choir’s mission: “to sing together to stimulate the mind, energize the body, and elevate the spirit.”

An inclusive choir

After publicizing the group, Joyful Voices began their first rehearsal in mid-September. They welcome people at different stages of Alzheimer’s.

“Probably the greatest benefit for this sort of activity would be someone in stages one to four,” said Sherman. “In the later stages it does get difficult, but that depends really on that person’s musicality and musicianship prior to coming.”

Shirley Guistino has been bringing her mother, Marie Garand, since that first rehearsal. Both Guistino and Garand (who has Alzheimer’s) had participated in choirs in the past, so they enjoy having the opportunity to sing.

“I thought it was something fun we could do together,” said Guistino. “As things progress [with the disease], there’s not much we can enjoy together.”

Great for caregivers, too

Joyful Voices not only provides an opportunity for caregivers and their loved ones to bond; it also provides an opportunity for caregivers to bond with one another.

“When I registered my mother for Joyful Voices,” said Sue Weber, “I was beyond excited that I was finally able to provide her with a safe, friendly and understood environment to experience and share one of her greatest loves — music.”

While Weber’s mother enjoys singing, Weber strengthens her friendships with the other caregivers.

The science of singing

A study published in 2015 in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease considered the benefits of music-related leisure activities for people with mild to moderate dementia.

The study, conducted by researchers from the University of Helsinki, found that singing produces benefits for working memory, executive function and orientation, particularly for those under 80 years old with mild dementia.

They also found that singing helped alleviate depression, and that just listening to music provided cognitive benefits.

Because music activates brain regions involved in memory, it can unlock memories connected to the songs.

Singing also helps activate the part of the brain involved in retrieving long- and short-term memories, one of the last areas affected by Alzheimer’s.
Gluten and lactose used in many pills

Inactives affect some

By Lauren Neergaard

A man with celiac disease felt sicker after starting a new drug, but it wasn’t a typical side effect. It turns out the pills were mixed with gluten the patient knew to avoid in food — but was surprised to find hiding in medicine.

A new report says pills often contain so-called “inactive” ingredients capable of causing allergic or gastrointestinal reactions in small numbers of people sensitive to specific compounds.

And it’s hard for those patients, or even their doctors, to tell if a pill contains an extra ingredient they should avoid, according to researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

When the doctor writes a prescription, the pharmacist issues whatever the person’s insurance covers — without discussion of inactive ingredients that are buried in the drug’s labeling.

“There’s a tremendous underappreciation of the potential impact that inactive ingredients may have,” said Dr. Giovanni Traverso, a Brigham gastroenterologist who spurred the research after his celiac patient’s trouble.

Inactives may have an “active ingredient” — what you hope will help your health. Inactive ingredients, which make up the rest of the pill, can make it easier to absorb the drug, improve its taste or extend the shelf life.

Most people don’t need to worry about inactive ingredients, but the Boston researchers pointed to rare published reports of reactions in patients with allergies or intolerances to certain compounds — and called for more information about who might be at risk.

The study analyzed data on inactive ingredients from a database of more than 42,000 prescription and over-the-counter medicines. An average pill contains eight inactive ingredients, but some contain 20 or more.

Consider that 39 percent of older adults take at least five prescription medicines daily, and even a small amount can add up, the researchers reported in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

The report found:

About 45 percent of the analyzed medications contained lactose. The amounts may be too small for some lactose-intolerant people to notice, but someone taking common drugs for high blood pressure and cholesterol could get about a gram a day.

A third of medications contained a food dye associated with allergic reactions.

More than half contained at least one type of sugar that people with Irritable Bowel Syndrome are supposed to avoid.

In a recent survey, 18 percent of manufacturers said their medications contain gluten, which can cause severe reactions if patients with celiac disease consume as little as 1.5 milligrams a day. But labels may list it only as innocuous “starch.”

Check refills, formulations

That’s what happened when a patient of Traverso’s experienced worsening celiac symptoms after using a common stomach acid-blocking drug, omeprazole. Traverso had to call the manufacturer to learn that the particular formulation contained starch made from wheat.

Because refills can bring a different company’s formulation, patients should check the label each time, he added.

Patients shouldn’t be alarmed, cautioned one allergy expert not involved with the report.

“ ’It is certainly true that there are reports of allergic reactions to residual food proteins in medications,” said Dr. Roxanne Oriet of the Mount Sinai Jaffe Food Allergy Institute in New York. But, “these types of allergic reactions are quite rare.”

Still, manufacturers of drugs made with refined peanut oil, such as some versions of the hormone progesterone, often put an allergy warning on the label.

The issue is getting some attention. A pending Food and Drug Administration proposal recommends adding gluten information to drug labels.

And the standard-setting U.S. Pharmacopeia has a panel studying how electronic health records could help doctors and pharmacists better identify patients who need to avoid a certain ingredient.

“It can be frustrating for patients” to find the information, said Gerald McGee of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, a member of that panel.

—AP

Killing germs can make us less healthy

By Claire McCarthy

Household disinfectants seem like such a good idea, especially when you have children. After all, children make messes, and killing germs helps keep children healthy, right?

Not always, it turns out. Sometimes germs actually keep us healthy and keep us at a healthy weight.

More and more, we are learning that not all bacteria are bad. In fact, the bacteria that live naturally in and on our bodies, especially in our digestive tracts, are crucial for health.

When we mess with those bacteria, it increases the risk of many problems — including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer and even obesity.

Researchers from Canada used data from the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) study to see if there was a connection between the use of household disinfectants by mothers and the weight of their children.

They found that indeed, when mothers used household disinfectants (most commonly multi-surface cleaners, hand soap and spray air fresheners), their children were more likely to be overweight or obese at age three.

By looking at stool samples from the children when they were infants, they found that this increased risk seemed to be related to a change in the bacteria in the digestive tract. The children whose mothers used disinfectants had less of the bacteria needed for good health.

When families use disinfectants, their children when they were infants, they were more likely to be overweight or obese at age three.

Interestingly, a study of the bacteria in the mouths of two-year-olds showed that certain mixes of bacteria types increase the risk of rapid weight gain.

It’s not just household disinfectants that affect the bacteria in our bodies. Antibiotics and antacids can, too, as well as our diet and lifestyle.

Obviously, it’s not just bacteria that affect weight gain. Interestingly, in the Canadian study, children of mothers who used eco-friendly cleaning products were less likely to be overweight at three — but this lower risk did not appear to be related to the bacteria in their stool.

Instead, the researchers said, it was more likely related to the fact that the mothers in the study who used eco-friendly cleaning products were more likely to breastfeed and to have more education, and less likely to be overweight themselves. Breastfeeding, maternal education and maternal weight are factors that are known to affect the weight of children.

What to do about it

Given what we know about the many problems that can occur when we get too aggressive about killing bacteria, it’s not a bad idea to rethink our cleaning products. Here are some ideas:

Avoid anything that says “antibacterial” on the label.

Look for natural cleaning products. Not only are they less likely to kill healthy bac-
Joyful voices
From page 3
While some caregivers choose to sing next to their loved ones, in some cases the caregivers and singers sing different parts and are therefore seated apart.
As a result, the volunteer singers may be called upon as “on-site caregivers,” Sherman said, helping out when needed. “The volunteer singers are the fabric, the underlying carpet of the chorus itself,” she said.

These volunteer singers, who attend every rehearsal and support Sherman in her mission, say they get as much out of the experience as they give.
One such volunteer, Luana Lambert, said she doesn’t think of herself as a singer. But she loves to spend time with the other members each week. “Our voices are just a way of communicating joy, love and happiness to many,” she said.
This spring, Joyful Voices will share their happiness when they give a concert in May. This will be their second public performance, and they will be singing their favorite Broadway songs.
Having a performance helps to reinforce that Joyful Voices is a chorus, not a singalong. “Each week, we are challenging the singers, getting them thinking, and using those cognitive skills so they don’t lose them any more quickly than they have to,” Sherman said.
Sherman expresses hope that Joyful Voices will remind those with dementia and Alzheimer’s that they can still enjoy life. “We’re hoping people will get out there, embrace this, and know they can still have a rich, fulfilling life,” she said.
“Give my regards to Broadway,” the upcoming performance, will take place Thursday, May 2 in F&E Hall at Salisbury Presbyterian Church, 13621 W. Salisbury Rd. in Midlothian, Va. The concert begins at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are $10 and may be purchased by calling (301) 221-2279 or emailing audrey.fischer2386@gmail.com.
For more information about Joyful Voices or to sign up, visit joyfulvoiceschorus.org.

Germs
From page 4

teria, they have fewer dangerous chemicals.
Wash your hands — and your children’s hands — with plain soap and water. Consider making your own cleaning products with things like vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice and soap. There are lots of websites with recipes for inexpensive, effective, safe and bacteria-sparing cleaning products.
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Looking for the Perfect First Floor Living Home?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

| Apr. 26+ | TURKEY HUNT | The 5th Annual Old Dominion One Shot Turkey Hunt, a guided hunt in exclusive properties, is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, April 26-27. The event is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia. Hunters should register at Bass Pro in Ashland by Tuesday, April 9. For more information, visit vaoneshot.com. |

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

| Apr. 25 | THINKING AHEAD | Join the Chesterfield Council on Aging for a special presentation on Advance Care Planning presented by healthcare attorney Nathan Kotkamp, founder and chair of National Healthcare Decision Day. The workshop takes place on Thursday, April 25, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at Lucy Corr Village, Mast Auditorium, 6800 Lucy Corr Blvd., Chesterfield. For more information, contact Aging and Disability Services at (804) 768-7878 or email AgingServices@Chesterfield.gov. |

| Apr. 27 | HERB AND PLANT SALE | Shop, learn and eat at Herbs Galore & More, an event at Maymont on Saturday, April 27, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Buy herbal products or crafts, get advice at Meet the Expert sessions, or pick up free second-hand gardening tools or cuttings at the From One Garden to Another bargain booth. Food trucks will be available for lunch. Marketplace admission is $5 per person. For more information, call (804) 358-7166 or visit maymont.org/herbs-galore. |
By Matthew Kadey

A long-held belief is that calories are calories no matter if they hail from bacon or broccoli. Take in fewer calories than you burn; that’s your ticket to winning the battle of the bulge.

It’s true that any calorie from a food supplies a set amount of energy. But once eaten, things become more complicated. A newer era of research is making it clear that perhaps not all calories are created equal.

The thermic effect

The true calorie count of a food may very well be different than what’s labeled due to its “thermic effect” (i.e., the energy required to digest and process it).

The best example is protein, which has a higher thermic effect than carbs or fat, so a lower percentage of its calories (4 calories per gram) will be available for storage in the body.

In a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, people who got 25 percent of their calories from protein burned 227 more calories a day than those who only ate 5 percent of their calories from protein.

So even though 3 ounces of chicken breast may have 92 calories on paper, up to 35 percent fewer of those calories will actually be absorbed by the body.

Furthermore, “calories from protein have also been shown to have a greater impact on satiety, and hunger is the enemy of weight loss,” said New York weight loss expert Samantha Cassetty, M.S., R.D.

The carb math

A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that when people ate the same diet except for whole grains versus refined grains, those consuming items like brown rice and whole wheat bread burned almost 100 more calories per day than those who ate the refined versions. This was likely due to both a metabolic boost as well as extra calorie excretion.

“Your body has to work harder to digest a meal containing less-processed carbs, so will burn off more calories to do so,” noted Cassetty. In other words, 100 calories from quinoa are not the same as 100 sugary calories from soda in the weight loss equation.

A report in *Obesity Reviews* noted that...
If you think oatmeal only comes in a packet, think again. They know about oatmeal in Ireland and Scotland, where whole-grain, steel-cut oats are popular. Yes, these slightly chewy oats take longer to cook than old-fashioned rolled oats (and way longer than instant oats in a packet), but the results are so much better.

To shorten the usual half-hour cooking time, start the process at night and then finish up in the morning. This recipe is great to make with grandkids or for houseguests.

**Overnight oatmeal with raisins and brown sugar**

*Servings: 4*

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes, plus overnight resting time

**Cook Time:** 15 minutes

**Ingredients:**
- 3 cups plus 1 cup water, measured separately
- 1 cup steel-cut oats
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In large saucepan, bring 3 cups water to boil over high heat. Turn off heat and slide saucepan to cool burner. Stir in oats and salt. Cover saucepan with lid and let sit overnight.

In morning, stir remaining 1 cup water into saucepan with oats and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture is creamy and oats are tender but chewy, 4 to 6 minutes.

Turn off heat and slide saucepan to cool burner. Stir in raisins, sugar, butter and cinnamon. Cover and let sit for 5 minutes. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 270 calories; 48 calories from fat; 5 g. fat (2 g. saturated; 0 g. trans fats); 8 mg. cholesterol; 154 mg. sodium; 53 g. carbohydrate; 5 g. fiber; 25 g. sugar; 7 g. protein.

**Variations to try**

Also try these fun flavor combinations:

— **Banana and brown sugar oatmeal:** Use 2 chopped ripe bananas instead of raisins. Leave out cinnamon.

Raw or lightly cooked meat (e.g., sushi and rare steak) require extra internal processing to deal with more tightly wound muscle fibers. Therefore, they supply fewer usable calories than well-done meat. A study in the journal *Obesity* fed people the same number of calories as either a liquid or solid, and noted that post-meal hunger was greater after liquid calories. Overall, a solid meal leads to a greater drop in levels of the hunger-inducing hormone ghrelin, which could help trim overall calorie consumption.

**That’s nuts**

Fascinating research shows that the amount of energy (calories) derived from nuts — such as almonds, walnuts and pistachios — after we eat them is up to 30 percent less than previously thought. Some of the calories in nuts are found within hard-to-digest cell walls, and microbes in your gut get access to a handful of the nut calories as well, so in the end we don’t absorb all their upfront calories. This is likely one reason why studies have failed to show that eating calorie-dense nuts leads to weight gain.

“Some calories just work a lot harder for us than others, so if we’re focusing solely on calories alone we’re missing the big picture,” Cassety said. In other words, calories from candy are not the same as calories from cauliflower.

**Watch the clock**

Eating calories at certain times of day may also make them less calorie. Data shows that consuming calories earlier in the day can lead to better weight management. “Our biological clocks impact how our bodies handle the calories it receives, and it seems we are primed to deal with the biggest meal of the day in the morning,” Cassety said. So consider eating breakfast like a king and dinner like a pauper for a bigger calorie burn.
Annual memory checks often forgotten

By Lauran Neergaard
Few older people get their thinking and memory abilities regularly tested during check-ups, according to a new report from the Alzheimer’s Association.

Medicare pays for an annual “wellness visit” that is supposed to include what’s called a cognitive assessment — a brief check for some early warning signs of dementia, so people who need a more thorough exam can get one.

But doctors aren’t required to conduct a specific test, and there’s little data on how often they perform these cognitive snapshots. About half of older adults say they’ve ever discussed thinking or memory with a healthcare provider, and less than a third say they’ve ever been assessed for possible cognitive problems, according to a recently released Alzheimer’s Association survey.

Early detection can help
About 50 million people worldwide have dementia, and Alzheimer’s is the most common type, affecting 5.8 million people in the U.S. The disease takes root in the brain decades before symptoms appear. There is no cure, and today’s treatments only ease symptoms. They don’t prevent the disease from gradually worsening.

Some slowing of memory is a normal part of aging, like temporarily misplacing your keys. But more significant declines in memory, thinking skills or behavior can require medical care.

It might be due to something treatable like sleep apnea, depression or a side effect of medication. But even if someone is developing dementia, knowing early allows people time to plan for their future care — and to participate in research studies, Pike said.

The doctor looks for any signs of impairment as the check-up gets under way, asks the patient directly about any changes over time, and asks any family members who came along for the visit if they have concerns.

Then the doctor sometimes, not always, administers a test, such as asking the patient to remember a short list of words. Some written tests excel at spotting subtle problems, but they’re too simplistic to rule out trouble. Nor does a poor score mean there’s a problem, just that more testing is required.

Why aren’t more tested?
Medical guidelines don’t say everyone needs a formal assessment with those memory quizzes, cautioned Dr. Sumi Sexton of Georgetown University’s School of Medicine and editor of the journal American Family Physician, who wasn’t involved with the survey.

In fact, you might be getting assessed and not realize it, she said. Maybe a conversation with the doctor shows that you’re pretty active and doing well. Or maybe the doctor spots that you’re taking medications that can impede cognition — and changes your prescription, waiting to see if that solves the problem.

“We [doctors] are all attuned to memory issues,” said Sexton, who tends to screen frequently. But she wasn’t surprised at the report’s low screening numbers, because a discussion about cognitive impairment takes time in an already crammed check-up.

And it’s hard for patients to bring up, said Jim Gulley, 69, who was diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer’s in 2015. He marked “memory issues” on a check-up questionnaire but then crossed it out — only to have his longtime doctor insist on a discussion.

“I was definitely afraid,” said Gulley, of Penfield, N.Y. His father had had dementia, and he knew “the stigma is not dead.”

But after Gulley told his church group about his diagnosis, he was inundated with help — and with others asking how to know if something’s wrong. He now counsels people to talk to their doctors early.

Even fewer, 16 percent, said they get regular cognitive assessments — a stark contrast to the blood pressure and cholesterol checks that just about everyone gets routinely. Just 1 in 3 knew cognition is supposed to be part of the annual wellness visit.

Even though many older adults say they’ve noticed changes in their mental abilities, “the majority of the time seniors are waiting for the physician to bring it up,” said Alzheimer’s Association chief program officer Joanne Pike.

To you, it’s the perfect lift chair. To me, it’s the best sleep chair I’ve ever had.”

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

Our Perfect Sleep Chair® is just the chair to do it all. It’s a chair, true — the finest of lift chairs — but this chair is so much more! It’s designed to provide total comfort and relaxation not found in other chairs. It can’t be beat for comfortable, long-term sitting, TV viewing, relaxed reclining and — yes! — peaceful sleep.

Our chair’s recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of positions, including the lay flat position and the zero gravity position where your body experiences a minimum of internal and external stresses. You’ll love the other benefits, too: It helps with correct spinal alignment, promotes back pressure relief, and encourages better posture to prevent back and muscle pain.

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Dear Mayo Clinic: What can be done about thumb arthritis besides having surgery to relieve the pain?

A: There are a number of therapies to consider before turning to surgery to treat thumb arthritis.

Although these therapies may not always provide long-term relief, for most people with thumb arthritis, they can effectively lessen symptoms, and surgery may not be necessary. Surgery for arthritis of the thumb is usually a treatment of last resort.

The thumb is designed to give you a wide range of motion, enabling you to pinch, grip and grasp objects. It provides approximately 40 percent of hand function.

In a normal thumb basilar joint, the cartilage that covers the ends of the bones acts as a cushion and allows the bones to glide smoothly against each other.

With thumb arthritis, the cartilage that covers the ends of the bones deteriorates, and its smooth surface roughens. The bones then rub against each other, resulting in friction and more joint damage.

The most common symptom of thumb arthritis is pain at the base of your thumb during daily activities, such as opening a jar, turning a key or pulling a zipper.

You may notice other symptoms, too, such as stiffness, tenderness or swelling at the base of your thumb. You may not have as much range of motion or strength in your thumb as usual.

About 8 to 12 percent of the population is affected by arthritis of the thumb joint, making it the second-most common part of the hand to have arthritis. In fact, thumb arthritis affects more than half of women 70 and older. The joints at the end of the fingers are the most common spot for hand arthritis.

Simple at-home treatments may be all that are needed for some people to reduce symptoms of thumb arthritis successfully. Anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen, is often effective.

A gel form of a similar anti-inflammatory medication (the prescription diclofenac) is available for those whose stomachs do not tolerate anti-inflammatories well. Other medications, including acetaminophen and prescription pain relievers, also may help.

In addition to medications, tools that make it easier for you to grip with your thumb can be useful. Jar openers, key turners and large zipper pulls designed for people with limited hand strength are available.

Many people with thumb arthritis also find it helpful to replace traditional round door handles with lever handles. Your healthcare provider or a hand therapist may have other suggestions about techniques and equipment that can make it easier to use your thumb.

If those steps aren’t enough, talk to your healthcare provider about getting a splint that can support your joint and limit your thumb and wrist movement. Doing so helps rest the thumb joint and lessens pain.

Some people only need to wear a splint at night. But, depending on your situation, your healthcare provider may recommend prolonged use of a splint, especially when you do activities that cause thumb pain.

If the above treatments are not enough, an injection of medication into the thumb joint, such as a corticosteroid injection, may reduce inflammation and relieve pain temporarily.

If none of these approaches work, surgery may be a reasonable option, especially if symptoms are making it hard for you to do your day-to-day activities.

There are various treatments, including arthroscopy (keyhole surgery); removal of the arthritic bone at the base of the thumb, possibly with a tendon graft; joint fusion; and even joint replacement (in select cases).

It is important to thoroughly try all nonoperative treatments before surgery. In most people, they can relieve symptoms of thumb arthritis successfully.

— Sanjeev Kakar, M.D., Orthopedic Surgery, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

E-mail a question to MayoClinicQ&A@mayo.edu. For more information, visit www.mayoclinic.org.

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Meds and supps to be taken with food

There is much confusion about when to take herbal supplements, vitamins and medications. Do you take them on an empty stomach or with food?

No matter what you take, you should be drinking a full glass of water to make sure the pill doesn’t linger in your esophagus and cause irritation.

When a dietary supplement, enzyme or medication states the directive to “take with food,” it usually means to take while you’re eating, or a few minutes beforehand.

But since food stays in your gastrointestinal tract for a little while, it would be fine to take the pill right after you eat, as well.

Medications to take with food

Antacids: These help with heartburn or reflux. They should always be taken with food so that they can neutralize the acid that is secreted while you’re eating.

Amoxicillin: This is the most popular antibiotic, especially for children. I recommend it be given to toddlers and teens with food in order to reduce indigestion, nausea and vomiting.

Aspirin and Ibuprofen: Ideally these are taken with food.

Corticosteroids: These are used for pain, allergic reactions, rashes and overactive immune systems. Some examples include prednisone, hydrocortisone and dexamethasone.

These should always be taken with food or milk.

Enzyme supplements or medications: Some people can’t digest food normally, so they take enzyme supplements, which break down the starch, fat and protein in a meal.

Take these with meals. If a medication (e.g., Creon) is required to restore pancreatic function, it must be taken with meals.

Metformin: Taken for diabetes, this medication is best taken around meal time to reduce blood sugar levels after eating.

Supplements to take with food

Ashwagandha: This popular stress reducer should be thought of as food because it’s an herb. All herbs should be taken with a snack or a meal in order to amplify the benefits and reduce nausea.

CoQ10: Some people take this powerful antioxidant for cellular energy production to support their heart, pancreas, liver and brain. CoQ10 (ubiquinone) should be taken with food or a fatty meal to speed absorption.

Fish oil: Some people take fish oil to help with cholesterol, triglycerides, depression and blood joint health. Taking fish oil supplements (EPA, DHA or both) with food or fatty meals is ideal because it boosts the absorption.

Magnesium: Some people take magnesium for depression, regularity, reduction of leg cramps and blood pressure support. Like most minerals, taking magnesium with a snack can minimize diarrhea and stomach discomfort.

Multivitamins or prenatal vitamins: Because there are so many constituents in these supplements, it’s best to take them with food in order to minimize stomach upset and nausea.

Selenium: This mineral is taken for thyroid inflammation, bone health, prostate support and immune support. It’s ideally taken with food.

Vitamin D: You can take this without regard to meals, according to the newest research. However, most of the older scientific literature says to take it with food since it’s fat-soluble.

This information is opinion only. It is not intended to treat, cure or diagnose your condition. Consult with your doctor before using any new drug or supplement.

Suzy Cohen is a registered pharmacist and the author of The 24-Hour Pharmacist and Real Solutions from Head to Toe. To contact her, visit www.SuzyCohen.com.

Finally... A scooter that loads itself in and out of your car.

Introducing the Quingo® Flyte - the powerful, portable mobility scooter that you never have to lift. Now featuring patented 5-Wheel Anti-Tip Technology.

It’s a sad fact. Many people who have mobility issues and could benefit from a scooter aren’t able to use them away from home. Struggling to get it into a car or loading it onto a bumper-mounted lift just isn’t worth the effort.

Now, there’s a better scooter, the Quingo® Flyte. It’s easy to use, even for one person, and requires no more effort than closing a car’s tailgate. Clever design enables it to fit into SUV’s, mini-vans, crossovers and hatchbacks.

Quingo® Flyte can load and unload itself in less than 60 seconds using an innovative ramp and a simple remote. The built-in guide rails can be installed in minutes and safely direct your scooter to ground level.

This scooter provides 5-Wheel Anti-Tip Technology for stability, agility and comfort with its unique wheel configuration. The patented 5-wheel Bumpmaster™ design by Quingo enables it to ride safely over a wide variety of surfaces. It uses 4 ultra slim powerful batteries providing a range of up to 23 miles on a single charge.

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Medicare and Medicaid no longer subsidize scooter sales. Today, cheaper scooters are cheaper for a reason. Get the most out of your investment with the best scooter on the market today.

“For the first time in years I’ve been able to go with my granddaughters to the mall. A crowd gathers every time I unload my scooter from my car!”

– Judi K, Exeter, CA

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Choosing the yogurt that’s best for you

By Harvard Health Letters

There are so many kinds of yogurt in the dairy aisle these days, it can be tough to know which to choose.

That’s a great problem to have. Many of the yogurts that have hit store shelves in the past decade offer nutritional benefits including higher protein levels, more calcium and additional choices for people who want to enjoy the benefits of yogurt, but with less added sugar — or who want to find dairy alternatives that offer similar benefits.

However, it’s wise to know what you’re buying before facing that aisle, as many types of yogurt contain more sugar than you’d like to eat for breakfast or a quick snack.

Here’s a guide to help you identify the main varieties, discover some popular options, and learn what to look for when shopping for the healthiest choice.

Try traditional yogurt

The yogurt you grew up eating is unstrained (still contains whey), which means it’s thinner than Greek and Icelandic styles. Nutrition-wise, it has more calcium and natural milk sugars than other varieties.

Get more protein with Greek yogurt

This thick, strained yogurt now makes up more than a third of all yogurt sales in the United States. Straining removes some lactose, calcium, milk sugars and minerals, but results in a higher protein content. One cup of Greek yogurt can have up to 20 grams of protein; traditional yogurt has 11 to 13 grams.

For the most protein-rich choice, try Icelandic yogurt

This is the thickest of all varieties: 1 cup of this strained yogurt is typically made with 4 cups of milk. Because of that, Icelandic yogurt often has the highest protein content.

It also has the longest incubation process, so it’s the tartest of all varieties and has the lowest amount of milk sugar.

If creamy is your thing, choose Australian yogurt. Creamy and unstrained, this yogurt is commonly made with whole milk, so it will be higher in fat than the traditional variety. Other than that, it has a similar nutritional profile.

Don’t do dairy? You have options

Yogurt can be made from nondairy milks, such as coconut, soy and almond.

For the same health benefits as regular yogurt, look for calcium on the Nutrition Facts label. A serving should provide at least 15 percent of your daily calcium dose.

Probiotics: Look for the Live & Active Cultures seal on the label of dairy and nondairy yogurts. It means that your choice contains the highest amount of probiotics. No seal? L. bulgaricus and S. thermophillus should be listed as ingredients.

Sugars: Plain yogurt with 9 grams or less of natural sugar per serving is the healthiest choice. For flavored yogurts, opt for ones with less than 15 grams of sugar. Anything higher than 17 grams has the same sugar content as two fun-size Snickers bars!

Fat: Full-fat yogurts can be a creamier, healthy choice; just figure their higher saturated fat and calories into your overall daily saturated fat intake, which should be less than 7 percent of your total daily calories.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Apr. 18

FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS
Meet fellow breast cancer survivors and hear hematology and oncology specialist Dr. William J. Irvin discuss medical oncology and research at April’s Komen Conversations. This free event will be held at Bon Secours Heart and Vascular Building Conference Room, 7001 Forest Ave., on Thursday, April 18, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. For more information or to register, call (804) 320-1772 or visit komencentralva.org.

Apr. 20

PROTECT YOUR EYES
Learn what you can do to save your vision at the Macular Degeneration Association’s free awareness program on Saturday, April 20, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at DoubleTree Richmond-Midlothian, 1021 Koger Center Blvd. This half-day event will cover age-related macular degeneration, diabetic macular edema and low-vision aids. Buffet breakfast is included. To register, call (855) 962-2852 or visit bit.ly/April20EyesOnSight.
“With my Zinger Chair, I can go anywhere and everywhere I want!”

More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday concern. Whether from an injury or from the aches and pains that come from getting older—getting around isn’t as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The Zinger is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The Zinger is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease. You can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

I can now go places and do things that I wasn’t able to go or do before. It has given me a new lease on life and I am so happy I found it!

—Dana S., Texas

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a mobility device that’s truly unique. They created a battery that provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. The Zinger features two steering levers, one on either side of the seat. The user pushes both levers down to go forward, pulls them both up to brake, and pushes one while pulling the other to turn to either side. This enables great mobility, the ability to turn on a dime and to pull right up to tables or desks. The controls are right on the steering lever so it’s simple to operate and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the Zinger is sturdy and durable yet convenient and comfortable! What’s more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk— you can even gate-check it at the airport like a stroller. Think about it, you can take your Zinger almost anywhere, so you don’t have to let mobility issues rule your life. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. It holds up to 265 pounds, and it goes up to 6 mph and operates for up to 8 hours on a single charge.

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your independence and quality of life?

Zinger Chair®

Call now and receive a utility basket absolutely FREE with your order.

1-888-597-3670

Please mention code 110815 when ordering.

Just think of the places you can go:
• Shopping • Air Travel • Bus Tours
• Restaurants— ride right up to the table! • Around town or just around your house

Zinger is not a wheelchair or medical device and is not covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

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April is National Volunteer Month

By Penny J. Jordan, Senior Connections, CAAA - Information and Community Outreach Manager

I have worked with volunteers for over 10 years in my professional life and many more in my personal life, and working with them has always inspired me to be a better person. I have often wondered if volunteers truly understand the impact they have on people’s lives. My guess is they do not.

The true impact of their kind, selfless acts.

These nonprofit agencies, like many others, would have to pay if the labor was not free. According to the same study, approximately 63.4 million Americans volunteered for a total of 8.1 billion hours in 2009. Those hours have an estimated value of $169 billion. In fact, the value received from services provided by volunteers in the United States compares to the economy of Greece.

According to the Virginia Office of Volunteerism and Community Service, 2.2 million Virginians volunteered a total of 232 million hours in 2017. Their service has an estimated value of $5.5 billion.

At the state and local level, money saved because of volunteer contributions allow more local dollars to be allocated to other services, such as road improvements, education and services for older adults.

Why is this data important? Because it shows the big picture and how spending a few hours volunteering for a cause important to you can make a significant difference to local, national and global economies.

Improve your community

Volunteering has other social consequences. Many public goods and services are delivered through the volunteer sector. For example, the American Red Cross website states that 90 percent of its workforce is made up of volunteers, and these volunteers make it possible for the American Red Cross to respond to an average of 62,000 disasters a year. And according to the Make-A-Wish America website, 28,000 volunteers contribute to their mission of granting wishes.

These nonprofit agencies, like many others, would not be able to provide their services without the support of a strong volunteer force. Volunteering often fills in where there are gaps in the supply of affordable goods and services provided by private commercial businesses or the government.

At Senior Connections, we rely on volunteer support for many of our programs. For example, the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) is administrated by the (See VOLUNTEER on next page)
Senior Connections announces launch of Benefits Enrollment Center

Senior Connections is proud to announce the launch of a new program – the Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC).

Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs) are located around the country to help Medicare beneficiaries enroll in benefit programs for which they are eligible. Trained staff will assist at no charge in determining eligibility and applying for benefits.

Through the BEC, seniors and adults with disabilities will receive enrollment assistance with the following core programs:
- Medicare Part D Extra Help/Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)
- Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

For more information about the Senior Connections Benefits Enrollment Center, please call (804) 672-4484 or email: bec@youraaa.org.

Senior Connections Welcomes Dianne Mallory as one of our new Benefits Enrollment Center Specialists

Senior Connections is happy to welcome Dianne Mallory as one of our two new Benefits Enrollment Center Specialists. Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, Dianne earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Welfare from VCU and a Master of Divinity from Virginia Union University. She has also earned certificates from the non-profit institute at VCU and the Grantsmanship Center of Newport News. She is a fellow with the Sorenson Institute for Political Leadership.

Dianne is a member of the Virginia State Golf Association, but she labels herself as an “extreme beginner” as a golfer. She also enjoys painting (watercolors and mixed media) and genealogy. Dianne and her husband, Lee, have two adult children, two grandchildren and one more on the way!

Mary Bontly Joins New Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC)

Senior Connections is happy to welcome Mary Bontly as one of our two new Benefits Enrollment Center Specialists.

Born in Janesville, Wisconsin, Mary attended the University of Wisconsin where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Work. She also earned a Master of Science in Gerontology at VCU. Most recently, she was a Care Coordinator for VAAA Care with Bay Aging.

Mary has also worked with the Alzheimer’s Association of Greater Richmond and Lifestyle Care with Humana. She still serves on the Alzheimer’s Association’s Care and Support Task Force.

Mary enjoys movies and documentaries, reading and listening to podcasts. She lives with her husband, Larry, in Williamsburg with their dog, Bogart.

To All of the Volunteers at Senior Connections

You might have heard the adage that reminds us to give people their flowers while they can smell them. I think that’s wise counsel.

Through your volunteer service, you are helping to “give flowers” to others as you help pay bills and manage finances, call to check on seniors, answer questions about insurance, give a hand to help out when needed, forward a concern on another’s behalf, share information and educate others, help to keep things in order, or care for someone who might not have anyone else.

For all of these wonderful acts and others, we at Senior Connections say thank you.

We try to stay connected with you, our volunteers, throughout the year. We do this mainly through our volunteer newsletter, by social capital, which is the network of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society to make it more efficient. According to an article by the Points of Light Institute, a strong inverse relationship has been found between the levels of social capital and crime. The higher the social capital, the less crime.

I could go on and on about the significant impact volunteers have on our society. In my line of work, I see it every day. Whether it’s a Red Cross disaster action volunteer team opening a shelter, a Make-A-Wish volunteer helping to grant the wish of a child with a critical illness, or a Medicare trained VICAP counselor helping older adults, the end result is always the same. Our society as a whole is served and made better. I always want volunteers to understand the importance of their contribution.

At Senior Connections, a volunteer is never “just a volunteer.” They are kind, compassionate, selfless individuals who have made a true impact not just on the individuals they help, but also on our agency, our community, our country and our world.

And even though we have a million times, we will continue to say “thank you” to each and every volunteer who helps us empower seniors to live with dignity and choice.
“Spring Fling”  
Health and Safety Fair for Adults 55+ in New Kent and Charles City  
Thursday, April 4  
9:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Corinth Baptist Church  
11650 New Kent Highway  
New Kent, VA  
Sponsored by Chickahominy Area Triad  
Event is free

Finding Value in Your Prime – Hanover County  
Thursday, April 11  
8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Mechanicsville Baptist Church  
8016 Atlee Road  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111  
Register now to attend Hanover County’s largest resource collaboration for seniors, brought to you by Hanover Council on Aging. Hanover County Sheriff’s Office, AARP, Ashland Police Department, Hanover Triad and Hanover County Parks and Recreation.

Hanover’s 4th Annual Finding Value in Your Prime, Hanover’s Active Aging Event, will be held on Saturday, April 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Mechanicsville Baptist Church.

Participants will enjoy breakfast and lunch as well as presentations to promote active lifestyles and positive aging. Meet representatives of services and resources available to older adults, enjoy activities and door prizes.

Volunteering with TeleBridges program at Senior Connections has improved my life. I have met a lot of interesting clients and made new friends over the phone. I consider some of them to be another grandmother and friend. And I believe I have been helpful to my TeleBridges senior friends when they have faced difficult times. A friendly voice checking on them reminds them that someone cares about their well-being. And sending them a note for holidays, birthdays or “just because” brightens their day.

Another great volunteer opportunity I had at Senior Connections was working on the Transforming Perspectives Mural project. The mural aims to highlight the positive and transformative aspects of aging. I worked with my TeleBridges senior friends to see what positive stories they could share about their experience with aging and some of their responses were included in the mural. I look at it now and see the response of one of my TeleBridges senior friends who recently passed away and I am glad to see her words.

I have also volunteered within my neighborhood with our civic association. The civic association collected Secret Santa gifts for teenagers and many of my neighbors stepped forward to get gifts for some students. I could tell from the teenager’s response that our gifts made a difference and help brighten their Christmas that initially looked bleak. I remember how excited some of the teenagers were to receive a knitted scarf that had been made for them. I proved how the positive power of hand-crafted gifts can go a long way. Some of my neighbors also set up “the closet” and supplied it with clothes, shoes, school supplies, food and healthcare items. The kids are able to use the closet as a resource when they need a little help. We also feed the teachers’ breakfast or lunch during Teach-ers Appreciation Week to acknowledge all the work they do to help the students learn. I found this volunteer opportunity very rewarding.

I encourage everyone to do some volunteer activity. There are many organizations who can use extra help from the community. And when you volunteer, you benefit as well. You make friends, people are helped and communities become stronger.
As older adults, we need to stay busy, have fun, and most important, have a purpose to live for. I find volunteering gives me all of those things and more. Unlike a career, no extra special talent is needed — just sign up and show up.

I retired nearly 20 years ago from my job as an accountant. I was only in my early 50s, and I yearned to do something else while rebuilding our lives, with no room for much. Besides the chance to give hands-on help to animals, the Richmond SPCA has many different volunteering opportunities. Clerical work and other administrative activities are always needed. If you like to do laundry, your calling can be met here. They even have a sewing group that meets every Saturday afternoon. For more information, please go to richmondsPCA.org.

Another group I volunteered for was Meals on Wheels. I selected Mechanicsville as my base area to deliver meals, because it is a less congested area than Richmond.

I volunteered once a week delivering meals to a wide variety of people. All were so thankful to see me as I stood in their doorway with a good, nutritious meal. Many wanted to talk, and I was happy to listen, knowing that for some, I may be their only communication with the outside world that day.

Another fun volunteering job I had was helping out at a hospital thrift store. I had a great time organizing items in a fashionable style, satisfying the "Department Store Window Decorator" in me.

My friend Susanne Sturges has been volunteering for seven years as a pastoral care visitor at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Each month a volunteer receives their assignments to visit church members who are housebound or residents in retirement communities. Susanne expresses the rewards of doing this type of volunteering: "Most wonderful is getting to know such dear, special people. There is a wealth of stories about their lives that they share with me. My hope with each visit is to brighten their day with conversation and company," she said. "I leave the visit feeling enriched by the opportunity to be with them. It has proven to be a positive exchange."

Agency Welcomes Anika Gaines as the new Care Coordinator for Charles City and New Kent County

Born in Richmond, Anika Gaines holds a degree in Finance and Accounting from J. S. Reynolds Community College. She has worked as a human resources security specialist supervisor at the Defense Supply Center of Richmond, and more recently as a financial crimes consultant at Wells Fargo of Charlotte, focusing on financial crimes committed nationally and internationally against older adults. Anika started her journey as a candy Stripper for St. Luke's Hospital at the age of 12, and continues to serve as an active volunteer throughout the community. She is also the Chapter Queen for Royalty in Red under the Red Hat Society.

She is a proud mother of three sons and one grandson. She enjoys traveling, snow tubing, four-wheeling, car and motorcycle racing, cooking, movies, music and spending time with family and friends. Anika recently moved back to Virginia from Charlotte, N.C., and is now a proud resident of Charles City, along with her teacup Yorkie, Anya Rose.

Senior Connections Welcomes Dee Caras to the Agency

Dee Caras joined Senior Connections in February as the Caregiver Support Specialist. Dee is a graduate of the VCU Department of Gerontology, and has spent many years working with older adults across the spectrum of care from home- and community-based to facility-based care.

Early in her career, she worked for the Masonic Home of Virginia, which she left to open the Senior Center of Richmond at Chesterfield. Dee also opened, and worked as a manager at, the Adult Day Center at VCU Health and has experience working in a skilled rehabilitation facility.

Dee is certified to work with persons with dementia and is trained by the Rosalynn Carter Institute in the Caring for You, Caring for Me Curriculum. She enjoys discussing issues and policy surrounding aging, and is looking forward to utilizing her education and experience to assist care partners navigate their caregiving journey.

In her free time, Dee enjoys engaging in outdoor activities, reading and spending time with her grown children.
By Andrea Broene Taylor

With an estimated net worth of $88 billion, the British royal family is one of the wealthiest monarchies in Europe. However, just because money is no object for them doesn’t mean they’re frivolous spenders — quite the opposite.

It has been well-documented that Queen Elizabeth II keeps a close eye on her spending, and frugality is a trait that has passed down to other members of her family.

Take a look at several of the most widely reported penny-pinching habits of the various members of the British royal family. In many ways, they’re just like the rest of us.

Prince William and Kate Middleton shop at IKEA

Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, who are parents of three small children, could easily have custom furniture made for their little ones’ rooms. Instead, they like to shop at Swedish home furnishings retailer IKEA.

During a visit to Sweden’s national museum of architecture and design, ArkDes, in 2018, they revealed to IKEA’s head of design Marcus Engman that they had purchased some of the brand’s furniture for two of their kids’ rooms, the Mirror reported.

Prince Charles saves leftovers

Chef and author Carolyn Robb cooked for the British royal family for more than 10 years, from 1989 to 2000, so she’s well-versed on their eating habits.

In a 2015 interview with Racked.com, Robb revealed that Prince Charles is adamant about saving leftovers for additional meals.

“The Prince was very economical and very much believed that nothing should go to waste,” she explained. “If there were leftovers, they’d be used one way or another... If we made roasted lamb and there were leftovers, we’d probably go and make Shepherd’s pie the next night.”

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle fly coach

You might expect an heir to the British throne to use a private jet. But in 2018, the Daily Mail reported that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle flew economy class on a British Airways flight to Nice, France, for a New Year’s vacation. According to passengers who were on the flight, the couple — casually dressed in jeans, a baseball cap and a beanie — sat at the back of the plane with three bodyguards.

In 2014, Prince William flew coach on an American Airlines connecting flight from Memphis, Tenn., to Dallas, on his way home from a friend’s wedding. He only ordered water on the short flight, the Daily Mail noted.

Queen Elizabeth II uses a space heater

Queen Elizabeth II has some thrifty habits, too. She has been photographed on several occasions using an electric space heater at Buckingham Palace to keep warm when greeting guests in the audience room, as well as in her private sitting room at her vacation castle in Scotland.

When the temps drop, rather than crank up the thermostat at her 775-room palace or her Balmoral castle, she simply plugs in a $40 space heater and sets it inside a room’s fireplace.

Yet she’s also mindful of energy use at Buckingham Palace — so much so that there’s a ban on the use of light bulbs over 40 watts, according to the Daily Express, and lights must be turned off when a room isn’t in use.

After all, when you live in a palace that spans 828,818 square feet, energy costs can quickly get out of hand if you aren’t keeping a close watch.

Kate Middleton recycles clothing

Several royals have been photographed out-and-about over the years wearing their favorite clothing and accessory items repeatedly.

The Duchess of Cambridge favors high-end brands but gets her money’s worth from them. In fact, WhoWhatWear.co.uk has deemed her “the perfect advertisement for the cost-per-wear shopping model,” which calculates the true price of a fashion item by dividing the cost by the number of times it’s been worn.

The site reports that she has been spotted at least six times since 2011 wearing a Smythe “Duchess” blazer (she wears it so much the brand renamed it after her), which retails for $695. Using the cost-per-wear model, the true cost of that blazer based on how many times she has publicly worn it is just under $110.

Prince William’s children wear hand-me-downs

Wearing your elder brother’s or sister’s old clothes is a rite of passage for many younger siblings — including the British royals.

Princess Charlotte, the daughter of Prince William and Kate Middleton, was photographed earlier this year holding her new baby brother, Prince Louis, while wearing a blue cardigan with a distinct print around the collar.

Social media fans quickly pointed out that it was the same cardigan her big brother, Prince George, wore in 2016 in an official photo for his great-grandmother Queen Elizabeth II’s 90th birthday, the Huffington Post UK notes. In that same picture of Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis, he’s been wearing a cream top and pants that were also worn by his big sister.

Meghan Markle is a budget fashionista

The Duchess of Sussex’s fashion sense has taken center stage since she started dating her now-husband, Prince Harry. The American actress-turned-British-royal has been lauded for her budget-friendly style choices — including $80 Missoma gold rings she was spotted wearing via social media and a $300 J. Crew coat.

Tennis star Serena Williams recently praised Markle for sporting a $145 blazer from her Serena fashion line. (The blazer has sold out since Williams posted a picture to her Instagram account of Markle wearing the garment.)

Prince William and Kate Middleton cook

While Prince William admits he’s not the best in the kitchen, his royal highness still enjoys cooking for himself. Last year, while serving as a judge at a charity cook-off competition in London, the Prince shared with the crowd that his favorite meal to prepare at home is roast chicken and steak, according to People.com.

Even his kids like to prepare home-cooked meals with help from their mom. While making an appearance earlier this year at St. Luke’s Community Centre in London, where the Prince and Duchess helped prepare meals, Kate Middleton shared with other attendees that her children Prince George and Princess Charlotte like making pizza dough from scratch, Hello! magazine reports.

Queen Elizabeth II saves gift-wrapping paper

In the biography Young Elizabeth: The Making of Our Queen, author Kate Williams shares that the Queen has a long-time habit of collecting wrapping paper and ribbons from gifts she’s received, smoothing them out and storing them to use again, People.com reports. Just like many of us.

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Live like the royals — frugally, that is
Virtual credit card numbers cut fraud risk

By Miriam Cross

Worried about your credit card number falling prey to online breaches or fraud? “EMV chips gave us protection against the cloning of credit cards, but a lot of credit card fraud has moved online,” said Beverly Harzog, credit card expert and author of The Debt Escape Plan. A few card issuers have a solution: virtual credit card numbers. These randomly generated numbers are linked to your credit card, and you can use them instead of your actual card number for online shopping.

That means your real number remains hidden from a merchant’s website. If you create different numbers for different online merchants, the fallout in the event of a breach is limited.

Several banks offer it

With Capital One’s “intelligent assistant” named Eno, for example, your virtual numbers are saved in a control panel, so you can lock or delete individual numbers without affecting the rest of your spending.

Two issuers in addition to Capital One currently offer virtual card numbers on most of their credit cards: Bank of America, through its ShopSafe service, and Citi, through its Virtual Account Numbers benefit.

You can create a temporary set of digits for one-time use or for multiple purchases with the same merchant, as well as for recurring purchases, such as Netflix subscriptions.

Still need vigilance

There are a few potential hiccups when bringing your virtual numbers into the real world. For example, you’ll need to keep track of virtual card numbers linked to recurring purchases to prevent missed payments.

And card issuers say returning items purchased with a temporary number online to a physical store shouldn’t be a problem, but you should bring a copy of your receipt as backup.

Check with your issuer about whether paying in person for a hotel or rental car that you reserved online with a virtual card number will work.

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Smaller stocks are doing well, for now

By Stan Choe

The stock market’s biggest gains are once again coming from its smallest companies, but the trend may not last much longer. Smaller-company stocks like Allegiant Travel and AK Steel have been soaring since late December and leading the rest of the market — a sharp reversal from much of the winter, when smaller stocks were plunging more than the rest of the market.

The Russell 2000 index of small-cap stocks has jumped 19.8 percent since Christmas Eve versus 16.2 percent for the big stocks in the S&P 500 large-cap index, though neither has returned to the records they set late last year.

Bed Bath and Beyond, for example, has surged 46.3 percent since Christmas Eve, helped by a stronger-than-expected earnings report where it said it’s ahead of plan in eventually returning to profit growth. Besides earnings reports, smaller stocks have also been benefiting in recent weeks from reduced worries that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates too quickly.

That’s a big deal for investors in small-company stocks, because they often carry higher levels of debt than their bigger rivals, which gets more expensive as borrowing costs rise. Just don’t count on this run to last forever. “We love the bounce back, but we don’t anticipate the momentum continuing,” Jef-feries strategist Steven DeSanctis wrote in a recent report. He is sticking with his forecast for the Russell 2000 index of small-cap stocks to end the year at 1,500, which would be just about a 2 percent rise from mid-March.

Also, after their quick rebound, small-cap stocks no longer look as cheap as they did just a few weeks ago, relative to their earnings.

And if the economy is indeed in the later stages of its current expansion cycle, as many economists believe, smaller companies may be in line for a more difficult time than their larger rivals, for a variety of reasons.

Profit margins at smaller companies are more vulnerable to rising costs and a slowing economy, for example, say strategists at Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

So even though those strategists are forecasting similar returns for small-cap stocks this year as for other areas of the stock market, they say small-cap stocks may take investors on a more volatile ride getting there.

—AP

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Pay for lifelong learning with tax-free fund

By Mary Kane

If you have helped children or grandchildren with college costs, you are probably already familiar with 529 plans — the tax-advantaged education savings accounts offered by states and educational institutions.

There’s no federal tax deduction for 529s, but residents can usually get a state tax deduction on contributions made to their own state’s plan.

Furthermore, the money grows tax-free over the years until you take it out, tax-free, to use for a child’s tuition, books, room and board, and other qualified educational expenses.

Works for any age student

But you may not realize the plans also can serve a different purpose — to fund your own education. If you are a lifelong learner, you can set up a 529 plan for yourself to pay for your educational pursuits.

You get the same tax breaks and benefits as any 529 plan owner. You can fund the account with new money or with unused money from a child’s account. Any leftover money in your 529 that you don’t use can go to the 529 of a child or grandchild.

Joe Hurley, 62, of Victor, N.Y., used about $5,000 saved in his 529 plan to study horticulture and conservation at Finger Lakes Community College. “I don’t think a lot of people know you can do one just for yourself,” he said. “It sounds almost too good to be true.”

Hurley, who is a former accountant and founder of Savingsforcollege.com, a college finance research website, learned about a personal 529 after setting up plans for his two children in the early 1990s. He sold the website in 2012 and now runs a farm.

Karen Austin, deputy treasurer for the state of Iowa, set up a 529 for herself in 2012 to help pay for her MBA from the University of Iowa. By the time she finished her degree, Austin deducted nearly $9,000 over three years from her state income taxes. She says her only regret is not saving money in a 529 sooner.

Shop around

To set up your own 529, do some shopping first. Find details on different state plans at savingforcollege.com.

Most states (including Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia) offer residents a state income tax break for contributing to their own state’s plan. Virginia taxpayers can deduct up to $4,000 per account per year on state taxes.

In Maryland, individuals may deduct up to $2,500 per beneficiary per year. Married couples may deduct up to $5,000 per beneficiary per year.

Contributions to the D.C. College Savings Plan by D.C. residents may be deducted up to $4,000 per year by an individual, and up to $8,000 per year by married taxpayers who each make contributions to their own account.

You can choose a plan in another state, which could be a smart move if your state doesn’t offer deductions and another state’s plan offers better investing options or lower fees. You also can research and compare plans at the website of the College Savings Plans Network (collegesavings.org). If you decided only recently to go back to school, you won’t have time to let your 529 contributions grow. But most states (including Md., Va., and D.C.) allow for immediate 529 withdrawals, according to Mark Kantrowitz, publisher for Savingsforcollege.com. You can set up a plan one day, take money out the next day and still qualify for a state tax deduction that same year.

Know the rules

You may be tempted to use the money to take a trip advertised as an educational tour, but it likely won’t count as a qualified plan expense, Hurley warned.

Continuing education or certification courses count, so you could use a 529 for those. Be sure any course you take is offered by an eligible educational institution, and use the money only to pay tuition and other eligible expenses. Otherwise, you could face a 10 percent tax penalty and income taxes on the account’s earnings, and you also may have to pay back your state tax deduction.

Going back to school may make you eligible for the federal Lifetime Learning tax credit, which is worth 20 percent of the first $10,000 in tuition you pay per year, for a maximum credit of $2,000.

But you can’t double dip on tax breaks, Kantrowitz pointed out. You can’t use the same educational expenses to justify both the tax credit and the tax-free withdrawal from a 529. You’d owe income tax on the earnings withdrawn from your 529, though the 10 percent penalty would be waived.

To avoid the tax hit, use 529 money only after you exceed the limit of the expenses covered by the tax credit.

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Exploring a classic Maine fishing village

By Glenda C. Booth

To get to Stonington, Maine, from U.S. 1, wind down the Blue Hill Peninsula to Deer Isle on two-lane roads for 38 miles, past blueberry fields, rocky pastures and spruce forests, until the road stops at a snug working harbor on the peninsula’s end, a granite thumb lapped by salty ocean waves.

Stonington, situated at the southern end of Deer Isle, is a quintessential coastal Maine village, named for its granite quarries. And like those formations, which were carved by a two-mile-thick glacier 20,000 years ago, living up north can be hard — especially during the long, cold winter.

But summer brings colorful window boxes crammed with orange impatiens and purple petunias, hydrangea blossoms the size of volleyballs, and sweet aromas of simmering seafood. Signs advertise freshly-picked blueberries, ocean-fresh haddock fillets and fishing gear at the auto store.

Stonington’s a slow-paced hamlet of fishing, boating, art and meandering, with many places for quiet reverie along the shoreline, in the woods or about town. And residents want to keep it that way. The threatened “infiltration” of a Dollar Store in nearby Blue Hill prompted vociferous protests.

Fishing fixation

Part of the fun in Stonington takes place around the town dock. Surrounding waters support a working fleet of more than 300 lobster boats. Stonington claims the title as “the state leader in pounds and dollar value of lobster landings.” You can watch the boats return, help haul out their catch, and buy a lobster fresh off the dock.

In the summer, local captains conduct narrated boat trips laced with the arcana of lobstering. For example, did you know Maine’s favorite crustacean takes five to seven years to reach the legal catch size and, during that time, sheds its shell 25 to 27 times?

On some boat tours, passengers can spot harbor seals lounging around on the granite boulders and hear lighthouse lore, such as the story of the first female lighthouse keeper on Mark Island. Captain Mike Moffett of the Isle au Haut Boat Company chuckled, “A lot of fishermen swung by to say hello. Hello? She had a 45 revolver to ward off the unruly ones.”

The Stonington Lobster Boat Races are a July highlight. High-powered diesel- and gas-powered lobster boats compete for speed, and the winner nabbs the Fastest Lobstah Boat Afloat award and the Jimmy Stevens Cup.

Celebrating granite

The bedrock under Deer Isle is rose-hued granite, formed 360 million years ago. Since the late 1800s, Stonington’s quarries have supplied the stone to historic structures, including President John F. Kennedy’s memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

A statue next to the public landing honors stoneworkers who came to the area in the 1900s from Italy, Scotland, Sweden and other countries to quarry, cut and ship granite around the country.

The Deer Isle Granite Museum honors the island’s quarry workers who “built America’s cities.” In its heyday, Stonington was a “wild west town,” with 50 businesses, says the recorded narration, and the saloons hawked beer at ten cents a glass.

Finding and making art

You can easily fill a day gallery hopping for paintings, weavings, pottery and stone work.

At Marlin Spike Chandlery on West Main Street, Timothy Whitten masters fancy ropework, inspired by the sailors and fishermen who needed tough lines and knots to withstand the seas’ turbulence and vengeance. (A marlin spike is a splicing tool.)

Whitten creates bell ropes, becket, jewelry and bags from mostly linen and hemp twine. His combo shop-studio is like a museum of nautical gear from sea chests to glass float balls.

The Opera House, also on historic Main Street, is a popular venue for concerts, dance, theater and films year-round. Originally a music and dance hall, the 1886 building has gone through several iterations, including abandonment, but was renovated in 1999.

The Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society maintains five historic buildings on its site, including an original jail and a house built in 1830. It features exhibits of 19th century clothes and fishery and marine transportation memorabilia. It is open to the public from June 16 to September 16.
Three enchanting weeks in sultry Sumatra

By Don Mankin

The young orangutan swung on a vine like an Olympic gymnast. From the look on his face, it was clear that he was having a great time performing for the sweaty hikers who had trekked through the Sumatran jungle to catch his show.

My wife and I were in the orangutan reserve on the edge of Bukit Lawang in Northern Sumatra on a trip hosted by Eldertreks — an adventure travel company specializing in exotic trips for mature travelers (eldertreks.com).

The young primate was just the opening act in a three-week adventure exploring the wildlife, culture, natural history and scenery of one of the most interesting places on earth.

We watched the playful youngster and his mother, then took a two-hour drive on a rutted, dusty road to an elephant reserve.

For an hour, a herd of elephants, including two babies, frolicked in the river as my wife scrubbed one of them with a brush. I got as big a kick watching her wash the “little” guy as I did watching the elephants.

Our next destination was the village of Tuk Tuk on Samosir Island in Lake Toba. The biggest lake in Southeast Asia, Toba was formed about 75,000 years ago following the largest known volcanic eruption of the last 25 million years, many times greater than Vesuvius or Krakatoa.

We took a leisurely boat ride to explore nearby villages of the Batak people, the largest ethnic group in the region.

The next two days featured a walk through Tuk Tuk, once a popular stop on the hippie trail. (Many shops still sell magic mushrooms.)

At 3,000 feet above sea level and surrounded by three volcanoes, Bukittinggi has more to offer than cooler temperatures and dramatic scenery: surprisingly friendly locals.

Soon after we checked into our hotel, we took a short walk. It was Friday, after the weekly Muslim services, and the plaza was full of people enjoying the early evening. As we strolled through the plaza, young Muslim girls in hijabs approached us, shyly giggling, and asked us to pose for photos with them.

Everyone was friendly, welcoming and curious, asking, “Where you from?” I felt like a rock star. I guess they don’t see many fat, old white men in that part of the world.

Over the next three days, we walked through rural villages outside the town, and got a dose of Minangkabau culture — the ancient matrilineal people who dominate this part of western Sumatra — with a visit to the beautifully restored king’s palace and to a family in a local village.

On our last day in Bukittinggi, we explored nearby tunnels, built with local slave labor during their occupation by Japan in WWII. The tunnels end in Sianok Canyon — not a Grand Canyon by any stretch of the imagination, but a pretty good canyon nonetheless, and one that is considerably easier to hike.

Karakatoa and pygmy rhinos

Our next significant stop was Krakatoa, the legendary volcano off the southern tip of Sumatra. Krakatoa’s eruption in 1883 was probably the single greatest destructive force in modern history.

All that is left of that volcano is an arc of islands that were part of the rim of the original caldera (the crater formed when a volcano erupts and collapses).

Our destination was Anak Krakatoa (“child of Krakatoa”), a volcanic island that emerged in the middle of the original caldera from an eruption in 1927.

After a rough two-hour ride in speedboats, we landed on a black-sand beach, then hiked through the tropical brush to an exposed expanse on the volcano’s flank.

A few more minutes of hiking through the rocky lunar landscape granted us a view of steam and smoke drifting out of the caldera at the top, as well as the remnants of the original caldera, now steep jungle-covered islands, not far away.

Our last day included a visit to the Rhino Breeding Center in Way Kampas National Park. There are fewer than 100 pygmy rhinos in the world, and all of them are in Sumatra. At the time of our visit, seven were in the breeding center.

For almost an hour we were able to watch one of the “residents” devour bananas, branches, brush and almost everything else in sight in his protected compound.

Then on a boat ride up a jungle river, we saw monkeys, birds (blue herons, kingfishers, fish eagles) and crocs slithering into the water.

Bumpy but scenic road trips

Our trip spanned the 1,110-mile-long island of Sumatra almost from end to end. That meant that we spent a lot of time on rough, twisting roads.

Yet these drives were usually scenic, winding through dark, green tunnels of overhanging trees, and past rice paddies, tropical forests, volcanic cones covered in tangled jungle, and terraced fields of coffee, beans, corn and chili peppers.

From our mini-bus we glimpsed everyday life in Sumatra — mosques with shining domes, women in colorful head scarves sweeping their stoops, children in school uniforms waving to us, men repairing trucks in their front yards, and people selling all kinds of wares from stalls in front of their homes.

At one point, we crossed the equator and stopped just long enough to take photos, straddling the imaginary meridian with one foot in each hemisphere — a symbol, perhaps, of the complexity and diversity of this sultry, magical place.

Eldertreks.com offers trips to Sumatra at $5,495; they also offer excursions to Europe, Africa and Antarctica.

Don Mankin, an award-winning travel writer, will be leading a trip to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in October. For more information, visit adventuretransformations.com.
On Stinson Neck overlooking Jericho Bay is Haystack Mountain School of Crafts — an artist’s rustic haven of 40 quiet, mossy, wooded acres offering workshops in pottery, metalwork, bookmaking, weaving, ceramics, wood, blacksmithing, glass blowing and other arts. Students can have 24-hour-a-day immersion in their passion. You don’t need a watch here, staff say.

Another example of local creativity can be found at Nervous Nellie’s Jams & Jellies, “a cottage industry in a cottage,” where Anne Beerits produces 15 flavors of jam, chutney and marmalade in her small kitchen — 40,000 jars a year.

Her husband, Peter, gives tours of a whimsical sculptural village he has created over the past 30 years from discarded items found around the island. It’s a quirky mishmash that won Yankee magazine’s “Best of Everything” award in 2010 and 2013.

For landlubber outdoor types, several nature preserves invite quiet ambles. The Island Heritage Trust’s walker's map has trails through the woods and along a rocky coast.

At the Barred Island Preserve, the walk “rewards mightily, especially when a storm blowing hard from the south pounds pretty respectable waves on the shore,” according to its brochure. Savvy trekkers time their visit to watch waves simultaneously cover a sandbar from both directions, known as the “zipper effect.”

Another favorite is Isle au Haut, a six-mile ferry trip from Stonington, with 18 miles of trails, rocky shorelines, cobblestone beaches, evergreen forests, marshes and a lake.

Dining and downtime

As for dining, restaurants like Aragosta serve ocean-to-table dishes such as Blue Hill Bay oysters and mussels, Gulf of Maine hake and Stonington lobster tortellini.

Restaurants also specialize in delicacies made from blueberries, the state’s famous fruit — blueberry pies, cobblers, buckles, syrup, wine, jams and ice cream toppings.

All around town, fresh lobsters are steamed, stewed, casseroled or lumped on a hot dog roll — genuine Downeast Maine cuisine.

“So, what’s the best reason to visit? There’s something about the quiet here. On most days, the tide creeps in and bathes the rocky shoreline. A cottony, gauzy fog can feel like a warm blanket.

“We have a relationship with the fog,” said Marissa Hutchinson, a staffer at Island Heritage Institute. In Maine, “it’s beautiful and low key, a slower pace. Down here, we don’t have immediate access to a lot of things, but we learn we don’t need as much.”

If you go

The closest airports are in Portland, 160 miles away, and Bangor, Maine, 58 miles away. The least expensive round-trip airfare to Bangor in April is $573 on American Airlines from D.C.-area airports.

The Deer Isle Chamber of Commerce (deerisle.com) has an online island guide, lodging options and maps.

Stonington’s Inn on the Harbor has 13 rooms with decks offering views of the bay, islands and waterfront.

Boat tours are available from Bert and I Harbor Tours (deerislecabinwithboat-tours.com) or Old Quarry Ocean Adventures (oldquarry.com).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Ongoing

MONDAY WITH FRIENDS
For more than 44 years, Young at Heart, a senior club, has met every Monday at 10 a.m. at Belmont United Methodist Church, 3510 Broad Rock Blvd. Drop in for conversation, a brief program and lunch. Call (804) 275-6336 for more information.

Ongoing

HAVE YOUR SOIL SAMPLED
The Chesterfield County Cooperative Extension offers homeowners a personalized plan for a healthy, environmentally-friendly lawn. Register by Wednesday, May 15 to receive a home visit from a Master Gardener volunteer, who will measure your yard, examine your lawn and take a soil sample for analysis. A $25 fee covers the soil test and all supplies. To register, visit tinyurl.com/GR2019 and download form.

May 6

DEMYSTIFYING CONCIERGE MEDICINE
PartnerMD, a provider of concierge primary care, explains the ins and outs of this fast-growing alternative to standard healthcare at a free educational event on Monday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to noon or 6 to 7 p.m. Their office is located at 7001 Forest Ave., Room 110. For more information or to register, call (804) 237-8282 or visit bit.ly/May6ConciergeMedicine.
Exhibit illuminates immigrants’ stories

By Martha Steger

When he was 10 years old, Atif Qarni, Virginia’s Secretary of Education, came to the United States from Pakistan. He went on to serve in the U.S. Marines during the Iraq War.

Bol Gai Deng, who works at a Richmond home-improvement store, survived the destruction of his Sudanese town when he was seven years old, fled to America and settled in Virginia. Today he’s campaigning to be the next president of South Sudan.

These are just two of many stories of first-generation immigrants and refugees who arrived in Virginia after 1976 that are told in a new Library of Virginia exhibition highlighting the commonwealth’s changing demographics.

“New Virginians: 1619-2019 & Beyond,” which opened in December, is built around more than 30 video interviews, each of which illuminates the personal story of a Virginian born abroad.

“Some of them were fleeing oppression, war or genocide. Others came seeking greater opportunities for themselves and their children,” wrote interviewer David Bearinger in the library’s magazine.

Bearinger and Pat Jarrett, who filmed the interviews, work for Virginia Humanities, the state’s humanities council.

“The other was the way that gratitude became a universal theme, expressed in one way or another by every person we interviewed — gratitude for the privilege of being part of this country, and a desire to give back.”

Rounding out the picture

To complement the video excerpts that may be viewed at the exhibit, a display of objects that have special meaning for the immigrants gives a glimpse into their personal lives.

For example, there’s “a graduation stole given to Isabel Castillo by her grandmother to celebrate Castillo’s receipt of an honorary doctorate from the University of San Francisco; a copy of Wedding Song, a memoir by Farideh Goldin of her journey from Iran to the United States; a mask crafted by Ganna Natsag for a tsam (‘masked dance’) ceremony practiced in his native Mongolia; and a stringed instrument called a charango from Bolivia,” Batson wrote.

In addition, a brief historical summary of immigration to the commonwealth is on view in the library’s lobby.

“The composite portrait of Virginia is becoming more complex, challenging an older, simpler understanding of what it means to be a Virginian,” Batson wrote for the magazine.

See EXHIBIT, page 21
Springtime’s beauties not here for long

By Lela Martin

Take some time this month to notice spring flowering ephemerals — you’ll be mesmerized by their magic. These plants have a short bloom period, go dormant, and then reappear the next spring.

Typically, spring ephemerals are perennial woodland wildflowers that develop stems, leaves and flowers in early spring, quickly bloom before deciduous trees leaf out, and produce seed.

Then comes the disappearing act. The parts you can see wither before the heat of summer, leaving only unseen underground structures (roots, rhizomes or bulbs) for the remainder of the year.

Feed the birds (and butterflies)

The early blooms of ephemerals provide a marvelous early nectar source for insects, butterflies and hummingbirds. It’s a symbiotic relationship, since these creatures pollinate the flowers and help spread the seeds.

Two attractive Virginia natives you might consider are Virginia Bluebell (Mertensia virginica) and Spring Beauty (Claytonia virginica).

The foliage of Virginia Bluebell emerges deep purple, but turns green in the blink of an eye. Leaves are oval and smooth with prominent veins, growing up to eight inches wide.

The flowers, which last about three weeks, start as purplish pink buds and then open downward as sky blue bells. Their tubular shape attracts bumblebees, long-tongued bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

The plants have few pests and are deer-resistant. Mature clumps can grow up to one foot wide and two feet high.

A more delicate and diminutive ephemeral, Spring Beauty has clusters of pink or whitish flowers, striped in bubblegum pink. You won’t notice the small plants until, hocus pocus, they start blooming from March through May. The star-shaped flowers attract bees, flies and butterflies.

Spring Beauty is a charming plant in rock gardens. Only about five inches tall, it is best enjoyed when planted in large groupings. Its grass-like foliage will last longer than the blooms, though it, too, will fade away before summer.

Buy and plant soon

Buy and plant ephemerals now through early summer when you can find them for sale. Look for nursery-propagated plants at nurseries that specialize in native plants.

Virginia Bluebell is considered threatened in parts of its native range, so do not transplant them or collect seeds from the wild.

Ironically, though their blooms are short-lived, the plants themselves can take years to establish in your garden, so be patient.

Trilliums, another ephemeral, might take as long as seven years from seed to flower.

To conjure the appropriate spot for ephemerals, select a site that has the attributes of a woodland: rich soil, spring moisture and summer shade. The soil should be well-draining, be enriched with compost, and have a neutral pH.

Although most ephemerals look best in mass plantings, start with a few plants. They will naturalize and you can buy more once you ensure they’re happy.

You should include plants to fill in as the ephemerals fade. Astilbe, hosta, ferns, bugbane (Actaea simplex) and Solomon’s seal are some choices to interplant with ephemerals as they thrive in the same growing conditions.

The best time to mulch with compost or shredded leaves is in very early spring, before ephemerals make their appearance. However, if you plant them now, mulch when you plant. You’ll be bewitched by your spring surprises each year.

Lela Martin is a Master Gardener with the Chesterfield County office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Download a free copy of a newly released native plant guide: Native Plants for Virginia’s Capital Region at plantvirginianatives.org. This guide showcases the variety of plants native to the Virginia Capital Region, which includes Henrico, Hanover, City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Charles City, New Kent, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland and Amelia.
Exhibit
From page 19
the exhibit’s overview. “The challenge and opportunity is to reconsider what kind of place Virginia is — and what kind of place it should be.”

The New Virginians exhibit runs through December 7. The Library of Virginia is located at 800 E. Broad St., in Richmond, and is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission and parking are free.

Look for information about exhibition-related events and programs on the library’s website at lva.virginia.gov, and on its Facebook page. For more information, call the events line at (804) 692-3099 or (804) 692-3500.

The complete interviews may be viewed on the library’s YouTube channel and on its website at lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/new-virginians.

2019 is the year the Commonwealth commemorates the 400th anniversary of several major historical events — among them, the bringing of the first Africans to Virginia as slaves in 1619, and the first women to arrive in the 17th-century colony in significant number in the 1620s.

Visit americanrevolution2019.com to learn more about how Virginia is engaging with diverse individuals and organizations to tell these stories from its past.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Apr. 13**
**ENJOY DEBUSSY, RAVEL & MORE**

Listen to swoon-worthy Nocturnes by Debussy, Ravel’s Rapsodie espagnole, and works by Bali-inspired composer Colin McPhee at a concert at the Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts. The University of Richmond Chorus and Richmond Symphony Chorus will present “Astia Masterworks: Influence of the World,” the last in its Tucker-Boatwright Concert series, on Saturday, April 13, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, April 14, at 3 p.m. (with a free pre-concert talk at 2 p.m. on Sunday). Ticket prices start at $10. For more information, call (804) 788-1212 or visit richmondsymphony.com/event/influence-world-tucker-boatwright-concert

**Apr. 14**
**MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE**

Bring the family to the University of Richmond Museums’ Family Day! This free event invites families to peruse the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature on Sunday, April 14, from 1 to 3 p.m. Activities include face painting, refreshments and hands-on art projects. The university’s natural sciences and decorative arts museum, the Lora Robins Gallery is located at 5 Richmond Way in Richmond. For more information, call (804) 287-6324 or email hcampbel@richmond.edu.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**May 10**
**RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY**

The Library of Virginia continues its Genealogy Workshop Series this year with beginner and intermediate workshops as well as workshops for African American families. Offered on Friday, May 10, the how-to class runs from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and costs $25; preregistration is required. For more information, contact ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov or call (804) 692-3001.

FROM PAGE 22
**ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD**

HOW TO PLACE CLASSIFIED ADS
All classified ads must be submitted and paid for online, via our website, www.the-beaconnewspapers.com/classifieds

Deadlines and Payments: To appear in the next issue, your ad text and payment must be entered by the 5th of the preceding month (for Baltimore and Howard County editions); by the 20th (for Washington and Richmond editions).

Cost will be based on the number of characters and spaces in your ad: • $25 for 1-250 • $35 for 251-500 • $50 for 501-750 (maximum length). The website will calculate this amount for you.

Note: Each real estate listing qualifies as one ad. • All ads are subject to publisher's discretion. Payment will be refunded if unacceptable for any reason.

Questions? Call (804) 673-5203.
To place your classified ad, visit www.thebeaconnewspapers.com/classifieds

CLASSIFIEDS

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For Sale

CEMETERY LOT — Greenwood Memorial Gardens on Patterson Avenue - Double urn niche for sale at 1995 pricing of $1,745.00. Contact 804-658-0399 for details.

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To place a classified ad today, visit our website.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Apr. 27

Host Home Program is leading a free six-hour training on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Centenary United Methodist Church, 411 East Grace St. Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be served. Visit bit.ly/April27HostHome to register.

Crossword Puzzle

Good Names

Stephen Sherr

Across
1. Creative
5. Arbitrary abbrev for a complex investing strategy
8. It is quite complimentary to red
12. Where to get a breath of frost air
13. Disqualified, on The Price is Right
14. Blusher
15. Related to drums, lobes, and canals
16. Businessman James, known as “The Pineapple King”
17. Shanty
18. Good names for catburglars
21. Before, read from either direction
22. Foe of Mr. Clean
23. Place into a third-person trust
27. Go at medium speed (to an equestrian)
28. Prefix with -demic and -center
29. Ironically, she was created during the day-time
30. Good names for the accounts receivable department
31. MXXX divided by X
32. It joined the Big-10 in 1912
33. Jell-O shaper
34. Good names for bears
35. “How was ___ know?”
36. Stubborn animal
37. Good names for straight-talkers
38. Implicit prohibition
39. Use quotes
40. It could be bounced off someone
41. Part of a detour sign
42. Newspaper page
43. Santa’s organizing tool
44. Outsource
45. Snake’s comment
46. Run out of checkers
47. Outgoing
48. “In the scheming phase
49. Avoids school
50. Governor’s constituency
51. Rutgers inspiration for Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds
52. Advance degree in singing or instrumentation
53. Letters in Greek tic-tac-toe
54. Good names for bears
55. Comic book
56. Useless piece on a topless beach

Down
1. Be quite fond of
2. Helicopter blade
3. Descendants of any one of Jacob’s sons
4. Disco song with a Guinness record 44,000 simultaneous dancers
5. Hobbies
6. Take some deep breaths
7. “Ew, gross”
8. Stay alive
9. Category of dog tricks
10. Bond film henchman (or a type of 5 Across)
11. Trail mix ingredient
12. Good names for bears
13. Good names for bears
14. Blusher
15. Disqualified, on The Price is Right
16. Good names for catburglars
17. Shanty
18. Good names for catburglars
19. Foe of Mr. Clean
20. Best way to start making “repairs”
21. Before, read from either direction
22. Foe of Mr. Clean
23. Place into a third-person trust
24. Good names for the accounts receivable department
25. MXXX divided by X
26. It joined the Big-10 in 1912
27. Jell-O shaper
28. “How was ___ know?”
29. Good names for bears
30. Good names for bears
31. Good names for bears
32. Good names for bears
33. Good names for bears
34. “How was ___ know?”
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51. “How was ___ know?”
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54. “How was ___ know?”
55. “How was ___ know?”
56. “How was ___ know?”

Answers on page 21.
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