Museum CEO tackles Civil War head-on

Christy Coleman, CEO of the newly expanded American Civil War Museum, reflects on the evolution of the museum — and Richmond itself. Under Coleman’s direction, the museum, a merger of two of the city’s institutions, will convey a more comprehensive history of the Civil War and its aftermath.

Photo by Kim Brundage Photography

www.fiftyplusrichmond.com
Heads in a fog

Is it me or are more people driving around today with their heads in the clouds than before?

Drivers have always had distractions, whether from kids roughhousing in the back seat, cars rubbernecking at an accident, or the urgent need to change the radio station or CD.

But today, we have more things than ever clanging for our attention when we drive. Some of them are external and technological in nature, such as phone calls, texts and GPS directions.

Other sources may be internally generated. We’re so bombarded with messages all day, some of us may have adopted a general air of inattention just to block out the noise.

On a quick outing the other day, I had three experiences in the same parking lot, one after the other, that led me to write this column.

I had gone to a small strip mall with a crowded parking lot to visit a popular store where people are constantly streaming in and out, so I expected to have some close encounters.

Surprisingly, I arrived at a time when there was an empty spot near the front of the store. In the car next to that spot, a woman was rooting around in her trunk, so I drove into my spot slowly and carefully.

Then, as if she hadn’t even noticed me there, she proceeded to open the rear passenger door of her car, pining me inside mine.

When I saw that she had a child in a car seat, I thought I would simply wait until she had gotten him out so they could go into the store. But after sitting quietly for a minute, I discovered she was still standing there, now feeding the child his lunch.

I started my car again to open my window and politely asked if she could let me exit my car. She did, and I went into the store.

I probably wouldn’t even recall that situation now were it not for my experience only a few minutes later, as I tried to leave the same parking spot.

When I returned to my car with shopping bags, I saw a car idling right behind me, the driver apparently waiting for a spot like mine to open up for him. So I put my bags in the back seat, cars rubbernecking around in our own little worlds.

Having these three experiences in a row got me thinking. Have many of us become so accustomed to focusing only on ourselves (or our ubiquitous technology) that we might break through the barriers of me, also leaving the shopping center, inordinately loud.

As I neared the exit, the car just in front of me, also leaving the shopping center, inexplicably drove into the lane intended for those entering the center (rather than the exit lane) and proceeded to wait there for the light to change.

I hesitantly started to pull into the (correct) exit lane but quickly realized that probably wasn’t a good idea under the circumstances, as the two of us would then be blocking all entrance to the center.

Sure enough, a few seconds later, a car coming up the main road attempted to enter the shopping center, only to find the entrance lane blocked by the out-bound car. So, I pulled back completely from the exit lane, allowing the driver to maneuver around the stopped car and enter the shopping center that way.

It seemed like an eternity before the traffic light changed and both the distracted car and I could leave the center. Having these three experiences in a row got me thinking. Have many of us become so accustomed to focusing only on ourselves (or our ubiquitous technology) that we stopped being aware of what’s happening around us?

While I don’t know if technology actually had anything to do with these peculiar examples of distractedness, I wonder if our tech-obsessed modern way of life has accustomed us to walking (or driving) around in our own little worlds.

With hearing blocked by car pods or Bluetooth devices, eyes only for our smartphones and GPS, have we walled ourselves off to the sights and sounds of our surroundings and fellow human beings?

As for those of us who find such behavior obnoxious, what lesson do we take away from these encounters? Do we walk around with chips on our shoulders, looking for reasons to get angry? Do we decide that, since so many others seem to be oblivious and get away with it, we should become more self-centered and insular ourselves?

Or do we aim to make a point to acknowledge the presence of others while respecting their personal space, in hopes that we might break through the barriers between us and help reestablish norms of human interaction?

I hope the folks with whom I interacted that day gained a little more self-awareness after our encounter.

But even if not, I certainly have been doing a lot of thinking myself since then, and I hope I have come away a little more aware of how my own behavior (especially behind the wheel of a car) might affect others.

And I hope those reading about this experience may do the same.
Feature Story

She’s not one to shy from controversy

By Martha Steger

Christy Coleman’s office inside one of Richmond’s riverfront Tredegar Iron Works buildings is typical of a chief executive officer. It’s filled with framed photographs of family members, plaques with accolades, newspaper articles and books.

Three items on her bookcase stand out, however. One is a small copy of the U.S. Constitution from James Madison’s plantation, Monticello. Another is a gourd reminiscent of “the drinking gourd,” an African-American freedom legend, and the third is a carved 18th-century mug from West Africa. All three pieces illustrate Coleman’s unique connection to African-American history and the Civil War.

Coleman, 54, is the CEO of the newly expanded American Civil War Museum (ACWM), which celebrated its grand opening in Historic Tredegar on May 4. Last July, Time magazine named Coleman “one of 31 people changing the South.”

Started as a slave re-enactor

Coleman began working at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1989 as a historical interpreter, where she portrayed a slave.

During her decade-long tenure at Colonial Williamsburg, Coleman rose from reenactor to director for public history, where she oversaw all of the foundation’s historical interpreters. It was in that position, she said, “that I began to find my voice.”

One of Coleman’s first big events there was the annual market day, a reenactment of a Colonial Virginia auction of items such as cattle and land.

When a colleague pointed out that a historical market would have sold slaves, too, Coleman received management’s approval to stage a live slave auction — one in which she would be one of four African Americans sold to the highest bidder from the market’s auction block.

The half-hour event attracted international media and a large crowd of onlookers. Coleman remembers the hush that fell over the crowd when the auction began — and the collective sigh from everyone when it ended. “It was wrenchingly emotional,” she said.

She left Colonial Williamsburg in 1999 to head the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit.

After nearly a decade there, Coleman heard about an opening at the American Civil War Center, a small museum back in Virginia on the banks of the James River. In 2008, she moved to Richmond to become its president and chief operating officer.

Two museums combine

By 2013, the American Civil War Center and the Museum of the Confederacy (encompassing the White House of the Confederacy), situated two blocks north of the Virginia State Capitol, had become part of the United States’ larger culture wars.

There were tense relationships between the two institutions across Confederate and racial lines, with supporters of each museum standing firmly — both in the media and behind closed doors — for their individual interpretations of 19th-century American history.

Throughout Richmond, tempers flared, fueled by a Confederate legacy group that launched a social-media campaign on behalf of the Museum of the Confederacy.

Cooler heads prevailed, however, and in November 2013, the American Civil War Center and the Museum of the Confederacy announced they would merge. Two months later, they unveiled a new name: The American Civil War Museum, with the tagline “Confederacy, Union, Freedom.”

No sugarcoated history

Last year, as co-chair of the Monument Avenue Commission dealing with the issue of what to do with Richmond’s Confederate monuments, Coleman was involved in many public meetings with the people of Richmond — black and white, old and young, male and female, new and longtime residents.

The 10-person panel’s report last July recommended removing a statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis but leaving in place four others.

A talented negotiator, Coleman has a unique skillset, said S. Waite Rawls, III, an investment banker who served as president and CEO of the Museum of the Confederacy for almost a decade.

Rawls, who now chairs the ACWM’s fundraising arm, said he was impressed when he met Coleman during the 2008 search for a new leader of the Civil War Center.

“She had the experience of dealing with controversial issues and had met them head-on, not trying to sugarcoat history,” Rawls said. “Once I met her, I saw why she’d been so successful. She’s confident, smart and makes a good impression.”

Rawls and Civil War scholar Edward L. Ayers, former president of the University of Richmond, were among the many people who worked with Coleman to open the expanded American Civil War Museum on the riverfront earlier this month. Ayers, who sat on the boards of both institutions before the merger, chaired the board of trustees for the new museum for the past six years.

“Christy is a rare combination: a driven visionary leader with a quick and deep sense of humor,” he said in an email. She “confronts challenges of every sort with a deep and empathetic understanding and with a determination to make the best out of every situation. She is inspiring to work with, and it’s wonderful to see her hard work come to fruition this spring.”

Debunking myths

When asked about the role of the Amer-

See COLEMAN, page 19
Facing cancer treatment? This can help

By Lindsey Tanner

Before she could start breast cancer treatment, Nancy Simpson had to walk in a straight line, count backward from 20 and repeat a silly phrase.

It was all part of a special kind of medical fitness test for older patients that’s starting to catch on among cancer doctors. Instead of assuming that patients are too frail for treatment or, alternatively, recommending harsh drugs tested only in younger patients, they are taking a broader look.

Specialists call these tests “geriatric assessments,” and they require doctors to take the time to evaluate physical and mental fitness, along with emotional and social well-being. They also take into account the patient’s desires for life-prolonging treatment regardless of how much time might be left.

An avid walker with a strong network of nearby family and friends, Simpson, now 80, said she “wanted to do the maximum I could handle” to fight her disease. She scored high enough in her 2017 evaluation to proceed with recommended surgery and chemotherapy.

“It gave me encouragement. Then I felt like I am OK and I can get through this — and we’ll get through this,” said Simpson.

For patients 65 and up

These tests are sometimes done with other illnesses but only recently have been recommended for cancer.

In new guidelines, the American Society of Clinical Oncology recommends the evaluations for patients 65 and up, particularly before making decisions about chemotherapy. The idea is to find ways to help patients tolerate treatment, not rule it out.

For example, if walking tests show balance problems that chemotherapy might worsen, patients might be offered physical therapy first. Relatives or friends might be called on to help cook for patients who live alone and would become too weak to prepare meals during chemo. And for those who want to avoid the hospital no matter what, treatment that could put them there would be avoided.

Almost 1 million U.S. adults 65 and older will be diagnosed with cancer this year, the American Cancer Society estimates. Nearly two-thirds of all cancer patients are in that age group.

And yet, most cancer treatments stem from studies on younger, often healthier patients. That leaves doctors with limited information on how treatments will affect older patients. Geriatric assessments can help bridge that gap, said Dr. Supriya Mohile, a specialist in geriatric cancer at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Evaluations assess risks

Nearly two-thirds of all cancer patients are 65 or over

These tests may take 15 to 30 minutes or more, and recent research has shown they can accurately predict how patients will fare during and after cancer treatment, Mohile said.

Older patients who get chemo and have other health problems are more vulnerable to falls and delirium, and are at risk of losing independence.

“We hear all the time about ‘decision regret,’” she said, meaning patients who got harsh treatment but weren’t aware of other options, and who later say, “I wish someone had told me this could happen.”

Mohile co-authored a recent study that found just one in four U.S. cancer specialists did the assessments. She said doctors say it takes too long and that patients don’t want it. But she hears from patients and caregivers: “I’m so happy you’re asking me about these things. Nobody ever asked me.”

One of Mohile’s colleagues administered Simpson’s evaluation, which showed she was strong enough to endure a standard, aggressive three-drug chemotherapy combo for breast cancer. She chose a variation that was gentler, but extended the treatment by several weeks.

The evaluation showed “I wasn’t in as that bad of shape as my age would indicate,” Simpson said.

Her walking buddy and four attentive children gave her strong social support, and she lived independently, doing her own cooking and cleaning.

Treatment left Simpson with hair loss, fatigue and excruciating mouth sores. She knew about the risks but has no regrets.

Cancer “gave me a different perspective on what is important in life and what isn’t, and I’m still adjusting to that,” Simpson said.

Insurance often doesn’t cover

Dr. Hyman Muss, a geriatrics specialist at the University of North Carolina’s Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, said there’s no question the assessments are important, but insurance coverage is sometimes a problem.

Medicare will pay for yearly physical exams but not geriatric assessments, he said. Doctors can sometimes squeeze the tests into other office visits, but there is no billing code for the exams, he said.

Advocates note that the assessments

See CANCER HELP, page 5

Brain zaps boost memory in people 60+

By Malcolm Ritter

Zapping the brains of people over 60 with a mild electrical current improved a form of memory enough that they performed like people in their 20s, a new study found.

Someday, people might visit clinics to boost that ability, which declines both in normal aging and in dementia like Alzheimer’s disease, said researcher Robert Reinhart of Boston University.

The treatment is aimed at “working memory” — the ability to hold information in mind for a matter of seconds as you perform a task, such as doing math in your head. Sometimes called the workbench or scratchpad of the mind, it’s crucial for things like taking medications, paying bills, buying groceries or planning, Reinhart said.

“It’s where your consciousness lives… where you’re working on information,” he said.

Effects are short term

The new study is not the first to show that stimulating the brain can boost working memory. But Reinhart, who reported the work last month in the journal Nature Neuroscience, said it’s notable for showing success in older people and because the memory boost persisted for nearly an hour minimum after the brain stimulation ended.

One scientist who has previously reported boosting working memory with electrical stimulation noted that the decline in ability with normal aging is not huge. But “they removed the effects of age from these people,” said Dr. Barry Gordon, a professor of neurology and cognitive science at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

“It’s a superb first step” toward demonstrating a way to improve mental performance, said Gordon, who was not involved in the new study.

Reinhart agreed that more research is needed before it can be formally tested as a treatment.

No pain involved

The electrical current was administered through a tight-fitting cap that also monitored each subject’s brainwaves. For study participants, that current felt like a slight tingling, itching or poking sensation under the electrodes for about 30 seconds, Reinhart said. After that, the skin got used to the current and it was imperceptible.

The researchers’ idea was to improve communication between the brain’s prefrontal cortex in the front and the temporal cortex on the left side, because the rhythms of activity in those two regions

See MEMORY BOOST, page 6
Alzheimer’s-like condition identified

By Lauran Neergaard

Some people told they have Alzheimer’s may instead have a newly identified mimic of the disease — and scientists say even though neither is yet curable, it’s critical to get better at telling different kinds of dementia apart.

Too often, the word dementia is used interchangeably with Alzheimer’s disease, said Dr. Julie Schneider, a neuropathologist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. And among all the known dementias, this newly identified kind “is the most striking mimic of Alzheimer’s,” she added.

It’s not clear how many people have this particular type, which an international team of scientists defined on April 30 in the journal Brain. But there could be a sizeable number, said Dr. Peter Nelson of the University of Kentucky, the paper’s lead author.

The dementia was dubbed “LATE,” an acronym chosen in part because the oldest seniors seem at greatest risk.

Here’s a look at various dementias in the confusing Alzheimer’s-or-not mix:

**Standard Alzheimer’s plaque**

Alzheimer’s is the most common form of dementia, and autopsies have long found its telltale signs in the brain: sticky plaque from an abnormal buildup of amyloid protein, and tangles of another protein named tau.

Only recently have scientists developed special, pricey scans that can measure that buildup in living brains. Studies with those scans found about a third of people with Alzheimer’s symptoms lack amyloid buildup — ruling out Alzheimer’s, said Schneider, senior author of the paper. What else could cause their dementia?

**Another toxic protein found**

It turns out another protein, named TDP-43, also can run amok in the brain. Scientists knew it plays a role in a completely different disorder, Lou Gehrig’s disease. Then, they linked TDP-43 buildup to severe shrinking of the hippocampus, a brain region key for learning and memory.

Nelson said about a quarter of people over age 85 have enough abnormal TDP-43 to affect their memory or thinking abilities. For now, it takes an autopsy to spot — the symptoms seem like Alzheimer’s until a specialist can peer inside the brain.

“What is now clear is that a lot of dementia is caused by gloppy proteins. We used to think it was just two gloopy proteins, amyloid and tau,” Nelson said.

The next step: Finding better ways to measure abnormal TDP-43 and diagnose LATE. (It stands for an unwieldy scientific name — Limbic-predominant Age-related TDP-43 Encephalopathy.)

“Our ultimate goal is to test people hopefully in a very noninvasive way,” said National Institute on Aging dementia specialist Nina Silverberg. That’s key to eventually developing treatments.

**Other dementia culprits**

— *Strokes*, sometimes small “silent” ones, can trigger what’s called vascular dementia, something scientists at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) think might be prevented with better blood pressure control.

— *Lewy body dementia*, named for clumps of still another abnormal protein, can cause Alzheimer’s-like symptoms along with movement and other problems.

— *Frontotemporal dementia* often triggers changes in personality and tends to strike at a younger age than Alzheimer’s, yet can still be misdiagnosed.

Many older patients probably have “mixed dementia,” several brain changes that combine to cause trouble, Dr. Walter Koroshetz, head of NIH’s National Institute on Neurological Disorders and Stroke, told a recent meeting about non-Alzheimer’s dementias.

The paper about TDP-43-caused disease adds to the complexity, said Alzheimer’s Association chief science officer Maria Carrillo, who wasn’t involved with the new research.

“We must learn more about each contributing cause of dementia so we can understand how these changes begin and interact and co-occur, and how to best diagnose, treat and prevent them,” she said.

**Correct diagnosis important**

Current treatments for Alzheimer’s and other dementias temporarily ease symptoms. But there are other reasons for a precise diagnosis.

A list of medications common for seniors can harm people with Lewy body dementia, for example. Knowing the specifics also can help people plan care, as some types of dementia worsen faster than others.

And it’s critical for developing better dementia treatments. Testing a treatment that targets say, the tau tangles or amyloid plaques of Alzheimer’s won’t stand a chance if patients who only have TDP-43 are allowed into the study.

“If you have a dementia percolating in your brain, the only hope we have right now is to participate in a clinical trial to try to stop it,” Nelson said. —AP

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**Cancer help**

*From page 4*

Cancer help can include questionnaires that patients can fill out at home to shorten time in the doctor’s office.

Beverly Canin, 84, of Rhinebeck, N.Y., became an advocate after declining chemotherapy following surgery for early breast cancer 20 years ago. She didn’t have an assessment, and says her doctor dismissed her concerns about harsh side effects and refused to consider other options.

A 2015 medical report Canin co-authored told of a patient who had the opposite experience. The 92-year-old man with rectal cancer entered hospice care after he declined surgery, the only treatment his primary care doctor recommended. The doctor determined the man would not tolerate rigorous chemotherapy and radiation because of his advanced age.

A specialist approved the treatments after the man had a geriatric assessment and declared he wanted care that would control his symptoms and prolong his life.

The patient managed well and was cancer-free two years later. Canin said his stress and treatment delay could have been avoided if an assessment had been done first.

“The risks with older adults traditionally are overtreatment and undertreatment. What we need is more precision treatment,” she said. —AP
Easing pain from golfer’s or tennis elbow

By Christopher Camp, M.D.

Dear Mayo Clinic:

A few months ago, I noticed minor pain in my elbow when I’d lift anything—even something light. Recently, the pain is worsening and moving down my inner forearm. My elbow hurts even when I’m not lifting. Turning my wrist or twisting my arm causes pain.

What could be the reason for this? Are there things I can do at home to make it better, or do I need to see my healthcare provider?

At: The problem you describe sounds like “golfer’s elbow.” The medical term for this disorder is medial epicondylitis, which develops when muscles and tendons on the inside, or medial side, of your arm become damaged, usually due to overuse.

Self-care measures often are enough to ease the pain. If you don’t see improvement after a few weeks, however, make an appointment with your healthcare provider for an evaluation.

The muscle and tendon damage of golfer’s elbow triggers pain and tenderness in the inner part of your elbow. As in your case, the pain may extend down the inside of the forearm. It also can lead to stiffness in the elbow and weakness in the hand and wrist.

A related condition that tends to be more common is tennis elbow (also called lateral epicondylitis). It affects the outside (lateral) side of the forearm and leads to symptoms similar to those of golfer’s elbow.

Despite its name, golfer’s elbow doesn’t affect only athletes. The condition develops due to excessive or repeated stress on the muscles and tendons of the inner arm. That can happen over time as a result of any activity that involves repeatedly bending and straightening your elbow.

Steps you can take

Although it can be painful, golfer’s elbow doesn’t require urgent care. It’s safe to try some remedies at home before you see your healthcare provider.

Rest your arm, and avoid activities that require you to turn or twist it. Use an ice pack on your elbow, 15 to 20 minutes at a time, three or four times a day. Take a non-prescription anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen or naproxen sodium, to ease discomfort.

In most cases, golfer’s elbow resolves completely with self-care and physical therapy. Although that may become frustrating, the effort is worth it. For most people who take the time to work through physical therapy to treat golfer’s elbow, symptoms don’t return.

Rarely, symptoms may persist despite consistent self-care and physical therapy. In those cases, an injection of platelet-rich plasma may be beneficial. In severe cases where all other treatment options have failed, surgery may be necessary.

Once your symptoms are gone, take care to prevent golfer’s elbow in the future. Strengthen your forearm muscles, and stretch before physical activity. Use lightweight equipment when working, exercising or playing sports. Don’t overuse your elbow. If you notice discomfort when doing an activity, take a break.

— Christopher Camp, M.D., Orthopedic Surgery, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

A related condition that tends to be more common is tennis elbow (also called lateral epicondylitis). It affects the outside (lateral) side of the forearm and leads to symptoms similar to those of golfer’s elbow.

A review of your health history and activities, along with a physical exam, usually are all that’s needed to diagnose golfer’s elbow. In some cases, X-rays may be useful to rule out other conditions, such as a broken bone or arthritis.

Once the diagnosis has been confirmed, physical therapy is the next step in treatment. Strengthening and stretching exercises called “eccentric exercises” are particularly effective in treating golfer’s elbow. A physical therapist can teach you these and other strengthening and flexibility techniques.

In most cases, golfer’s elbow resolves completely with self-care and physical therapy, and no further treatment is needed. Recovery can take time and patience, however.

Total symptom relief often requires three to six months of consistent physical therapy. Although that may become frustrating, the effort is worth it. For most people who take the time to work through physical therapy to treat golfer’s elbow, symptoms don’t return.

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— Christopher Camp, M.D., Orthopedic Surgery, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

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Memory boost
From page 4

had fallen out of sync with each other.

So the researchers applied the current to those two regions to nudge the activity cycles back into a matching pattern. The results provided new evidence that a breakdown in that communication causes the loss of working memory with age, Reinhart said.

The improvement lasted for at least another 50 minutes after the stimulation ended, at which point the researchers stopped testing. —AP
Relief for leg cramps; digestive issues

By Howard LeWine, M.D.

Q: I frequently have leg cramps that wake me up from sleep. How can I quickly stop the cramps, and are there ways to prevent them?

A: Few things are more jarring to a night’s sleep than a sudden cramp in your calf. By the way, you have lots of company. Although nocturnal leg cramps can strike people at any time of life, they become more common with age.

Among people over 50, about half report weekly episodes. Parkinson’s disease or neuropathy (nerve damage) can increase the risk of cramping.

Leg cramps are muscle spasms caused by “mini-seizures” of motor neurons (nerves that power muscle contractions). They are like flat feet or high arches, metabolic disorders such as Parkinson’s disease or neuropathy (nerve damage).

However, most cramps strike people who are otherwise healthy. Dehydration can reduce blood potassium or magnesium levels (a common side effect of diuretics) can increase the risk of cramping.

To stop a foot or cramp once it happens, lean over and grab your toes, then slowly bend your foot back toward your head. Hold for about 20 seconds, then release it. Repeat as needed.

If that doesn’t help, you can try rubbing the cramp with ice wrapped in a towel. Some people find more relief with a heating pad placed on the cramp.

Despite the lack of a scientifically proven and safe therapy to prevent recurrent nighttime leg cramps, a few approaches may be worth trying.

Start with stretching exercises. Stand about two feet from a wall. Lean forward, keeping your legs straight and feet flat on the floor. You should feel the stretch, but it should not be painful. Hold the position for 20 seconds and release. Repeat the stretch four to five times.

Ideally try to do this four times per day for the first couple weeks at least. The most important time to stretch is before bed.

Other preventive measures you can try include avoiding dehydration, wearing well-fitting supportive footwear, and keeping the bedding at your feet loose during the night.

Although the evidence isn’t strong, some people find that taking a daily vitamin B complex helps, or consider over-the-counter diphenhydramine (Benadryl) before bedtime.

Right now, there are no FDA-approved medications for leg cramps. The one drug with solid evidence for reducing the frequency of muscle cramps is quinine. However, the FDA has issued repeated warnings against using quinine to prevent or treat leg cramps because it may cause serious side effects.

Although doctors can still prescribe quinine, it is recommended only when cramps are disabling and the person understands the significant risks.

Q: Food often sits heavy in my stomach. Should I be taking a daily digestive enzyme supplement?

A: Digestive enzyme supplements promise to fix everything from bloating and flatulence to heartburn and gut health. Some of them are clearly beneficial in certain situations.

But enzyme supplements are too often used in situations where there is little evidence that they do any good.

Naturally occurring digestive enzymes help break down food so we can soak up nutrients. Your mouth, stomach and small intestine flood the small intestine (when food arrives there) with enzymes such as:

- lipase, which breaks down fats;
- amylase, which breaks down carbohydrates; and
- proteases and peptidases, which break down proteins.

Once nutrients are broken into small enough molecules, they are absorbed through the wall of the small intestine into the blood and then delivered throughout the body. Sometimes the body doesn’t make enough digestive enzymes. This can slow the digestion process and lead to uncomfortable symptoms.

For example, if you don’t make enough of the enzyme lactase, you’ll have a hard time digesting lactose — the sugar in milk and milk-based products.

If you don’t have lactase, the undigested lactose goes to the colon, which leads to more fluid entering the colon and more gas produced by bacteria in the colon. That creates bloating, flatulence and diarrhea.

For people who can’t make enough digestive enzymes because of a health condition such as chronic pancreatitis or cystic fibrosis, doctors prescribe enzyme pills to substitute for the lack of natural enzyme production. People with known deficiencies clearly get a benefit from these.

Likewise, we know that taking a nonprescription lactase supplement (such as Lactaid or Lactrase) can help people manage lactose intolerance, and taking an alpha-galactosidase supplement (such as Beano or Beanase)…

See RELIEF, page 8
Q: I don’t know why my diabetes is out of control — I cut out soda and cake! I walk around my house; shouldn’t that be good enough for exercise?

A: Diabetes can be complicated to manage. Medications can be difficult to understand, and knowing what to eat and how to exercise can be confusing.

Unfortunately, there is no universal plan because everyone’s lifestyle and health are unique. There are, however, recommended diets that can help keep your diabetes under control.

Your pharmacist can play a crucial role in helping change your lifestyle other than recommending medication. Utilize your pharmacist to develop a meal plan that is geared towards your likes.

For a diet plan, you can go with two strategies.

The first strategy is to keep your intake of carbohydrates to 45 to 60 grams per meal, aiming for 135 to 230 grams of complex carbs per day. This means you will need to check labels or other sources of nutritional information to determine the amount of carbohydrates each meal.

The second strategy is called the plate method. To follow this strategy, you fill half a standard dinner plate with non-starchy vegetables such as carrots, spinach, asparagus or broccoli. One-quarter of the plate should be filled with lean protein such as chicken or fish. The remaining one-quarter of the plate should have starchy vegetables or whole grains, such as brown rice, wild rice, potatoes or corn.

Fruit contains sugar, so be careful how much fruit you are eating. To keep your daily intake of fat down, it’s best to drink skim or low-fat milk in place of whole milk.

Diet is a great way to control your diabetes, but adding an exercise regimen can also be beneficial for your diabetes and lower the risk of cardiovascular disease. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic exercise.

Before starting an exercise regimen, you will want to speak to your doctor to ensure you are healthy enough to start an exercise program. If you are not regularly active, then begin with five to 10 minutes a day and increase as you see fit.

A few common examples of aerobic exercise include walking outdoors or on a treadmill, bicycling, dancing, swimming and moderate to heavy gardening.

From personal experience, I know adopting an exercise schedule can be difficult. But scheduling a 10-minute walk after a meal, or a 15-minute walk on the treadmill before starting your day, can be a good way to start. These aerobic exercises help the body use insulin adequately, which can lower blood glucose and increase one’s quality of life.

If you feel like you’re taking too many medications, dieting and exercise can help decrease your medication load. A pharmacist is a great resource for you if you have any questions or concerns about your diabetes and how to get it under control.

Aafaq Tariq is a third-year doctor of pharmacy student at VCU School of Pharmacy. He is from High Point, North Carolina, and graduated from University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a B.S. in biochemistry.

DR. RX
By Aafaq Tariq

From page 7

Relief may reduce gas and bloating if you have a hard time digesting the sugars in beans.

But for other common gut problems, like heartburn or irritable bowel syndrome, there is little evidence that digestive enzymes are helpful.

Howard LeWine, M.D., is an internist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School. For additional consumer health information, please visit health.harvard.edu.

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Insulin too pricey? Ways to cut costs

By Linda A. Johnson

The skyrocketing price of insulin has some diabetics scrambling to cover the cost of the life-saving medication. Others are skipping doses or using smaller amounts than needed and sometimes landing in the emergency room, patients and advocates told Congress recently.

About 7.4 million Americans use insulin to keep their blood sugar at safe levels. Insulin needs vary by patient, as do costs depending on insurance coverage.

Amid the public uproar about costs, drugmakers and some prescription plans are starting to offer patients bigger discounts. Express Scripts and its parent company, insurer Cigna, just began offering a month’s worth of insulin to eligible patients for $25 per month. Express Scripts is now lining up other insurers whose prescription plans it manages.

For most insulin and other diabetes medicines, manufacturers offer coupons reducing monthly out-of-pocket costs.

The American Diabetes Association connects patients to assistance programs through insulinehelp.org, though not everyone qualifies.

“We do not want anyone to skip or ration doses,” said Dr. William Cefalu, the advocacy group’s chief scientific officer.

If you are struggling to afford insulin, tell your doctors, Cefalu said. They might be able to recommend a free clinic or patient assistance plan, or suggest cheaper options.

If cost is an issue, here are other ways to save money:

Try older kinds of insulin
Talk to your doctor about switching to older, cheaper kinds of insulin, suggested Dr. Robert Gabbay, chief medical officer at Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston.

However, dangerous blood sugar plunges are more common with those, as they don’t control blood sugar as tightly as newer, more expensive insulins.

Patients using older products, such as Novolin and Humulin R, must test their blood sugar more often, and more accurately when they inject insulin before meals, Gabbay stressed.

Switch to vials
Patients who’ve been using insulin pens — injection devices containing multiple insulin doses — could switch to insulin vials. They are cheaper but less convenient.

Drawing insulin out of the vial into a syringe makes doses less precise, and the abdominal injections hurt a bit more.

Another option is Basaglar, a cheaper near-copy of the popular long-acting Lanatus insulin pens.

Check your insurance
Review your insurance company’s list of covered medications for insulin with the lowest copayments; coverage and copayments often change in January and there may be cheaper choices. Other savings options include getting a 90-day supply instead of 30-day refills.

Shop around
Compare prices at different pharmacies.

Prices can vary widely for insulin, other diabetes drugs and the testing strips and lancets needed to check blood sugar levels.

Patients can look up drug prices at multiple drugstores and get coupons for big discounts at the pharmacy counter at GoodRx.com Or try healthwarehouse.com, which sells medicines at cash prices that can be cheaper even if you have insurance.

Medicare and Medicaid patients can’t combine coupons with their insurance, but a coupon alone might still be the cheapest option.

The three main insulin makers offer the following savings:

— Sanofi’s Insulins ValYOU Savings Program offers uninsured and cash-paying patients one insulin vial for $99 or one insulin pen for $149 each month. Starting in June, it will offer up to 10 vials and/or pens of most of its insulins for $99. Its Sanofi Patient Connection offers low-income, uninsured patients free insulin.

— Eli Lilly will soon sell Insulin Lispro, a half-price version of its top-selling insulin Humalog KwikPens, for $265 per month. Its Lilly Diabetes Solution Center helps patients find affordable options.

— Novo Nordisk has long sold an older insulin, ReliOn, through Walmart for about $25 a vial. It’s now available through CVS Health and Express Scripts. Novo Nordisk offers copay savings cards for Tresiba and other insulins, plus patient assistance with generous income limits at NovoCare.com.

—AP

Please patronize our advertisers. They keep Fifty Plus free!
I finally got reflux and heartburn after all these years. I have newfound respect for those of you who deal with it!

I traced my problem to drinking shots of yerba mate. I drank them several times a week for energy. I noticed heartburn about 20 minutes after drinking one tiny glass bottle of it.

After it happened three times last week, I made the connection. I did a little research and learned that drinking too much mate, especially hot mate, apparently is tied to esophageal cancer. I’ve stopped drinking yerba mate shots as a result of my pain as well as these concerns.

I didn’t take acid blockers like famotidine (H2 antagonists) or omeprazole (Prilosec, a popular PPI med) to deal with my reflux. Acid blockers don’t soothe, coat or directly patch up your mucosal lining. They suppress acid, which gives your esophagus a break. It’s an indirect treatment, but it’s okay if that’s what your doctor recommended.

In my case, instead I started drinking hot tea. According to an article published in International Journal of Cancer, drinking hot tea dramatically increases your chance for developing esophageal cancer. So drink your beverages lukewarm.

1. Discontinue the offender.
2. Discontinue spices and hot foods.
3. Drink marshmallow root water.
4. Mastic gum

If you’re not significantly better within a week of your home treatment (natural or over-the-counter), see a specialist to make sure there is no serious underlying cause.

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. Visit suzycohen.com for more.

Letters to editor
From page 2
I’m 75 percent better.

Here’s the short story of my strategy:

1. Discontinue the offender.
2. Discontinue spices and hot foods.
3. Drink marshmallow root water.
4. Mastic gum

I finally got reflux after drinking yerba mate. For others, it may be smoking, spicy foods, alcohol or hot drinks. Whatever it is, discontinue your trigger.

If you’re not significantly better within a week of your home treatment (natural or over-the-counter), see a specialist to make sure there is no serious underlying cause.

The perfect gift for a loved one

Easy Exerciser is the motorized personal trainer that makes exercise convenient and safe.

The Easy Exerciser has been designed to provide passive leg exercise at any time of the day or night. You simply sit in a chair, place your feet on the footpads, flip a switch and OFF YOU GO! The rhythmic back and forth motion simulates the act of walking, increases circulation and engages your core muscles from your legs to your midsection.

It provides movement for the people who need it most. The special-designed footpads provide valuable acupressure for tired, aching feet. Once you’ve completed your “walk”, you can get out of your chair without the tingly feeling in your feet and legs that often leads to a fall. The unit is quiet, durable and can slide out of the way when not in use. It runs off a normal electrical outlet and there is even a two-speed adjustment switch so you can move at your most comfortable pace. Now almost anyone can get the benefits of walking without the danger of falling. If you are not completely satisfied with the Easy Exerciser, simply return it within 90 days for a refund of the product purchase price. Don’t spend another day without exercise, call now and get moving!

Easy Exerciser was $139
NOW $129 + s&h
Call now toll free 1-888-544-0050
Please mention code 110881 when ordering.

Now you can exercise while... • Watching TV • Doing Needlepoint • Eating • Talking with Friends ...any activity in which you are sitting in a chair!
By America’s Test Kitchen

It was only a matter of time before sweet potato-loving Southern cooks combined the fluffy texture and pleasant tang of biscuits with the earthy sweetness of this popular tuber.

To add the flavor of sweet potatoes to biscuits without weighing down the dough, we microwaved them to eliminate their moisture while concentrating their flavor. After mashing the flesh, we stirred in cider vinegar to mimic buttermilk’s tang and to create greater lift once combined with the dough’s baking powder and baking soda.

We maximized the biscuits’ tender texture with low-protein cake flour and opted for the deep, molasses-like sweetness of brown sugar to complement the sweet potatoes. The dough took on a pretty orange color and, once baked, the biscuits emerged tender and subtly sweet, perfectly ready for a smear of butter or jam, or to be sliced and stuffed with ham and mustard. If you can find them, Beauregard sweet potatoes are the best variety for these biscuits. The biscuits can be stored in an airtight container for up to two days.

**Sweet Potato Biscuits**

Makes 16

Start to finish: 1 hour 30 minutes

**Ingredients:**
- 2 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, unpeeled, lightly pricked all over with fork
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 3 1/4 cups cake flour
- 1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 5 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled, plus 2 tablespoons melted
- 4 tablespoons vegetable shortening, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled

**Directions:**

1. Microwave potatoes on plate until very soft and surfaces are wet, 15 to 20 minutes, flipping every 5 minutes. Immediately cut potatoes in half.
2. When potatoes are cool enough to handle, scoop flesh into large bowl and, using potato masher, mash until smooth. (You should have 2 cups. Reserve any extra for another use.) Stir in vinegar and refrigerate until cool, about 15 minutes.
3. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425˚F. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Process flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in food processor until combined.
4. Scatter chilled butter and shortening over top and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal, about 15 pulses. Transfer flour mixture to bowl with cooled potatoes and fold with rubber spatula until incorporated.
5. Turn out dough onto floured counter and knead until smooth, 8 to 10 times. Pat dough into 9-inch circle, about 1 inch thick.
6. Using floured 2 ¼-inch round cutter, stamp out biscuits and arrange on prepared sheet. Gently pat dough scraps into a 1-inch-thick circle and stamp out remaining biscuits. (You should have 16 biscuits total.)
7. Brush tops of biscuits with melted butter and bake until golden brown, 18 to 22 minutes. Let biscuits cool on sheet for 15 minutes before serving.

**Nutrition information per biscuit:**
- 265 calories; 93 calories from fat; 10 g fat (5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 19 mg cholesterol; 450 mg sodium; 39 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 6 g sugar; 3 g protein.

For more recipes, cooking tips and ingredient and product reviews, visit americastestkitchen.com.

—AP
It’s not a Wheelchair...

It’s not a Power Chair...

It’s a Zinger Chair!

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.

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 275 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.
1-888-658-0541
Please mention code 110878 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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Executive Director’s Message
Dr. Thelma Bland Watson
Executive Director,
Senior Connections,
The Capital Area Agency on Aging

Older Americans Month 2019: “Connect, Create, Contribute”

As indicated throughout this month’s “Engage at Any Age” newsletter, May is Older Americans Month. This is a time to recognize the accomplishments of older adults and celebrate people of all ages.

The theme for May 2019 is “Connect, Create, Contribute.” We are fond of this theme because it reflects on the many opportunities we find for individuals, government, business, service groups and advocates to recognize older adults as valuable resources to our communities and families. These opportunities help us to realize the important role that older adults serve as role models for all of us.

Thanks for joining us as we honor older adults, family members, volunteers and the professionals who support them. We extend thanks to all of our local governments for proclaiming May 2019 to be Older Americans Month. The local government proclamations call attention to the importance of intergenerational collaborations as well as the opportunities that are available for community partnerships.

Care Transitions’ Care Transitions program received a $2,000 third-place Best Practice award from the Commonwealth Council on Aging.

The Care Transitions program helps prevent hospital readmissions by educating and supporting newly discharged patients and their care partners. Care Transitions’ Coaches work with hospital-referred individuals in their homes to set up a 30-day plan and identify questions and concerns that can avoid another hospital stay.

"Each year the committee selects from a field of outstanding applicants with programs that impact the quality of life of older Virginians, care partners and care recipients," said Dr. Richard Lindsay, council best practices committee chair.

"Support of the care partner and the care recipient are important parts of many of the awardees programs and will make Virginia’s communities more livable in the future."
Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging: Empowering Older Adults to Live with Dignity and Choice

While we celebrate older Americans every month, this May we join the Administration for Community Living—which leads our nation’s observance of Older Americans Month—and the nation in celebration.

When Older Americans Month was established in 1963, only 17 million living Americans had reached their 65th birthday. About a third of older Americans lived in poverty, and there were few programs to meet their needs. Interest in older Americans and their concerns was growing. A meeting in April 1963 between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as “Senior Citizens Month,” the prelude to “Older Americans Month.”

Historically, Older Americans Month has been a time to acknowledge the contributions of past and current older persons to our country, in particular those who served our country. Older Americans Month is celebrated across the country through ceremonies, events, and other such activities.


We encourage older adults and their communities to CONNECT with friends, family and services that support participation; CREATE by engaging in activities that promote learning, health and personal enrichment; and CONTRIBUTE time, talent and life experience to benefit others.

“Connect with friends, family and services that support participation.”

Connection is the experience of feeling close and connected to others. It involves feeling loved, cared for and valued. It forms the basis of relationships. As humans, whether we are introverts or extroverts, we all need some level of connection.

Senior Connections helps build connections in the lives of older adults through programs and services designed to support their needs. Whether connecting older adults to programs and services offered by Senior Connections—such as transportation, ombudsman, respite care, care coordination, guardian services or care transitions—or connecting them to community resources, Senior Connections’ mission is to empower seniors to live with dignity and choice. Connecting older adults to programs and services is crucial to ensuring we are successful in meeting our mission.

Our Public Guardian Program serves as a great example of how we work to connect individuals to resources and programs that empower them to live with dignity and choice. Senior Connections serves as the court-appointed guardian for 40 individuals. Public Guardian staff members provide person-centered decision-making services to program participants in order to help them make important healthcare and housing decisions.

Recently, one of our Public Guardian staff members became concerned when a 56-year-old woman in the Public Guardian program began wandering off from her home at an assisted living facility in a state of confusion. She was also engaging in self-harming behaviors and neglecting her medical care. After a careful assessment of her living situation, the Public Guardian staff member realized the woman needed a more supportive living environment. By connecting the program participant to several different assisted living facilities and providing her the opportunity to choose one that was best for her, the woman was able to move to a new assisted living facility. In her new home, she is receiving the support she needs to stay happy, healthy and safe.

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and validated when they can give and receive without judgment, and when they derive sustainability and strength from the relationship.”

— Brené Brown

Create by engaging in activities that promote learning, health and personal enrichment.

Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing.

Creating opportunities to promote individual life enrichment programs is fundamental to Senior Connections’ mission of seniors with improved quality of life. Senior Connections offers wellness workshops, computer classes and social engagement programs in order to provide older adults with information and opportunities to enrich their lives.

Wellness workshops—such as A Matter of Balance, Chronic Disease Self-Management and Healthy Habits for Older Adults—help older adults improve their health and well-being. Our computer classes give older adults the tools they need to understand technology. And our Friendship Cafés and Telebridges Telephonic Reassurance program provides social engagement opportunities for older adults who may otherwise be isolated and experiencing loneliness.

Senior Connections computer classes, for example, can help to improve the quality of life of older adults who feel disconnected in today’s growing society. The rapid changes in technology leave some older adults feeling as if they are being left out. Learning new computer skills can help alleviate these feelings of inadequacy so they can remain active and connected to their community.

Many of the older adults enrolled in our computer training classes participate in the Senior Employment Program at Senior Connections. Their hope is to learn a new skill set that will pave the way to them becoming gainfully employed.

The three primary reasons given for taking the class is to become proficient at using computers, to learn how to use the internet, and to gain the ability to create a resume that will help them secure meaningful employment. After completing the computer classes, the participants feel confident in their ability to obtain a job and their overall self-esteem improves.

“Creativity is a combinatorial force: it’s our ability to tap into our inner pool of resources—knowledge, insight, inspiration, innovation and all the fragments populating our minds—that we’ve accumulated over the years just by being present and alive and awake to the world and to combine them in extraordinary new ways.”

— Maria Popova

Contribute time, talent and life experience to benefit others.

Today’s older adults are living longer than ever before and are recreating elderhood in new and exciting ways. Senior Connections provides avenues for older adults to contribute to society through the Senior Employment Program and our Volunteer Programs. Many of the programs we offer are supported by volunteers.

Programs such as the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), Volunteer Money Management Program, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Foster Grandparent Program provide older adults with a way to remain engaged in their community while gaining the opportunity to contribute to society. More importantly, they help provide them with sense of purpose, which may add years to their lives.

We have a wonderful story of how becoming a volunteer at one of Senior Connections Friendship Cafes provided a sense of purpose for one older adult in our community. One of our VICAP volunteers, Ms. Vanessa Brooks, was concerned about how inactive her mother had become. She encouraged her mother, Mrs. Thelma Brooks, to join one of the Senior Connections Friendship Cafes in the community.

Initially her mother pushed back, stating that she was not interested in the program. Her daughter continued to ask her, even making an appointment for her to visit the Friendship Cafe. Mrs. Brooks cancelled the first appointment, but her daughter was able to convince her to keep a second appointment.

After visiting the cafe, Mrs. Brooks decided to join. A few months after joining the cafe, she went a step further and became a Friendship Cafe volunteer. But she didn’t tell her daughter she was volunteering at the cafe.

One day, Ms. Brooks (whose name is also Thelma Brooks, but she prefers Vanessa) was reading the Senior Connections monthly Volunteer Newsletter and she saw her name on the birthday list. But it was not her birthday.

Ms. Brooks informed our Volunteer Coordinator that the newsletter incorrectly listed her birthday. Our Volunteer Coordinator advised Ms. Brooks that the birthday listing was for her mother, a Friendship Cafe volunteer.

When Ms. Brooks learned the news, she asked her mother about it and her mom told her she loved volunteering at the Friendship Cafe. Mrs. Brooks said she considered it a job and hated missing a day because it gave her a reason to get up every weekday morning.

Senior Connections recognizes that when communities encourage the contributions of older adults, the communities are stronger! Older adults play a key role in the vitality of our neighborhoods, networks and lives. This May, we hope you will honor and celebrate all Older Americans and the contributions they have made to our country. And we hope all older adults will Connect, Create and Contribute!

“Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing.”

— Brené Brown

“Act with your heart and your head will follow.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Creativity is a combinatorial force: it’s our ability to tap into our inner pool of resources—knowledge, insight, inspiration, innovation and all the fragments populating our minds—that we’ve accumulated over the years just by being present and alive and awake to the world and to combine them in extraordinary new ways.”

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Contribute time, talent and life experience to benefit others.

May we join the Administration for Community Living and http://www.FiftyPlusRichmond.com in extraordinary new ways.”

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Connect, Create, Contribute.
Senior Health and Resource Fair – Celebrating Older American’s Month  
Friday, May 10 • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Central High Cultural and Education Complex  
2748 Dogtown Road  
Goochland, VA  23063
Sponsored by Senior Connections, Goochland Cares, and Goochland County Department of Social Services.
Event is free. There will be free fitness class demonstrations, free information sessions, and senior resource groups sharing information. For transportation services to event, please call Goochland Department of Social Services at (804) 556-5880.

Virginia Senior Games  
May 10 – 18  
Henrico County  
Sponsored by the Virginia Recreation & Park Society. This will be the 41st year the Virginia Senior Games (VSG) promote healthy lifestyles for Virginia residents age 50 and better! The purpose of the VSG is to promote physical and social wellness for older adults. Presented annually by the Virginia Recreation & Park Society, VSG attracts approximately 2,000 older adults who compete in over 20 Olympic-style events for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. VSG are recognized by the National Senior Games headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and they are positioned to expand with the ever-increasing senior population. VSG are qualifying events for the National Senior Games, which takes place every other year, in odd years. To learn more about VSG, please contact the Virginia Recreation & Park Society at 804-730-9447.

Goochland Day  
Saturday, May 11 • 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Goochland Middle School/High School Complex  
3250 River Road West  
Goochland, VA  23063
This is a free community event for the whole family. Food trucks, rides, animals, great vendors! This event will be supporting Mental Health Awareness.

Hanover’s Sounds Festival  
Saturday, May 11 • 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Pole Green Park  
8906 Pole Green Park Lane  
Mechanicsville, VA  23116
No 80’s Brass band with the Richmond Symphony under the Big Tent. Additional performances by, The Remnants Rock-N-Soul, Hanover Concert Band, Hanover County Public Schools All County Jazz Band, Mako Music School. This free, family-friendly festival will take place Mother’s Day weekend, so that you can celebrate the special people in your life with a lovely evening of entertainment the whole family can enjoy.

Powhatan Triad Senior Resource Fair  
Wednesday, May 22 • 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
3920 Marion Harland Lane  
Powhatan, VA  23139
Free and open to the public. Rob Cerullo, Assistant Commonwealth Attorney of Powhatan, will be the guest speaker. Exhibits, resources, lunch and more. For more information, call Toni Beechaum, Senior Connections Powhatan Care Coordinator, at (804) 343-3056 or email tbeechaum@youraaa.org.

Veterans & Family Resource and Employment Fair  
Thursday, May 23 • 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
VFW Post 9808  
7688 Flag Lane  
Mechanicsville, VA  23111
Event will be held rain or shine. Veterans must present Military ID/Patient Card at entry. Come meet dozens of providers of educational, employment, rehabilitative, legal and other support services for veterans and their families. There will be door prizes and lunch will be provided. Families are welcome. Sponsored by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VFW and Humana. (Due to construction at the Medical Center, the Mechanicsville VFW Post has graciously offered their hall for this event.)

Charles City Connect, Create and Contribute Event  
Wednesday, May 29 • 10 a.m. – noon  
Charles City Social Center  
8320 Ruthville Road  
Charles City, VA  23030
Come join us connect with friends, neighbors and services. Create by engaging in activities that promote learning, health and self-enrichment. Contribute your time and talent and life experiences! Health and Wellness activities, vendors, refreshments and door prizes. For more information, contact Missi Boyer at 804-343-3026.

Senior Party in the Park and Wellness Fair  
Thursday, May 30 • 9:30 a.m. – noon  
Eastern Henrico Recreation Center  
1440 N. Laburnum Avenue  
Henrico, VA
Senior Connections, CAAA Celebrates 10 Years of Leading No Wrong Door in RVA

This year, Senior Connections celebrates its 10th year of leading the No Wrong Door effort in the Greater Richmond area.

Led by the Virginia Department for the Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) at the state level, with local leadership provided by each area agency on aging and powered by Virginia Navigator, No Wrong Door supports older adults, caregivers, individuals with disabilities, veterans and families.

No Wrong Door Virginia is a virtual system and statewide network of shared resources, designed to streamline access to long term services and supports — connecting individuals, providers and communities across the Commonwealth.

In the Greater Richmond area, we have a network of providers who refer back and forth and work together to coordinate supports for the individuals who live in the community. No Wrong Door is designed to augment this important work, providing electronic tools to make it easier to work together and safer to share information.

Many thanks to Westminster Canterbury for sponsoring our event on their newly renovated Roof Top Terrace. There Senior Connections recognized our No Wrong Door partners, including Feed More — our Top NWD BFF in the Greater RVA!

Current No Wrong Door Partners:
- Alzheimer’s Association Greater Richmond Chapter
- Bon Secours St. Mary’s Hospital
- Bon Secours Richmond Community Hospital
- Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center
- Circle Center Adult Day Services
- CA
- Family Lifeline
- Feed More
- HumanKind
- Institute for Public Health Innovation
- Jewish Family Services
- Local Department of Social Services
- Open Door Resource Center
- Rebuilding Together Richmond
- Resources for Independent Living
- Richmond City Health District
- South Richmond Adult Day Care Center
- Virginia Poverty Law Center
- Virginia Premier Health Plan

Feed More - NWD Top BFF Partner. Ms. Kathleen Klassen, Feed More Intake Coordinator and Ms. Roxann Wardally-Mboto, QMHP-A, Case Manager, Feed More’s Meals on Wheels

Ms. Annie Rhodes, Greater Richmond Age Wave Outreach Director and Ms. Megyn Robertson, Family Lifeline Volunteer Coordinator - Family Lifeline - NWD Champion BFF

Mr. Peter Perkins has served as the NWD Advisory Council Chair since the inception of the program.

Ms. Wendy G. Boggs, MSG, NWD Expansion Coordinator with DARS

Mr. Patrick Hickey, NWD Director at Senior Connections, CAAA

Dr. Thelma Bland Watson, Ph.D., Senior Connections, CAAA Executive Director

To speak with a BEC Specialist:
Call: (804) 672-4484
Email: bec@yourva.org
www.seniorconnections-va.org

Senior Connections is a non-profit 501(c)(3) serving the City of Richmond, Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, Powhatan, New Kent, Charles City and Goochland.
Get your grandkids in the giving spirit

By Neale Godfrey

Charitable giving is a subject close to my heart and something I have emphasized to my children — and now with my grandchildren — since they were young. It is an opportunity for you to impart your personal values to your family. My mantra is: You are not your money. You are your values.

A charitable donation can be made in many ways. It can be as small a gesture as giving spare change to a homeless person — offering a powerful visual lesson for a child to see that there are people less fortunate than themselves. It is also important to give to a specific charity that you and your grandson have selected together.

Perhaps the most precious gift of all, though, is the gift of time and consideration. Volunteerism is a crucial concept. When your grandchildren volunteer to help others, they become empowered by their acts and very aware of their link with the community.

Charity is also a key element of managing your finances responsibly.

Giving of yourself

Explain to your grandchild that volunteering together can be fun. This is a great activity that can become a cherished memory of the precious time you spend with them. With that in mind, you may want to look for something that matches your grandchild’s talents or interests. For instance, if your grandchild is interested in soccer, they could find a preschool program that needs help supervising young players.

When my kids were young, we went into a local hospital and helped to serve meals. Now my granddaughter and I make candles and “fun slime” together. There is a local store that will sell our goods. We have set up a “company” we call Grandma and Me.

A portion of our sales goes to a charity that my granddaughter has selected, Freedom from Fistula, which provides care to women in Africa injured during prolonged and obstructed childbirth.

I explained this charity to my grand-daughter and said I am so passionate about it because I gave birth to her mother by caesarean section. If I had been from an African village, I may not have been so lucky. If my daughter had not been born, I wouldn’t have my granddaughter.

She is now passionate about this charity as well, and our personal connection to the issue formed the basis of our business, Grandma and Me.

How to start

Watching the news together, talking to friends or just helping your grandchildren observe the world around them can help uncover volunteer projects that are appropriate and will interest them. There are kids’ volunteer groups in every school and house of worship.

It should take only one or two phone calls to locate something in your community. For instance, some nursing homes welcome people to come with their friendly dogs who just love to be petted by the people in the facility. What an easy way to spread some joy.

Empower them to act

Teach your grandchildren that they have the power to do something to make positive change. Start the discussion by letting them know the organizations you have donated to and where you have volunteered.

Let’s say your grandchildren want to raise money for a local cause. Make sure your young ones just don’t complain about a problem or expect someone else to do something about it. You want your grandchildren to decide that they can make an impact and that they are dedicated enough to do something about the problem.

Next, set a goal. Have your grandchild spell out in one simple sentence, what their goal is. For example: “We, the kids of Chester, N.J., want to raise money for a children’s playground in Newark so kids there can have a place to play.”

Set a date to accomplish the goal. (This is important. Imagine if their teacher said, “Just hand in your homework whenever you’d like!”) Have your grandchild set a realistic date for completion and a timetable for sub goals to be met along the way.

Most of all, remember that volunteering instills positive values in your grandchildren that will stay with them their entire lives. You are showing your grandchildren that they can make a difference. What a great gift!

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Bond funds help avoid loss of interest

Traditional bond funds lost value last year as the Federal Reserve steadily increased interest rates. The Fed could also increase interest rates in 2019, and this causes some concern among bond fund investors.

One of the disadvantages of traditional bond funds is that there is no fixed maturity date; fund managers are continually modifying their portfolios. Accordingly, when an investor sells shares of the fund, he or she may face a loss of net asset value (NAV).

There are ways that bond investors can mitigate interest rate risk. The simplest is to buy individual bonds and hold them to maturity. In this way, an investor is sure to receive the par value of the bond when it matures. Laddering bond purchases makes it easier to hold issues to maturity and avoid having to sell in a time of rising rates.

The major disadvantage of holding individual bonds is that it exposes an investor to greater default risk, especially with corporate bonds. An investor could buy U.S. Treasury notes and bonds, but the added security comes at the cost of lower coupon rates.

Benefits of target funds

There is another option for those looking for higher coupon rates, the benefits of diversification and relative protection from interest rate risk: target-maturity bond funds.

These funds hold bonds that mature in the same year. For example, assume you know that you want to invest in bonds for a 10-year period and then liquidate your holdings because you are facing a specific payment, such as college tuition. A target-maturity bond fund allows you to avoid interest rate risk because the bonds held mature at the time you wish to liquidate.

Two financially stable fund families that specialize in this type of investment are Invesco and BlackRock. Both companies issue exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

Invesco invests in corporate and emerging markets with maturities every year up to 2028. BlackRock iShares are invested in corporate and municipal bonds with maturities from 2020 to 2028. These ETFs have modest fees of approximately 0.5 percent per year.

If you invest in traditional bond funds, you can find some funds with lower annual fees. However, as I indicated, traditional bond funds expose you to the risk of selling your shares at a time when the NAV is lower because of unfavorable interest rate increases.

Target fund downsides

Target-maturity bond funds do have some disadvantages. The bonds held in the fund mature in the same year, but some will mature months before the fund’s closing date. The cash associated with the sale of these bonds will be idle and have negligible return.

Another disadvantage is that some of the bonds in the portfolio might be called, and the fund management will not be able to invest these proceeds with high returns.

Another potential disadvantage is liquidity risk. If you decide to sell your shares prior to the closing date you selected, you could be facing some loss in...
Money mistakes even smart people make

By Liz Weston

Certified financial planner Jill Schlesinger has seen smart people make some pretty spectacular money mistakes.

One client who repeatedly refused to buy disability insurance later developed multiple sclerosis. A doctor she knew put off writing a will and left behind a six-figure tax bill. A technology company engineer balked at her suggestion to sell his stock options, only to watch them evaporate when the market plunged. Schlesinger, a CBS News business analyst and author of The Dumb Things Smart People Do With Their Money, admits to financial missteps as well, including waiting for “just the right moment” to invest and thus missing a big jump in the stock market.

“We’re emotional animals, not just rational ones,” Schlesinger said. “So even otherwise intelligent people are stymied by their emotions — usually fear and greed — and their cognitive biases.” In fact, a whole field of economics is devoted to exploring how we make financial decisions, including the bad ones. Behavioral economics tries to pinpoint where our brains and emotions lead us wrong, as well as what we can do about it.

The value of pessimism

Most of us don’t like to dwell on what could go wrong, Schlesinger noted, and many of us believe we’re better at predicting the future than we actually are. Overconfidence, excessive optimism and the conviction that the recent past will continue into the future mean many of us don’t adequately protect ourselves.

The client who wouldn’t buy disability insurance, for example, thought he wouldn’t need it because he was healthy. The stock option guy didn’t want to sell a winning investment, not understanding how vulnerable he was to a downturn. The doctor just didn’t want to think about dying.

The antidote to this kind of thinking is to stop trying to calculate the odds of something going wrong. Focus instead on how much you or your loved ones have to lose if the worst happens. If you can’t easily absorb that loss, then buy the insurance, diversify your investments and write your will.

Slow down

A common sales tactic is to try to create a sense of urgency so people will act. But we tend to make mistakes when we rush. If you feel pressured to buy a product, sign up for a service or invest in something, take a step back.

Schlesinger recommends asking these five questions before making investments, but they could easily apply to other financial decisions:

• How much will this cost?
• What are the alternatives?
• How easy is it to get my money out and what fees or penalties will I pay?
• What tax consequences will this carry for me?
• What’s the worst-case scenario I face with this?

Seek out, and listen to, advice

Most financial advisers aren’t required to put your interests ahead of their own. They can sell you an investment that costs more or performs worse than an alternative, simply because it puts more money in their pocket.

This lack of advisers’ fiduciary duty has convinced many people they’re better off handling their own financial affairs. A do-it-yourself approach may actually be appropriate, Schlesinger said, when you’re getting a handle on the basics — paying off credit card debt, starting to save for retirement and building an emergency fund.

That said, you still would be smart to seek out an expert if you’re confronting a situation that’s complex or out of the ordinary, she said.

If the IRS is auditing you, you need a tax pro. If you’re being sued by a creditor, you need a lawyer. If you’re about to inherit a large sum — more money than you’re accustomed to dealing with — you should talk to a fee-only financial planner who agrees in writing to put your interests first.

The more money you have, the more likely you are to face complex situations that require expertise you don’t have. The consequences of making a mistake or not spotting a problem can be greater as well, which is why financial planners often hire their own financial planners.

Two areas that are particularly tricky are estate planning and retirement income strategies, including when to start Social Security and how to tap retirement funds. The cost of getting an expert second opinion could be a fraction of what you would pay for a mistake.

“We all make dumb mistakes, but some of them can be costly — and life-altering,” Schlesinger said.

—AP

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

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

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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.

And there’s more! The overstuffed, oversized, biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. The high and low heat settings along with the multiple massage settings, can provide a soothing relaxation you might get at a spa — just imagine getting all that in a lift chair! It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage. Shipping charge includes white glove delivery. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You
Census offers temp jobs for retirees

Dear Savvy Senior,

The U.S. Census Bureau is in the process of recruiting thousands of workers for temporary jobs to help collect valuable data for the 2020 Census, and retirees are ideal candidates. Can you write a column to get the word out? Thanks for your help!

— Census Recruiter

Dear Recruiter,

I’m happy to oblige, and I agree. This once-a-decade job opportunity is a great fit for retirees who have some free time on their hands and wouldn’t mind earning some extra income while helping the community.

Attention retirees! The United States Census Bureau is currently in the process of recruiting more than 500,000 temporary workers to help carry out the upcoming 2020 Census national head count of every person living in the country.

The U.S. Census helps determine each state’s representation in Congress; how funds are spent for schools, hospitals, roads; and provides information to guide many decisions made by government agencies, private businesses and institutions.

Among the jobs within the census are working in the field canvassing, updating maps, doing follow-up interviews with citizens in your community, working in the office as a clerk doing administrative tasks and overseeing field staff.

Some jobs will begin this summer, but the majority of positions will begin in late April 2020 and last a month or two.

These temporary part-time positions are located in every county throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Some positions require evening or weekend shifts because you must be available to interview members of the public when they’re at home.

And all positions require several days of online and classroom training. The pay ranges between $13.50 and $30 per hour, depending on position and location. To find the pay rates in your area, see 2020census.gov/en/jobs/locations.html.

To be able to work for the 2020 census you must:

• Be at least 18 years old;
• Have a valid Social Security number;
• Be a U.S. citizen;
• Have a valid email address;
• Complete an application and answer assessment questions;
• Be registered with the Selective Service System or have a qualifying exemption, if you are a male born after Dec. 31, 1959;
• Pass a Census-performed criminal background check and a review of criminal records, including fingerprinting;
• Commit to completing training; and
• Be available to work flexible hours, which can include days, evenings, and/or weekends.

In addition, most census jobs require employees to have access to a vehicle and a valid driver’s license, unless public transportation is readily available. Access to a computer with internet and an email account are needed to complete training.

How to apply

The first step is to complete the online job application at 2020census.gov/en/jobs. The process takes about 30 minutes and will include some assessment questions about your education, work and other experience.

If you’re a veteran who would like to claim veterans’ preference, which provides preference over nonveteran applicants, you’ll need supporting documentation.

For more information on the 2020 Census, or if you have questions or problems with the application process, call (855) 562-2020.

After you apply, an interviewer will reach out to potential hires to conduct a phone interview, but not all applicants will be interviewed. Job offers are made verbally, but candidates will also receive a letter by email.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of The Savvy Senior book.

Bond funds

From page 13

value as there may be insufficient interest in purchasing your shares.

What to do

If you are a short-term bond investor and are concerned about interest rate risk, invest in bond funds with three- to five-year maturities. You will receive reasonable returns with minimum interest rate risk.

If you are a long-term bond investor, then traditional bond funds have advantages over the target-maturity bond funds.

However, if you are pretty certain as to when you need the funds in your bond portfolio, and you are concerned about interest rate risk, then you can consider target-maturity bond funds as an alternative.

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Alabama’s Gulf coast popular year-round

By Victor Block

My first thought was that I must have taken a wrong turn. The scene outside the car windows — Dollar Stores, Waffle Houses and tattoo parlors — hardly matched the almost poetic name of my destination: Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. Small, aging wooden houses, some of which had seen better days, lined the narrow lanes off the main road.

Before long, though, I came upon glitzy high-rise condominium buildings standing shoulder to shoulder along a broad stretch of sugar-white sand. Then it dawned on me: I was in a something-for-everyone kind of place.

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, perched on the southernmost tip of Alabama, combine the usual list of to-dos and to-sees of many sun-and-sand destinations, but they have some unique surprises.

Folks who want a respite from the sun can explore a historic fort or museums devoted to Native Americans or naval aviation. For foodies, the area’s restaurants range from elegant to beach-dive casual. And those who like to commune with nature have plenty of ways to do so.

For beach bums and active hikers

Of course, the beach, lapped by the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico, is the reason most people visit Gulf Shores, a town of about 12,000 residents, and nearby Orange Beach, about half that size.

Between the two towns lies what many locals consider to be the best of Alabama’s 22 state parks: Gulf State Park. While the park is home to the shortest stretch of beach in the region, its other claims to fame account for its reputation and popularity. Nine distinct ecosystems in its 6,000-plus acres include pine forests, coastal hardwood swamps and freshwater marshes.

A 27-mile backcountry trail complex, accessible to people with varying abilities, leads walkers past boggy streams and three spring-fed freshwater lakes. Hikers may spot white-tailed deer, an alligator basking in the sun or even a bobcat.

The park’s nature center and butterfly garden offer a glimpse of colorful wildlife. Boats and fishing gear are available for rent, as well as lakeside cabins, cottages and campsites.

**Museums, cruises, fishing**

Nearby Fort Morgan, a state historic site, has a 14-mile seashore. Visitors can sit on the beach, bike, fish, kayak, picnic or visit a pentagon-shaped fort, completed in 1834. The structure occupies a strategic location, where Mobile Bay meets the Gulf of Mexico, and was built to strengthen the coastal defense of the United States following the War of 1812.

The site contains historic military buildings; artillery batteries constructed between 1895 and 1904; and a museum displaying uniforms, weapons, photographs and letters of soldiers who served there. To top it off, the fort fronts the same kind of broad, gentle, snow-hued beach that is characteristic of the area.

If you prefer to take to the sea without any effort, you can book a sunset, dolphin-watching or dinner cruise instead of kayaking or paddleboarding.

For fishing, some try their luck off a pier that stretches 1,540 feet over the Gulf of Mexico.

Snorkelers and divers who prefer to be in, rather than above, the water can explore a system of artificial reefs with experiences geared to everyone from children and beginners to advanced divers.

Golfers will find 14 courses in the area, including Craft Farms and Kiva Dunes, which rank high on Golf Digest’s “best courses” lists.

**Plenty for history buffs**

For those who want to learn, not burn, a good place to start is the Gulf Shores Museum, located in a historic beach house. Permanent exhibits tell the story of 19th-century settlers in the area and of hurricanes, including how they originate and how a community rebuilds after a storm.

Housed in a former school built in 1910, the Orange Beach Indian & Sea Museum provides introductions to the area’s Native American and fishing heritages.

Battleship Memorial Park, about an hour drive from Fort Morgan, is home to the massive USS Alabama, which saw action for 37 months during World War II, as well as a wartime submarine and a collection of historic aircraft.

An hour drive in the other direction leads to the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla., the largest such museum in the world. Despite its name, the collection of more than 250 aircraft represents every military branch.

The complex also is home to the famous Blue Angels, the aerobatic team of aviators from the Navy and Marines that thrills onlookers.

Not surprisingly, the area has been recognized and highly ranked in “best of” courses. For more information, visit www.FiftyPlusRichmond.com.

See ALABAMA COAST, page 18

Cruising Alaska in a small boat grants glimpses of rainforests, waterways and plenty of wildlife. See story on page 17.
A unique visit to Alaska in a small yacht

By Don Mankin

The Inside Passage in Southeast Alaska is the kind of place that inspires multiple visits. On my first two trips, I cruised past its lush rainforests and coastal mountains via the large, state-run ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway.

On my most recent trip, though, I hopped aboard the 85-foot MV Windward, the first charter yacht in Alaska, built in 1924. With only four cabins, the yacht is more intimate than the ferries and giant cruise ships that sail up and down the Inside Passage all summer.

On the seven-day trip I got to know everyone, including the three-person crew. The Windward was able to access coves and bays that larger boats cannot. And our itinerary was flexible, enabling us to change course to see whales, kayak in protected waters or dodge icebergs.

Summer rhythms

On cloudy days, we chugged through a silver world, passing islands covered in tall evergreens. Tufts of clouds and fingers of mist hung in the air between the hills and islands, wrapping the rolling contours of green in wispy cotton. On sunny days, we sat in shirtsleeves on the deck, protected waters or dodge icebergs. Some were in the distance, but many swam alongside the boat, flipping their tails as if waving goodbye before diving.

We also spent an afternoon at a fish hatchery, watching a dozen bears scrounge for salmon in the river just 20 or 30 yards away. We had enough time to note the bears’ personalities, relationships and even a dramatic teeth-baring exchange of snarls and growls between two bears challenging each other over a choice fishing spot in the river. It’s hard to top whales and bears, but it was only three miles round trip, but the rough trail and the fresh bear scent made it seem longer.

Another day we hiked up a hill alongside a roaring river to a natural hot spring. After picking my way along a rocky, muddy trail, I felt as if I had earned the soak.

Animal planet

We saw tons of wildlife, pun intended. We kayaked for an hour or so most days, usually an easy paddle in a protected cove, along a beach or around an island. One sunny day we sat in shirtsleeves on the deck, protected waters or dodge icebergs. Some were in the distance, but many swam alongside the boat, flipping their tails as if waving goodbye before diving.

One swam so close I got a photo of his nostril-like blowholes; another breached just a few feet off our bow, spraying me with an impressive splash as he flopped back into the water.

We had enough time to note the bears’ personalities, relationships and even a dramatic teeth-baring exchange of snarls and growls between two bears challenging each other over a choice fishing spot in the river. It’s hard to top whales and bears, but
Alabama coast
From page 16
lists compiled by the likes of USA Today, Reader’s Digest and Travel + Leisure.
Battlehips, vintage airplanes, golf and a historic fort would seem to have little in
common with an inviting beach destination. That’s the point.
Inclusion on “Top 10,” “Best Places” and “Most Beautiful” lists is based upon
the magnificent stretches of beach as well as the long list of other attractions that
Gulf Shores and Orange Beach offer those who visit.
As one repeat visitor told me, “I came here the first time for the beaches. Now I
return for everything else.”

If you go
Given the nature-friendly environment of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, the
most inviting place to stay fits very comfortably into that theme.
The Lodge at Gulf State Park is a trendsetter when it comes to sustainability and
environmental protection. In small ways and large, its owners have incorporated
innovative efforts into its design, construction and operation.
The building contains 20 percent recycled materials, and three-quarters of con-
struction waste was recycled rather than going to a landfill.
The lodge was designed in a way to pro-
tect the sand dunes. Invasive plants were
replaced with native species that thrive
without irrigation, chemical pesticides or
fertilizers. Condensate water from the gue-
stroom air conditioning system is filtered and
used in the swimming pool.
Straws in the restaurant are made of
reusable wood, and words on pens in guest
rooms bear the message, “I used to be a
newspaper.” Rates at the Lodge begin at
$129. For more information, call (251) 540-
4000 or visit lodgeatgulfstatepark.com.
Of an estimated 200 restaurants in the
area, only a couple of handfuls are chain
eateries. The upscale Perch dining room
in the Lodge at Gulf State Park has great
views of the Gulf. Try the Gulf gumbo ($9)
or jumbo prawns ($20). Stuffed quail ($28)
is one of several land options.
First-time diners at Doc’s Seafood

Shack & Oyster Bar soon understand why
the modest eatery is a local legend. Many
regulars go for the signature fried shrimp
($17). Others opt for the “create your
own” seafood platter (from $21) or fried
chicken basket ($8-$13). For more infor-
mation, call (251) 981-6999.
Gulf Shores and Orange Beach is a
year-round vacation destination. During
summer, the sea breeze provides relief
from high temperatures and humidity.
Winters generally are sunny and mild,
with daily highs close to 60 degrees. The
ocean is warm from May through Novem-
ber, with temperatures often in the low 80s.
For more information about Gulf
Shores and Orange Beach, visit gulf-
shores.com or call (800) 745-7263.

Alaska
From page 17
the last two days of the trip came close,
cruising down Endicott Arm, a long fjord
carved deep into the snow-capped moun-
tains of the Coast Range.
A fjord and a glacier
Our first stop was Fords Terror, a steep
and narrow fjord branching off from End-
icott Arm, named after a naval crewman
who rowed through the narrows in 1899
at slack tide only to spend several scary
hours trapped by the turbulent, twisting
currents when the tide surged out.
To avoid any terror, we waited for high
tide before entering the narrows. It was a
breathtaking ride between granite walls
2,000 feet high with streams cascading
through the seams in the rock.
John Muir compared these cliffs to
Yosemite Valley. That only begins to de-
scribe the dramatic beauty of this place,
one of the most spectacular places I’ve
ever visited. We stopped for the night at
the end of the fjord, which felt like the end
of the world.
The next morning, it was worth getting
up early to watch the sun touch the snow-
capped peaks behind the walls of rock,
then creep down the sheer walls to the
cracks of thunder that signaled the calv-
ging of chunks of ancient, deep blue ice, some
as big as houses, crashing into the water.

There, on essentially the last day of the
trip, I knew I probably wouldn’t come back
this way again. It would be hard to
match this trip, and impossible to beat.
Don Mankin was hosted on this trip by
Wilderness Travel, wildernesstravel.com.
For more information and photos, see his
blog at adventuretransformations.com.
Gold Star families get guidebook for grief

By Margaret Foster

On Memorial Day, most Americans will fire up the grill, invite their neighbors over for picnics or attend a Main Street parade.

But for families who have lost an adult child during military service, Memorial Day can be a piercing reminder of loss — as painful as their loved one’s birthday or anniversary of their death.

The very images that are symbols of our country are very personal symbols of loss,” said Virginia author Joanne Steen. “With military loss you get innumerable more reminders every day.”


No one except Gold Star families can understand what it’s like to hear that knock at the door, to see the uniformed messenger, to get the unimaginable news that their child has lost their life for their country.

That knock on the door arrived for Steen one June afternoon in 1992. Steen’s husband, 35-year-old Navy reservist Ken Steen, had been killed in a routine training exercise. He and six others died when their helicopter exploded and crashed into the Lynnhaven River in Norfolk, Va.

The need for a manual

In the years that followed her husband’s death, Steen and other military widows formed a support group to help navigate their loss together.

“There’s a scarcity of books about military loss and survivors,” Steen said. “Someone in my widows’ group said, ‘We need to write this down. We need a manual.’”

We Regret to Inform You, published by Central Recovery Press, is Steen’s second such manual. After her husband died, she quit her job as an electrical engineer, began working as a grief counselor, and in 2001 started writing.

She first coauthored a 2006 book called Military Widows: A Survival Guide. Now, at the request of some of her workshop participants who had lost a child, she has published a survival guide for parents.

Steen spent three years searching for a publisher. Most rejected her manuscript as unnecessary “because the wars are ending,” she said.

But an average of three military service members die every day, Steen pointed out, and not always in combat. According to a Congressional Research Service report published last year, 72 percent of the 15,851 deaths since 2006 among active-duty personnel and mobilized reservists occurred under circumstances unrelated to war.

Other publishers said Steen’s book was unnecessary because parents of service members ought to be mentally prepared for the loss of the child. After all, they joined the military and took that risk.

But no one can adequately prepare for such a loss, Steen said, which is why her book is critical.

Unique kind of grief

Unlike other parents, Gold Star parents face a different set of emotional issues. “Not all losses are equal,” Steen said.

First, there’s the paperwork. Military families may never learn the exact details of their loved one’s death because they may be classified. “More often than not, you don’t find all the answers,” Steen said.

Then there’s what Steen calls “secondary losses,” such as the parents’ realization that they’ll never be grandparents.

In addition, being regularly confronted with symbols of America, from flags to national anthems, can remind them of their child.

But “there is hope,” Steen said. After many years, families can learn to live with their new reality, she believes. “You don’t get over your grief; you get through it. You learn to integrate some level of grief into your life.”

See GOLD STAR, page 21

Russian-born historian Irina Coleman has spoken to white descendants of slaveowners who say their family documents indicate a close, loving relationship between the races. Her response is, “What was your reaction to 9/11? Do you think that was everyone’s response? The only way to tell the story accurately is to see it from multiple points of view.”

Another myth about slavery, according to Coleman, is that African servitude in the United States was simply an extension of a concept and practice that has been part of civilization from its beginning.

“Not true,” she said. “This was the largest forced migration in human history. It was much larger than the master-slave relationship because an entire infrastructure developed around it. Slaves became part of the monetary and economic system as well as cultural and legal institutions.”

The expanded museum’s new exhibits strive to tell the whole story, Coleman said. “The former American Civil War Center dealt with the North, the South and African Americans. There was nothing about Native Americans, enslaved blacks or immigrants — all of whom our expanded museum covers.”

Through thousands of letters, images, maps and other documents, Coleman hopes to present a comprehensive picture of the Civil War and its times. The expanded museum will be “much more inclusive, much more of an emotional experience for visitors,” Coleman said.

“Museums can be active without being activist,” she said. “With the many different pieces of cultural memory, we can help our community navigate controversy. The problem is that for so long, museums have helped perpetuate outdated attitudes by sweeping controversy under the rug.”

Coleman credits Colonial Williamsburg with giving her an appreciation — “even an expectation” — of risk-taking. “Employees have to know an institution has [their] back, from the board of directors to supervisors. I’ve tried to foster that attitude in staff development here,” she said.

Coleman’s success is due to her “insatiable curiosity,” she said. In her role as museum director, she never shies away from uncomfortable truths. “The human condition is fraught with darkness,” she said, “but you can learn something from everything.”

If you go

The American Civil War Museum, online at acwm.org, comprises three locations in Richmond and Appomattox:

Historic Tredegar, 300 Tredegar St., Richmond, Va. 23219, (804) 649-1861, ext. 100

White House of the Confederacy, 1201 E. Clay St., Richmond, Va. 23219, (804) 649-1861, ext. 100

American Civil War Museum-Appomattox, 159 Horseshoe Rd., Appomattox, Va. 24522, (804) 649-1861, ext. 300

All three location are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ticket prices at each site start at $12 adults; $10 seniors, retired military, teachers and students; and $6 youth (ages 6-17). The museum offers discounted admissions to more than one location through its “Experience Packages.”
Native bees are important pollinators

By Lela Martin

What’s the buzz about pollinators? Pollination is a symbiotic relationship between an animal pollinator and a flowering plant. The pollinator receives a reward and, at the same time, inadvertently transfers pollen from flower to flower or, in some plants, within the flower from the male stamen to the female stigma.

Bees, who spend most of their lives collecting pollen, are the main insect pollinators. You probably know that honeybees pollinate crops while producing honey for the hive and for you to enjoy.

Yet honeybees are not native to North America. Native bee species are significant pollinators in the region. “Native bees are a valuable resource to our everyday lives as they provide a range of pollination services that enrich both our natural areas and our dinner plates,” according to Tiffanie Pirault of Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Here are some Bs on native bees:

**Beneficial:** One-third of the food on our plates is due to insect pollination. Individual native bees can be up to 70 times more efficient than an individual honeybee.

Although you may think of bees as stinging insects, it is only the bees that live in a colony or hive (e.g., honeybees, bumblebees and sweat bees) that would sting as a defense of their colony.

Sweat bees can be annoying and carpenter bees can be worrisome; however, the benefits of native bees as pollinators greatly outweigh any negative characteristics.

**Botanical Specialists or Generalists:** Based on their foraging habits, native bees are divided into two types. Generalists are about 80 percent of the total population, and the rest are specialists.

Specialists have developed over time to feed from only one, two or three kinds of plants. You may have noticed specialist bees in the early spring pollinating woodland ephemerals. For example, the pink pollen of spring beauty (Claytonia virginica) is necessary to the miner bee (Andrena erginiae).

As a Virginian, try to grow plants that support specialists: willow (Salix); redbud (Cercis canadensis); dogwoods (Cornus); winterberry (Ilex verticillata) and plants in the heath family (Ericaceae), such as blueberry bushes.

**Burrowing and Borrowing:** While honeybees live in a hive, native bees are typically solitary. Because many solitary bees live underground, it’s helpful to have a patch of dirt for burrowing.

Other solitary bees, such as mason bees, create nests in hollow reeds or holes in wood. In addition to laying eggs in small natural cavities such as woodpecker holes, mason bees will use handmade or commercial nesting boxes.

Bumblebees are native bees that live in a colony. An overwintering queen might borrow an unused rodent’s nest on the ground for her home.

**Busy and Bustling:** “Busy as a bee” is an appropriate expression. A bee can visit as many as 5,000 flowers in a single day. Surprisingly, bumblebees visit many more blooms per minute than honeybees. The average mass of pollen and nectar carried by bumblebees returning to the nest is around 25 percent of their body weight.

**Big and Bitty:** Honeybees are mid-sized bees. Native bees include large bumblebees (more than an inch long) and tiny bees that measure less than 1/8-inch long.

The zoology team with Virginia’s Natural Heritage Program at DCR has compiled a list of 450 Virginia native bee species so far. There are a dozen species of bumblebees alone.

Carpenter bees, mining bees, leafcutter bees and orchard mason bees are all Virginia native pollinators.

**Buzzing:** Big, beefy bumblebees are able to perform buzz pollination that is necessary for several flowering plants that keep their pollen on lockdown.

Bumblebees contract their flight muscles, producing strong vibrations directed on a flower’s anther to shake the pollen loose. Honeybees are unable to do this. We enjoy blueberries and tomatoes, for example, because bumblebees perform buzz pollination.

**Blighted:** Many North American bumblebees are experiencing steep population declines. For example, the rusty-patched bumblebee (Bombus affinis), once common in Virginia, has declined by roughly 80 percent and was added to the endangered species list in May 2017. Threats to bumblebees include parasites, disease,
Gold Star
From page 19
For Steen, like others who have been presented with a folded American flag, a military death can change the course of life. “When Gold Star families go through that trauma, many of them want something good to come from that loss,” Steen said. “So many of them grow in ways they never thought they could.” Steen’s books and workshops are her way of growing, sharing and helping others get through their grief.

What not to say
When talking to grieving families, Steen suggests that friends adhere to the 80/20 rule: Listen 80 percent of the time and talk 20 percent of the time.

But when you speak, be careful what you say. Steen, a popular lecturer, said one of her most requested courses is titled “Seven Things Not to Say.”

“We don’t know what to say, so there’s this unofficial set of clichés. They don’t help,” Steen said.

Here are some clichés to avoid:
“Time heals all wounds.”
“It was God’s will.”
“He’s happy wherever he is now.”
“Happy Memorial Day.”
“I’m glad you have other children.”
“I know exactly how it feels.”
“Everything happens for a reason.”
“You’ve got to move on with your life.”


Pollinators
From page 20
habit loss, climate change, pesticides and invasive species, among others.

To “bee” pollinator-friendly:
Select a variety of native plants with a range of bloom-times.

Reduce lawn grass. Live with a few weeds and bare soil.

Be cautious when using pesticides. A chemical that kills a mosquito can also kill a bee. Read and follow all labeling.

Lela Martin is a Master Gardener with the Chesterfield County office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. She is also co-chairman of the 2019 Bumblebee Jamboree.
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Crossword Puzzle

Feeling Desserted

Stephen Sherr

Across

1. Actress Jessica, named “Sexiest Woman in the World” for 2007
5. Go over 21
9. Most central of the Great Lakes
14. Display disappointment
15. One on the other side
16. Bumbling
17. Library, study, or conservatory
18. West of Gotham City
20. Too much vodka, for most
25. Hindsight on one’s dessert selection at the Single Ladies’ Diner (with 39, 45, and 57 Across)
28. Fancy for a Toy Story action figure
29. Strike from the record
30. Try to reach China
32. Letters on Miracle on Ice losing
33. “___ bad thing” (regretful words)
35. Letters on a bike pump
36. “___ down and get some rest”
38. More of the dessert thoughts
42. Texas of Silicon Valley
43. Maiden name monikers
44. First retirement check was in 1940 for $22.54
46. Still more of dessert thoughts
47. Secure an ice skate
49. “___” (from Washington state to Washington DC)
50. Weakens
53. Immunizations
55. Dresser conclusion
60. One who routinely avoids R-rated movies
63. Most of a unicycle
64. One convicted of perjury
65. Monopoly investment
66. Arab nobleman
67. Wedding invitation color
68. In an ___ world...
69. Violate norms
70. Ticket stub identification

Down

1. National Canine Fitness Month
2. Exfoliation sensation
3. Keeps aloft
4. Ambience
5. Biblical false god
6. Voided
7. Vampire killer
8. Technique which can make a flower appear to bloom in seconds
9. Quality of an audiophile’s audio files
10. “A piece of spaghetti or a motorcycle, can only be led from the front end” (Patton)
11. Gridiron official
12. Make a choice
13. To the ___ degree
14. Acronyms for universities in Oregon and Ottawa
15. First letters of the first state
16. Raggedy Ann and Andy
17. “___ bad thing” (regretful words)
18. “___ impressed!”
19. Like Pluto
20. Sixth word of the Gettysburg Address
21. Consistent features of Tom and Jerry’s houses
22. Rand McNally publication
23. Convert a full beard to a goatee
24. End of symbol- or social-
25. Hot dog or NASCAR
26. In the cooler
27. White billiards ball
28. Schoolbook font
29. End of symbol- or social-
30. Like 1999 and 2017
31. Feature of the Century
32. Landline alternative
33. Headwear available at shopdisney.com
34. Out of the way
35. „___ and 57 Across"
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Answers are on page 20.
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