Artist taps into the power of the sun

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Calling amateur artists and photographers 50+

Submit digital images of your art and photos in our online Celebration of the Arts contest.

Enter up to 3 works in each of 7 categories:

- Painting
- Sculpture/Carving
- Drawing
- Mixed Media/Textile
- Ceramics
- Stained Glass/Jewelry
- Photography/Digital Art

Winners in each category will receive cash prizes, awards, display opportunities at galleries and area Expos, and recognition in Fifty Plus.

Enter online through March 20.
Entry fee: $10 per item.

For complete rules and to enter the competition, visit TheBeaconNewspapers.com/COTA2020

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Wonder and creativity

We all want to be understood by our close friends and, particularly, by our mates. We want them to know what our preferences are, what we like to eat, with whom we like (and don’t like) to socialize.

We want them to remember our birthday, what types of gifts please us, what music we like to listen to at different times of day. These are among the myriad ways in which people who love each other show they understand and appreciate each other.

But today, a device can do all of this for us and more, and probably do it better. A “smart refrigerator” can reorder your preferred foods and probably do it better. A “smart refrigerator” can reorder your preferred foods and probably do it better. A “smart refrigerator” can reorder your preferred foods and probably do it better.

Better yet, they don’t try to change our ways, say one thing and mean another. We know (and even love) can lie to us somehow, digital assistants from Amazon, Google and other know-it-all companies will remember your spouse’s birthday and, once it gets to know their taste (and your budget), can send your spouse a gift in the right size, perhaps even with a card having an appropriate message.

Publications that you frequently online know what topics you like to read and will “curate” their content for you, showing you only the articles, op-eds and blogs that reflect your political opinions, or (if you appear to like getting upset, showing you the ones most sure to raise your blood pressure). We don’t even need to explicitly ask these devices for such favors. Unlike people, they don’t need to be told or reminded about our preferences. They figure them out on their own and, seemingly, never forget which clothing items we once lingered over while shopping online.

Better yet, they don’t try to change our opinions or expose us to different ways of thought the way a spouse might.

These examples of useful artificial intelligence (AI) come from companies that say they are simply trying to make our lives easier, more convenient, less burdened. Personal assistants theoretically have only our interests at heart. (After all, catering to our every whim is how they make money.) And it’s true that many of us do appreciate the benefits we derive from such technology.

But there are other, similar artificially intelligent bots that, you might say, have an ulterior motive.

For example, we all know and hate those daily, dastardly robocallers, who impersonate our neighbors and want to scam us. There are the emails that purport to be from our friends, but ask us to FedEx gift cards ASAP, and the digital ads that are constantly inviting us to stray from our diets as we pass by pizza and pastry shops.

Now, I have to admit that people we know (and even love) can lie to us sometimes, try to manipulate us in certain ways, say one thing and mean another. We humans are not above such behavior. But in interpersonal relationships, we believe we can usually detect — and even appreciate — the occasional white lie, well-told.

It feels very different when we have no idea where the deceptive phone calls, emails and digital ads are coming from, and when we are certain that the responsible party only wants our money or our vote or our credit card number for nefarious purposes.

I went shopping the other day for a birthday card for my wife. I chuckled or choked up over numerous cards in a huge variety of styles. Some were clearly for the romantic young marrieds, others for the “we’ve been through a lot together” couples, and some were perfunctory “have a great day; indulge yourself” cards.

And yes, I usually have no trouble finding a card that perfectly expresses my feelings for my wife. She, in turn, gives me cards that accurately convey her emotions and thoughts.

If I don’t have a problem giving my wife a heartfelt card written by someone else, why should it be a problem if I ask Alexa to “buy my wife something nice for her birthday” or “send her the kind of flowers she likes, with a nice card”?

Well, somehow that seems unnecessarily, less personal.

Is it just a matter of degree? Have we ended up here because we relinquished much of the personal touch long ago by communicating with, and giving to, others via Hallmark cards, Amazon “wish lists,” form letters and email blasts, and it’s just that the technology has gotten better?

Perhaps it’s true that today’s AI computers understand us and those we interact with better than we do.

And if that’s so, what do we lose in exchange for this greater efficiency? The opportunity to make personal choices, to spend a little time thinking about others, and to make an effort to understand others are among the things that make us human.

The movie The Matrix, which I saw when it came out more than 20 years ago, made little sense to me at the time, but I did get the point: namely that human beings in the future function solely as batteries, our purpose being to power the machines that really run the world.

In that futuristic dystopia, most human beings are all but dead, lying in pods connected to wires, generating body heat that keeps the machines humming.

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

Thank you for the great feature story on aging (“It’s time to disrupt ageism,” February). I am now 88 years old and truly marvelous at the wonder of it. My children are now past middle age and on the brink of retirement.

Often, as the night sinks in my little house, I wonder why in such a long life I only had my precious mother and father for 17 years. They perished in the Holocaust in 1941.

I felt that I was back in time when I read Wolfgang Puck’s “Rustic bean soup brings back memories” in your January issue. Like Puck, I hail from Austria, and like his mom, my mother was a great cook.
Ever-changing artwork, powered by the sun

By Diane York

A friend of mine recently sent me a TED Talks video filmed in Vienna. It displayed gorgeous light studies in vivid shades of green, blue, red and yellow — very fluid, alive and ephemeral.

I was amazed to learn they were created from sunlight and that they changed throughout the day following the movement of the earth. I was also surprised to find out that the internationally known artist who created these has lived here in Richmond since 2003.

Born in Ohio, Janet Saad-Cook, 79, spent much of her life in the Washington, D.C. area. Originally trained as a concert pianist, she took up painting and sculpture in her early 20s.

About a decade into her career, she happened to pass through a department store and was intrigued by the iridescent film in a display. As the sunlight hit it, she saw brilliant patterns of light. Excited, she rushed back to her studio and began to experiment with sunlight as an art form.

Today, nearly four decades later, Saad-Cook continues to create art in her Forest Hill home. Her now-famous sunlight-based installations have been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the world. This April, her work will be exhibited at the Royal College of Art, Kensington Gallery, London.

There goes the sun

She first created several “Sun Drawings,” as she calls them, in the early 1980s. She soon learned that natural light is a mercurial medium, constantly changing as the earth orbits the sun.

At one point she left her studio for a month, only to find on her return, with the changing seasons, that the light through the windows no longer illuminated her art.

Saad-Cook was determined to make artworks that would continue to be visible throughout the year. She also wanted to be able to separate pure, individual colors from the spectrum of sunlight and to display them in her “drawings.”

Saad-Cook sought out scientists and engineers to help her understand how this could be achieved. Based on her work and plans, she won the position of artist-in-residence at the Physics Department of Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

She spent a year in that position and then studied at its Glass Research Center. There, she learned the sciences of optics and metallurgy.

She explored ways to bend and coat glass, and learned how to change refraction with various metals and coatings to affect light passing through.

Following the sun out West

Hoping to learn more about the sun and paths of the planets, which was critical to developing sun drawings that would be beautiful throughout the year, she contacted the American Astronomical Society, where she met astronomer Peter Boyce.

Boyce visited her studio and suggested she travel to some sites in the American Southwest where Native American cultures marked the Solstices by tracking sunlight.

And so began her study of archaeoastronomy — the interdisciplinary study of how ancient cultures “have understood the phenomena in the sky...and what role the sky played in their civilizations,” such as for marking time and the changing seasons, Saad-Cook said.

With Boyce’s encouragement, she studied the cultures at sun sites such as Chaco Canyon, New Mexico; Chimney Rock Colorado; Hovenweep Castle in Utah and the pyramids of Mexico, including Teotihuacan near Mexico City.

She has become so knowledgeable on the topic of the sun and how cultures viewed it in the past that she has been asked to deliver papers on the subject to the General Assembly of the International Astronomers Union at Johns Hopkins University and astronomers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Haystack Observatory.

Saad-Cook now believes her sun drawings, which she patented in 1989, connect human culture from the most primitive times to the present. As she puts it, “My work occurs at the intersection of time, space and light.”

International and local exhibits

Her art is now known throughout the world. In addition to the London exhibit in April, her works have been exhibited in the Gladbeck Museum in Germany as well as galleries in Italy, France and Monaco.

Her European exhibitions brought Saad-Cook to the attention of TED Talks Vienna, which contacted her and asked her to come to that city and deliver a presentation on her work.

Here in the United States, one of her most impressive installations is located in the Photonics Center at Boston University, where her 20-by-104foot sun drawing, titled “Athanor,” has been situated on the curved atrium wall since 1997.

Viewers are mesmerized as the sunlight moves across its mirrored metals and coated glass. As the day progresses, the light breaks into different, pure colors and ghost-like images that “walk” across the wall. Workers there so love this magical artwork that they have volunteered to pay to upgrade the heliostat, the device that operates the sun drawing, so it can be visible for more hours of the day.

Saad-Cook has also conducted numerous collaborative projects with scientists, architects and engineers, along with independent research in the field of archaeoastronomy.

Now she lectures extensively in the U.S. and abroad, and has presented papers about her work at scientific institutions such as The Royal Institution of Great Britain, the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, the Santa Fe Institute, and the International Astronomical Union, among others.

It is a credit to the artist who created these has lived here in Richmond since 2003.

See ARTIST, page 7
Do face masks protect from coronavirus?

By Carla K. Johnson

People around the world are buying up protective face masks in hopes of keeping the new virus from China at bay. Some companies have required them for employees. Schools in South Korea have told parents to equip their children with masks and hand sanitizer.

But do the masks work? It depends.

All viruses are small enough to get through a typical strap-on medical mask, but the germs don’t generally spread through the air one at a time, said Dr. Mark Denison of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. Denison studies SARS and MERS, which are coronaviruses, the same family as the new virus, which is now named COVID-19.

Instead, viruses ride from person to person on droplets from a sneeze or cough. Those droplets land on hands and other surfaces, where they are touched by others, who then touch their own eyes, noses or mouths.

Masks can block large droplets from a sneeze or cough. That means they have some value, Denison said. Also, someone in a mask can’t touch their own nose and mouth. That can help prevent the wearer from picking up germs left on surfaces by someone who is sick, he said.

Masks are “a very sensible precaution” while scientists work to study exactly how the new virus is transmitted, University of Oxford researcher Trudie Lang said.

None of this, however, is based on rigorous research. Nobody has compared groups of masked and unmasked people by exposing them to the new germ, Denison said.

A 2017 review of studies in healthcare workers suggested masks offer some protection against SARS, but the authors noted “existing evidence is sparse, and findings are inconsistent.”

The best way to avoid getting sick from the new virus is to wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water aren’t available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. That’s the same advice for avoiding regular cold and flu viruses.

CDC recommendations

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not currently recommend masks for the general public. In February, officials said the immediate risk to the general public in the U.S. remains low.

The CDC does recommend masks for people being evaluated for the new virus, people confirmed to have it, household members and caregivers. Airline crew should offer a face mask to a sick traveler, the CDC said.

Healthcare workers treating patients with the new virus are advised by the CDC to take additional precautions such as goggles or face shields.

In early March, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of the Center for the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), elaborated on some additional precautions appropriate for older adults, according to the transcript of a press briefing.

“Think twice before you expose yourself to someone who is showing symptoms. This is especially important for people who are older and have underlying health conditions,” Messonnier said.

“For seniors, preparedness may also mean making sure you have adequate supplies of routine medications, like medication for blood pressure and diabetes. This is always part of what CDC recommends for preparedness. "If you’re 65 and older — and particularly if you live in areas where there’s ongoing community spread — you need to think about what actions you can take to reduce your exposure.""

That may include, for instance, avoiding large public gatherings. “The goal of social distancing is to limit exposure by reducing face-to-face contact and preventing spread among people in community settings,” Messonnier added.

If you are 65 and older, or have heart disease or diabetes, the CDC says you should consider taking actions to protect yourself from coronavirus. You might also be preparing for these actions if you live in areas where there’s ongoing community spread.

For up-to-date information, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

AP journalists Tong-hyung Kim in Seoul; Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo; Havovi Todd in London; Tsaiing Wu in Taipei, Taiwan; Erika Iinetz in Shanghai and Karel Janick in the Czech Republic contributed to this report.

—AP

Superfoods that can help fight off colds

By Amanda MacMillan

They say you are what you eat. So, it makes sense that eating nutritious foods can help you maintain a healthy immune system.

“Vitamins, minerals, antioxidants — these are what keep your body strong, and without them you’re not giving your body the edge it needs to ward off infection,” said registered dietitian Karen Ansel, a former spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

For the best defense against colds and flu, make these healthy foods part of your diet:

Fish

Oily fish — including salmon, tuna and mackerel — are rich in omega-3 fatty acids (compounds that help reduce harmful inflammation in the body). Chronic inflammation prevents your immune system from working properly and can contribute to colds and flu.

Garlic

These pungent cloves contain alllicin, a sulfuric compound that produces potent antioxidants when it decomposes. Garlic packs the biggest antioxidant punch when eaten raw.

Anise seeds

These licorice-flavored seeds, which have antibacterial properties, have been shown to ease coughing and help clear congestion from the upper respiratory tract.

Citrus fruits

Studies show that taking vitamin C at the first sign of illness may reduce a cold’s duration by about a day. Eating lots of citrus — noshing on orange and grapefruit slices, or using lemons and limes in recipes — will provide a healthy dose of this powerhouse nutrient.

Fennel

Fennel is a natural expectorant and can help clear chest congestion and soothe a persistent cough. Make your own fennel tea with 1.5 teaspoons of the seeds and 1 cup boiling water. Steep for 15 minutes, strain and sweeten if desired.

Yogurt and kefir

Probiotic foods such as yogurt and kefir are a good way to replenish beneficial strains of bacteria, which promote digestive health and help prevent stomach ailments and upper respiratory tract infections.

Red peppers

Like citrus fruit, red peppers are high in vitamin C. In fact, one red pepper has 150 milligrams of the nutrient. (A large orange, by comparison, has about 100 mg.)

Skinless turkey breast

Lean proteins are high on Ansel’s list of healthy extras (like high sugar content), and it’s loaded with zinc, too. To reap the immunity-boosting benefits without the unhealthy extras (like high sugar content), stick with bite-size portions of dark chocolate with a cocoa content of 70% or higher.

Carrots and sweet potatoes

Orange fruits and vegetables such as carrots and sweet potatoes are rich in beta carotene. Your body converts this organic compound into vitamin A, which is essential for maintaining a strong immune system.

Health.com delivers relevant information in clear language that puts health into context in peoples’ lives.

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Amateur artists 50 and over are invited to enter their best works in a variety of media in the *Beacon's* 2020 Celebration of the Arts, an online art competition, open now through March 20.

The Celebration of the Arts was inspired by moving stories from readers who have returned to an earlier love of art after years away from it, or who developed a passion for it later in life.

Amateurs may enter digital photos of their original works created after the age of 50 in seven categories (up to three items per category): Painting (watercolor, oil, acrylic), Drawing (pen and ink, graphite, pastels, calligraphy), Sculpture/Carving, Ceramics, Jewelry/Stained Glass, Mixed Media/Textile Art and Digital Photography.

Judging will be by professional artists, none of whom participated in the last competition, so all new eyes will be on this year's entries.

Winners will be announced in April, will receive cash prizes, and will be exhibited throughout May at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery in Washington, D.C.

In addition, photos of winning artists and their works will be published in a special Celebration of the Arts section to be printed in the May edition of the *Beacon*.

Winners will also be honored at senior expos in Baltimore County and Montgomery County, Maryland, and in Fairfax County, Virginia.

While there is a modest fee of $10 for each entry, all entrants will be entitled to a one-year membership in the Maryland Federation of Art (new members only; value: $70). Among other things, the membership will enable artists to have their own web page on the MFA site, where they can share images of up to 20 artworks with friends and family.

Sponsors of the Celebration of the Arts include Fifty Plus, AAPR DC, the Maryland Federation of Art, Brooke Grove Retirement Village, Pepco and Sommerset.

The online competition is open now, and will close on March 20. For complete rules of the competition or to enter, visit the *Beacon* Newspapers.com/ COTA2020.

For more information or assistance uploading entries, call (804) 673-5203.

**Artist**

*From page 5*

complexity of her work that so many science-related institutions include her sun drawings as permanent exhibits in their facilities.

Some of these include the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Socorro, New Mexico, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Smithsonian Institution, both in Washington D.C.

As a breakthrough woman in the field of art, Saad-Cook is included in the most recent edition of *Originals: American Women Artists* by Eleanor Munro. Her works, Munro writes, “link the three orders of nature: humanity, earth and sun into a techno-aesthetic continuum to outlast any single day or lifetime.”

What’s next

One of Saad-Cook’s dreams is a building that would house multiple sun drawings so that the moving pictures of sunlight could be seen year-round by visitors.

She obtained approval for this project from the National Science Foundation and located a site in New Mexico. A Sun Foundation was begun, but funding has never reached the necessary goal.

She also hopes to create a trail of sun installations around the earth that would track the sun’s light, creating a global chain of images following the movement of the earth around the sun.

“Despite our fractured world, we connect with each other in ways that are beyond all barriers of time or space or race or spiritual beliefs,” she said in her TED Talk in December 2019. “We touch the sky as one human race.”

As Munro states, Saad-Cook’s art starts at the beginning of time, transcends the present, and can continue into the future as long as the sun shines. It is eternal and classic.

See Janet Saad-Cook’s art at janetsaad-cook.com or watch her TED Talk at ted.com/talks/janet_saad_cook_how_i_pai nt_with_light.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Mar. 26**

MINDFUL SHOPPING

Learn how to reduce waste and be more environmentally conscious at the grocery store with dietician Erica Wells. The free session will be held on Thurs., March 26 from 6 to 7 p.m. at Ellwood Thompson’s, 4 North Thompson St., Richmond. To register, visit http://bit.ly/EnvironmentalGrocery.
When/how to use opioids for acute pain

By Scott Weiner, M.D.

Two recent articles have again highlighted how often opioid pain relievers — medications like oxycodone and hydrocodone — are excessively prescribed in the U.S. for acute pain, sometimes for vulnerable populations, and sometimes for conditions for which they are probably not even indicated.

The first paper, by authors at Boston Children’s Hospital, evaluated visits to the emergency department by adolescents and young adults (ages 13 to 22) over an 11-year period from a nationwide sample. About 15% of patients — roughly one in six — were prescribed an opioid, with high rates seen for ankle sprains, hand fractures, collarbone fractures and dental issues, for which an incredibly high 60% of patients in this age group received an opioid.

The second paper compared opioid prescribing by dentists in the U.S. and England in 2016, and the numbers are shocking. U.S. dentists prescribed about 35 opioid prescriptions per 1,000 people, compared to just 0.5 opioid prescriptions per 1,000 people in England.

The pain experienced by people in the U.S. can’t be staggeringly different than in the U.K. So why the discrepancy? In the U.S., prescribers were reassured by evidence that the vast majority of patients experienced adequate pain relief with over-the-counter medications that you can get at any supermarket — actually work amazingly well for acute pain.

As an example, a large survey study of more than 2,000 patients who underwent a range of dental procedures discovered that the vast majority experienced adequate pain relief with over-the-counter or non-opioid prescribed pain medications.

Another paper, which compared patients treated for low back pain in the emergency department and found no difference in pain after five days, whether the patient was treated with an anti-inflammatory medicine (naproxen) or opioid. It just didn’t make a difference, so why take the risk?

When an opioid makes sense

Of course, there are times when the over-the-counter medications are not sufficient to treat acute pain. In those situations, the goal should be to take non-prescription medications first, and then add an opioid only when the pain is unbearable.

Typically, this period of severe pain is in the first three days after a surgery or trauma. For example, my colleagues evaluated opioid consumption in the days after suffering an acute fracture. Most patients needed only about six oxycodone pills.

We therefore subscribe to the recommendations of the Opioid Prescribing Engagement Network (OPEN) program in Michigan, which recommends relatively small opioid prescriptions after surgery, such as 10 pills after having your appendix removed or hernia repaired, and just five for procedures like a breast biopsy.

Patients do fine with these smaller numbers of pills, and they’re at less risk of developing long-term opioid use.

How to discard leftover pills

When the acute pain is gone, if there are leftover opioid pills, discard them safely.

Although opioid misuse among teens is decreasing, it still is a major problem. About two-thirds of adolescents who misused opioids got them from friends or family for free. These medications should ideally be stored securely and dispensed by a parent or guardian following the appropriately prescribed schedule.

There are lots of places to safely discard pills. In fact, the Drug Enforcement Administration has a website that lists the closest bin locations. If one of those is not accessible, mix the medication with coffee grounds, kitty litter or dirt, seal it in a plastic bag, and put it in the trash. Don’t flush it down the toilet, as opioids and other drugs can contaminate the water supply.

Use minimally, if at all

My general recommendation for opioid-naïve patients, regardless of age, is this: If you have a simple problem, like a sprain or a dental procedure, or even back pain, do whatever you can to avoid an opioid.

Ask your doctor about which over-the-counter pain treatments you can safely take, and maximize those.

For more severe pain, such as from fractures or after surgery, use the minimum number of opioids needed to tolerate the pain, then back off once the pain is bearable. Then continue with non-prescription treatments.

Scott Weiner, M.D., is a contributor to Harvard Health Publications. © 2020 President and Fellows of Harvard College. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.
Virginia lawmakers continue to fine-tune legislation that aligns with the state’s growing medical cannabis program by advancing two Senate bills facilitating the work of caregivers and lab employees.

The goal is to enable older adults who have been certified for medical cannabis to obtain and use the substances.

Bill SB 185, sponsored by Sen. Siobhan Dunnavant, R-Henrico, would allow employees at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospices to administer CBD and THC-A oil to residents who have a valid written certification to use the medication.

Bill SB 885, from Sen. David W. Marsden, D-Fairfax, would remove criminal liabilities for analytical lab workers who transport and possess both substances during the course of their work.

Marsden also introduced legislation to protect individuals from possession charges for having marijuana in the form of cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil, if they have valid written certification for medical cannabis from a practitioner.

In 2019, Dunnavant and Marsden helped pass legislation signed by the governor to reduce restrictions for patient access to the substances (SB 1557, SB 1719).

For health, not a “high”
CBD products are used to treat epilepsy and to help with pain management for a variety of ailments. The product can be extracted from hemp, a plant in the cannabis family that is typically low in THC.

The non-psychoactive version of THC is THC-A; it does not produce a high. THC-A has been used to treat seizures, arthritis and chronic pain.

Fibers of the hemp plant are also used in making rope, clothing, paper and other products. Hemp recently became legal at the federal level, and its cultivation is still regulated.

There is a distinction between hemp-derived CBD oil and marijuana-derived CBD oil — namely the level of THC present.

Dunnavant told a Senate panel that the bill is needed so that staff at assisted living facilities can be included as those authorized to store and administer both CBD and THC-A to residents and patients.

Nurses can already administer
Registered nurses and licensed practice nurses can legally administer the oils. Last year lawmakers passed legislation protecting school nurses from prosecution for possessing or distributing such oils, in accordance with school board policy.

Several nursing homes and assisted living facilities when contacted said that currently the use of CBD or THC-A are not allowed at their locations, and that there are no immediate plans to incorporate such use into the care of their residents or patients.

Marsden sees his bill as an opportunity for further research and development of medical marijuana in Virginia. Both Dunnavant and Marsden’s bills reported out of committee and are headed to the House floor.

Other cannabis-related bills moving through the General Assembly include HB 972, which would decriminalize simple possession of marijuana down to a civil penalty of no more than $25. The Senate version of the bill carries a civil penalty of no more than $50.

HJ 130, currently in the Senate Committee of Rules, would direct the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study options for the regulation of recreational adult use and medical use of cannabis.

—AP/Capital News Service

To express your views on this subject, contact Senators Siobhan Dunnavant at (804) 741-0440 or David Marsden at (804) 698-7537. Contact Sen. Jennifer L. McClellan, District 9, at (804) 698-7509 and Jeffrey M. Bourne, District 71, at (804) 686-1071.

To find out the name of your state senator, visit virginia.gov/services/whos-my-legislator.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Mar. 18**
**COMPUTER BASICS**
Learn how to use a mouse, explore the Internet and create documents with Microsoft Word. The free class will be held on Wed., March 18 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Ashland Library, 201 S. Railroad Ave., Ashland. To register, call (804) 798-4072.

**Apr. 11**
**FREE YOGA CLASS**
If you’re looking to better your balance and manage your stress level, then yoga is for you. Bring a mat, and wear comfortable clothing. The free class will be held on Sat., Apr. 11 from 11 a.m. to noon at the North Avenue Library, 2901 North Ave., Richmond. To register, call (804) 646-6675.

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**Efforts to bring CBD to senior housing**

**By Chip Lauterbach**

CBD products are used to treat epilepsy and to help with pain management for a variety of ailments. The product can be extracted from hemp, a plant in the cannabis family that is typically low in THC.

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Marsden sees his bill as an opportunity for further research and development of medical marijuana in Virginia. Both Dunnavant and Marsden’s bills reported out of committee and are headed to the House floor.

Other cannabis-related bills moving through the General Assembly include HB 972, which would decriminalize simple possession of marijuana down to a civil penalty of no more than $25. The Senate version of the bill carries a civil penalty of no more than $50.

HJ 130, currently in the Senate Committee of Rules, would direct the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study options for the regulation of recreational adult use and medical use of cannabis.

—AP/Capital News Service

To express your views on this subject, contact Senators Siobhan Dunnavant at (804) 741-0440 or David Marsden at (804) 698-7537. Contact Sen. Jennifer L. McClellan, District 9, at (804) 698-7509 and Jeffrey M. Bourne, District 71, at (804) 686-1071.

To find out the name of your state senator, visit virginia.gov/services/whos-my-legislator.
There is a plant with beautiful foliage that provides year-round food for deer, so they call it the deer nut plant. But you might know it as jojoba (pronounced huh-hoe-ba).

Just like cactus plants, jojoba is a desert plant that can tolerate high heat, long hours of sunlight and very little water. It’s botanically known as *Simmondsia chinensis*.

Other delightful, hilarious names include goat nut, pignut and quinine nut. Call it what you will, the plant is still an exceptional ingredient to find in your lotion, face cream and serum. It’s so similar to your own sebum (the oily secretions of our skin cells) that your skin immediately absorbs jojoba, which can enhance the absorption of other topical treatments, nutrients or medication.

I think jojoba is one of the healthiest, most moisturizing, skin-healing and wrinkle-reducing oils one can use on the skin. Full disclosure: I’ve put it in a facial serum that I formulated for anti-aging benefits.

Here are six benefits of jojoba oil:

1. **Collagen synthesis.** In several studies, jojoba oil has been used to accelerate the production of both keratinocytes and fibroblasts. This could mean improved skin wound healing, reduced scar formation and hair growth.

2. **Anti-inflammatory.** Jojoba-based products may be useful for rosacea, psoriasis, dermatitis, acne or sensitive skin.

3. **Hair growth.** If you are currently dealing with some eyebrow loss due to aging, dieting or hypothyroidism, jojoba oil might be good to apply to your brows. Jojoba oil is known to be a wonderful scar healer, especially for acne scars. There was a study showing that after just six weeks, 154 participants using a jojoba oil-based face mask experienced a 55% perceived reduction in acne scars. The magic is from the high content of vitamin E in jojoba.

Jojoba oil is great for practically any skin type. You can simply buy a plain bottle of it to use for manicures, pedicures or even a massage. You can also add any essential oil to jojoba for fragrance and additional benefits.

One of my favorite things to do is rub jojoba oil onto my dry, itchy or cracked heels. It keeps my feet looking pretty and soft. Be well and pamper yourself with this hydrating, natural oil.
Knee pain? Options to try before surgery

When cartilage inside the knee joint starts to break down, a person may begin to experience pain.

“If you were to look inside a healthy knee joint, you’d see a thick cushioning of cartilage that covers and protects the ends of your bones, as well as another type of cartilage, called the meniscus, that acts like a shock absorber between the bones,” said Andrew Urquhart, M.D., a professor of orthopedic surgery at Michigan Medicine’s Comprehensive Musculoskeletal Center.

“The meniscus keeps the knee joint stable and helps evenly spread out the weight the knee joint bears.

“But when a person’s knee cartilage is deteriorating, the bones rub together and they may experience pain when walking or weight bearing.”

To treat a painful knee, Urquhart mentioned a few options.

“Many patients jump to surgical options, but we recommend every patient start with diet and exercise or physical therapy before considering knee replacement surgery,” he said.

What surgery involves

Total knee replacement surgery involves capping off the thigh bone (femur) and shin bone (tibia) with metal, and inserting a plastic bearing, or artificial joint, in between the bones where cartilage would normally exist. In some patients, a plastic cap is inserted over the kneecap (patella) as well.

Urquhart notes that the surgery shouldn’t be taken lightly.

“About 15 to 20% of patients that undergo knee replacement surgery have buyer’s remorse because they still experience discomfort or a sensation of instability in their knee, even after surgery,” Urquhart said. “That’s why we strongly encourage patients to try non-surgical options before electing surgery.”

Urquhart answers some common questions he hears from patients about knee replacement surgery:

Q: What’s causing my knee cartilage to break down?

A: There are a number of conditions that can cause knee pain and the cartilage to deteriorate. Some of the most common are arthritis; an injury, such as tearing the meniscus; and obesity.

Q: Am I a candidate for total knee replacement?

A: Patients in their 50s or older who have a hard time walking, despite trying non-surgical treatments first, may be good candidates for knee replacement surgery. Before considering knee replacement surgery, I always recommend patients start with improving their diet and exercise routine.

Many Americans are overweight, and just losing a few pounds can improve symptoms in the knee, which carries five times a person’s body weight when going up a single stair.

Targeted physical therapy and exercise can improve and strengthen the muscles in the knee, which may result in less pain.

We also recommend patients try non-steroidal medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen to reduce swelling and pain.

For some patients, we recommend trying steroid injections, such as cortisone injections, before electing knee replacement surgery.

When all of the non-operative options listed above do not work, patients should consult with an orthopedic surgeon. During that consultation, a physician will likely give strength and ligament tests, take X-rays, and discuss symptoms as well as the benefits and risks of surgery.

Q: What’s the difference between partial knee replacement and total knee replacement? I’ve also heard of resurfacing the knee; what does that mean?

A: A partial knee replacement is performed on patients who have intact ligaments and pain isolated to the inside portion of the knee. Performing surgery on that inside portion of the knee can result in relief of symptoms and the patient not needing surgery on the entire knee joint, thus the “partial” title.

All knee replacement surgeries involve some amount of resurfacing, or replacement of the knee’s cartilage.

Q: How long does it take to recover after surgery?

A: Every patient’s recovery time is different, but most patients can expect to be up and walking without a cane or walker about four weeks after surgery. They can generally bend their knee to or beyond 90 degrees by that point, but they may still experience some pain or stiffness.

Q: Will I be able to get back to a physical, active lifestyle?

A: Most patients — about 80 to 85% — feel their knee functions better after surgery than before. These patients can get back to low-impact physical activity, such as walking, hiking, biking, playing golf or tennis, and other light recreational activities. We discourage high-impact activities, such as basketball and running, as these can reinjure the knee.

A Wellness Update is a magazine devoted to up-to-the minute information on health issues from physicians, major hospitals and clinics, universities and health care agencies across the U.S. ©2020 www.awellnessupdate.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Do YOU Have the Drive?

drive seniors to medical appointments and grocery stores
choose when and where you drive with our online ride-scheduling program
bring independence to a senior’s life - discover why giving back is so rewarding!

The Shepherd’s Center of Richmond is a nonprofit, nondenominational service and education organization. Its mission is to encourage older adults to remain active and independent through enrichment programs and volunteer service to their peers.

Facebook: Shepherd’s Center of Richmond 804-355-7282 TSCCOR.ORG
New cookbook aims to bring out flavors

By Stuart Rosenthal

This month’s recipe comes from Deep Flavors, a new cookbook described as “a celebration of recipes for foodies in a kosher style.”

The author is Ken Horwitz, an attorney and CPA from Dallas, Texas, with a passion for cooking. He tells stories before (and within) almost all his recipes, giving context and history, and he describes step-by-step instructions to maximize the flavor and presentation of the dish.

While that means instructions can be highly prescriptive, the recipes themselves are not so complex that they might put you off from trying them.

Some recipes offer the cook options, such as mushroom soup made either with or without a roux. With either choice, there are simple, but detailed, instructions. The book’s 15 chapters cover the food landscape, from spice mixtures and pickles, to meaty (and vegetarian) main courses and decadent desserts (lots, but not all, with chocolate).

The “kosher style” element means there are some traditional “Jewish foods,” many using family recipes, and that non-kosher ingredients are either not used or kosher substitutes are suggested.

The book has an international flavor as well, including a selection of Iraqi, Mexican, Italian, French and Indian recipes.

We’ve selected a curried fish recipe for the following except from the book. Enjoy:

Easy Indian fish

You may think that preparing Indian food is daunting and beyond the scope of your capabilities. This is simply not true, now that there are numerous Indian spices and mixtures available from your normal grocery.

Or you can buy from online spice markets such as Penzeys.com or a local Indian or Asian grocer so that you do not need to assemble multiple spices yourself.

In this recipe, use a white-fleshed fish such as Chilean sea bass, black cod (also known as sablefish), red snapper, grouper, cod, haddock or other similar mild-flavored fish.

Do not use salmon, which does not meld well with these flavors. Also be sure to remove the skin from black cod or Chilean sea bass before cooking.

In this recipe, use a white-fleshed fish such as Chilean sea bass, black cod (also known as sablefish), red snapper, grouper, cod, haddock or other similar mild-flavored fish.

Also note that the type of fish used, and its thickness, will determine how long the cooking time is. For example, a thin fillet will cook much faster than a thick fillet of black cod or Chilean sea bass.

Also, these latter two varieties need to be fully cooked, while you need to be careful not to overcook ordinary cod or snapper.

The final flavor of the dish will vary depending on the spice mixtures used. It is easy to change the flavor of the recipe as desired.

Coconut-curry fish

Ingredients:

Neutral-flavored oil or butter for sauteing
2 large shallots or ½ sweet onion, finely chopped
2-4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 lemon or lime, zested and juiced
1 tablespoon sweet curry powder (or another mixture, such as tandoori or tikka masala spice blend)
1 tablespoon garam masala (Indian spice mix)
1 tablespoon coconut milk
1 can high-quality, unsweetened, full-fat coconut milk
2 tablespoons ginger, finely chopped
2 large shallots or ½ sweet onion, finely chopped
Neutral-flavored oil or butter for sautéing

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly sauté the shallots, garlic and ginger in a small amount of butter or oil until they have wilted and the aroma is incredible.

If you are sautéing in an over-proof pan, add the fish, spices, coconut milk and citrus zest. Otherwise, transfer all of the ingredients except the citrus juice and cilantro to an oven-safe Corning Ware or Pyrex dish.

Reserve the cilantro and citrus juice to be added a couple of minutes before cooking ends.

Place the pan or dish into the oven and cook for 30 minutes or until the fish is just cooked (time will vary depending on its thickness and variety. See note above.)

Serve with basmati rice and a salad or vegetable, and you will have a wonderful Indian-style meal ready in less than an hour.

Questions on dry skin, cholesterol drugs

By Howard LeWine, M.D.

Q: My skin has become very dry and itchy over the past year. Could it be some other skin problem, not just dry skin?

A: Our skin’s top layer, or epidermis, is normally thick with naturally occurring fats and oils that act as a barrier to help retain moisture and prevent irritants from entering the skin.

But as we age, the skin thins, and we lose some of those fats and oils. This allows vital moisture to escape from the skin, allowing it to become dry and cracked.

While dry skin in itself is the most common cause of itchy skin, sometimes it’s tough to tell if the symptoms are caused by a different condition, such as contact dermatitis, eczema or psoriasis.

People with contact dermatitis are more vulnerable to allergens and irritants such as fragrances that could cause inflammation. When they come in contact with something that causes a reaction, they develop a red, cracked, itchy rash.

Eczema is another term for atopic dermatitis, a condition that is mostly diagnosed in children. In older adults, eczema is a more general term for skin that’s chronically dry, cracked and itchy despite the use of moisturizers.

Psoriasis causes thick, raised, red or silvery patches of scaly skin on the elbows, knees, scalp and trunk. This skin condition isn’t as itchy as eczema.

Psoriasis is the result of an overactive immune system that causes a rapid turnover of skin cells and leads to cells piling up on the surface.

Over-the-counter remedy

For simple dry skin, a concerted effort to moisturize the skin throughout the day may be all it takes to get rid of itching and dryness.

But most people don’t moisturize often enough, or they use lotions that contain too much water to be effective on very dry skin.

Instead of liquid lotion, look for an oil-based cream that’s so thick it comes in a jar, not a pump bottle. If moisturizing alone isn’t working, it’s time to make an appointment with your doctor or a dermatologist.

Q: My cholesterol level has remained about the same for many years, but now my doctor suggests that I start taking a statin drug. What has changed?

A: There are two major reasons why your doctor could now be recommending a statin — the cholesterol guidelines continue to evolve and/or you have developed other heart disease risk factors, such as Type 2 diabetes or hypertension.

In the past, the decision to start a statin or other drug was based primarily on the level of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL), the so-called “bad cholesterol.”

New guidelines have removed this “target-driven” approach. They don’t focus on the LDL numbers. Instead, they recommend using risk to decide when people should take a statin drug to lower LDL cholesterol.

Statins are best because they do more than just lower a number. They reduce risk of developing heart disease and having a stroke.

New evidence suggests that an LDL cholesterol level much lower than 70 mg/dL is probably beneficial for some people. So, even if you have an excellent LDL blood level, you likely should take a statin if you have:

—Artery disease, including angina, a previous heart attack or stroke, or other related conditions
—A very high level of harmful LDL cholesterol (generally at or above 190 mg/dL)
—Diabetes, if you are also 40 or older

For everyone else it’s a decision that you make with your doctor, depending on risk factors that include:

—A parent, brother or sister who had coronary artery disease or stroke at an early age (a man before age 55 or a woman before age 65)
—Tobacco use
—High blood pressure
—A low HDL (“good cholesterol”) level (under 40 milligrams per deciliter)

A statin dose tailored to the individual is more important than reaching a particular target number.

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, visit www.health.harvard.edu.

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Can a chiropractor treat low back pain?

By Robert H. Shmerling, M.D.

If you've ever seen a doctor for back pain, you're not alone. An estimated 85% of people experience back pain severe enough to see a doctor at some point in their life.

Yet despite how common it is, the precise cause of pain is often unclear. And a single, best treatment for most low back pain is unknown.

“Standard care” includes a balance of rest, stretching and exercise, heat, pain relievers and time. Some doctors also suggest trying chiropractic care.

The good news is that no matter what treatment is recommended, most people with a recent onset of back pain are better within a few weeks — often within a few days.

A variety of treatments

Estimates suggest that low back pain costs up to $300 billion a year in the U.S. (including costs of care and missed work), and it's a leading cause of disability worldwide.

With the backdrop of the opioid crisis, we badly need an effective, safe, non-opioid alternative to treat low back pain.

Experts disagree about the role of chiropractic care, and there are few high-quality studies about this approach.

Should it be a routine part of initial care? Should it be reserved for people who don’t improve with other treatments? Are some people more likely to improve with chiropractic care than others?

Evidence for chiropractic care

A 2018 study published in *JAMA Network Open* is among the latest to weigh in on the pros and cons of chiropractic care for treating low back pain.

Researchers enrolled 750 active-duty military personnel who complained of back pain. Half were randomly assigned to receive usual care (including medications, self-care and physical therapy), while the other half received usual care plus up to 12 chiropractic treatments.

After six weeks of treatment, those assigned to receive chiropractic care:

—reported less pain intensity

—experienced less disability and more improvement in function

—reported higher satisfaction with their treatment

—needed less pain medicine

While no serious side effects were reported, about 10% of those receiving chiropractic care described adverse effects (mostly stiffness in the joints or muscles), while 5% of those receiving usual care had similar complaints.

Some concerns

While this study suggests that chiropractic care may be helpful for low back pain, some aspects of the study make it hard to be sure. For example:

—It only lasted six weeks. Most new-onset back pain is better by then regardless of treatment.

—The differences in improvement between those receiving chiropractic and usual care were small. It's not clear how noticeable such a difference would be or whether the cost of chiropractic care would be worth that small difference.

—The study included a mix of people with new and longer-standing low back pain and a mix of types of pain (from a pinched nerve, muscle spasm or other reasons). So, it's hard to generalize these results to everyone with back pain.

—Most of the study subjects were young (average age 31) and male (77%). All were generally healthy and fit enough to pass military fitness testing.

—Study subjects knew which treatment they were receiving. This creates potential for a placebo effect. Also, the added time and attention (rather than the spinal manipulation) might have contributed to the response.

Even within the two groups, the care varied — that is, not everyone in the usual care group received the same treatment, and this can also be said for the chiropractic group.

If any of these factors had been different, the results might have been too. For example, it’s possible that if an older population of people with chronic low back pain had been studied, “usual care” might have been the better treatment.

This new study lends support for chiropractic care to treat low back pain. But it's important to recognize the limitations of this trial, and keep in mind that side effects were more common among those receiving chiropractic care.

In addition, chiropractors aren’t free (although, fortunately, insurance coverage is becoming more common).

Robert H. Shmerling, M.D., is faculty editor at Harvard Health Publishing. © 2020 President and Fellows of Harvard College. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.
Engage at Any Age

Executive Director’s Message
Dr. Thelma Bland Watson
Executive Director, Senior Connections,
The Capital Area Agency on Aging

Impact Report for 2018-2019

Dear Readers:

We are extremely pleased to share Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging's 2018-2019 Impact Report with you as part of this month’s Engage at Any Age newsletter. As indicated throughout the Impact Report, the last two years have been very active and full of noteworthy achievements. We are grateful to have the opportunity to reflect on our work and activities that support the quality of life for thousands of older adults, caregivers and family members.

We are indeed proud of the numerous accomplishments that are a part of our ongoing Strategic Planning that addresses these focus areas:

- **Visibility and Marketing** to create recognition for Senior Connections, our programs, the individuals we serve and the issues we represent.
- **Programs and Services** to ensure the development and provision of comprehensive and collaborative activities that reflect individual needs and choices.
- **Resources and Funding** to develop diverse and long-range resources with effective stewardship.
- **Sustainability** to improve our facility and to ensure sustainability of Senior Connections as the designated Area Agency on Aging for the Richmond Metropolitan Region.

As you read the 2018-2019 Impact Report, you will notice that it focuses on a few of our programs that “empower older adults to live with dignity and choice.” The success and impact of the programs featured reflect the results of all of our services and initiatives. The Impact Report highlights the contributions of our Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Staff to support our finances, programs and services.

As we publish the 2018-2019 Impact Report, we are also looking forward to many activities in celebration of the Agency’s 50th Anniversary in 2023. For example, On May 19, 2020, we will convene our Open House from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. On that day, we will have a celebration in recognition of the hundreds of volunteers who join our dynamic staff every day to insure maximum service delivery and assistance to older adults, caregivers and family members. These volunteers “make their mark” with ongoing service and dedication. Please join our Open House and help us celebrate.

We hope the 2018-2019 Impact Report will add to your knowledge and awareness of Senior Connections and of our many community partners. On behalf of our Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Staff, thank you for your generous support. We know our success depends on you.

Thelma Bland Watson, Executive Director

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Visibility and Marketing

Engage at Any Age

In 2018 Senior Connections gave considerable attention to transforming the Agency’s popular Mature Life newsletter that was first published in November 1977. The Mature Life newsletter, mailed quarterly to over 15,000 households, has kept community members up-to-date on issues important to older adults and their caregivers for over 40 years. In an effort to continue our Transforming Perspectives theme of presenting the positive aspects of aging as part of the important work we do, the decision was made to change the newsletter’s title to Engage at Any Age. In addition, to expand the newsletters reach, Senior Connections partnered with The Beacon Newspapers, a family-owned business dedicated to providing well-written, useful information of interest to people 50 and older and their families. The Beacon’s award-winning content covers health, financial, career, housing, travel and arts topics, as well as local events and feature stories. In 2018, the Engage at Any Age newsletter became a four page pull-out section of The Beacon’s Fifty Plus Richmond publication. The Engage at Any Age newsletter now reaches over 65,000 readers and is distributed to over 350 locations throughout the eight localities served by Senior Connections.

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Help Support Older Adults in Your Community!

Did you know Senior Connections is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization? Essential services such as food, in-home care, emergency services, transportation and social engagement programs are provided through donated funds.

YES! I want to help support Senior Connections.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

$100 ☐  $50 ☐  $25 ☐  Other $__________

Contributions will support the Empty Plate Campaign.

Name: _________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________
City:________________________________ State:_______ Zip:_________ 

Mail to Senior Connections, 24 E. Cary St. Richmond, VA 23219.
To make a donation with a credit card, please visit our website at
https://seniorconnections-va.org/giving/donate
Confidence in managing one's own healthcare after a hospitalization is essential in having the best options for recovery. Patients going home from the hospital may find themselves vulnerable if they are not sure of next steps when making the transition from hospital care to home.

Care Transitions Intervention® is an evidence-based program proven to reduce hospital readmissions. Trained Senior Connections Health Coaches are referred to older adult patients being discharged home by area hospitals: VCU Health and Bon Secours Mercy St. Mary's. We also provide CTI® services on behalf of VAAA Cares, managed by Bay Aging.

The program is introduced to the patient and family at hospital bedside, and includes a home visit shortly upon the patient's return home. Over the 30 days following discharge, a health coach will work with the patient by reviewing their progress, answering questions, and encouraging confidence in managing their care.

Health Coaches listen to patients regarding personal needs, and make referrals to community resources such as home-delivered meals, phone checking, and the Benefits Enrollment Center.

Impact Story
A Health Coach visited Barbara, a 68-year-old woman, in the hospital’s ICU. Barbara was receiving care for complications due to diabetes. A home visit with Barbara’s Health Coach was scheduled for the following day.

During the home visit, Barbara and her Health Coach reviewed and developed a Personal Health Record. Barbara had a question regarding the proper dosage for one her medications and was unsure who to call or what to ask. Barbara’s Health Coach helped clarify her questions and role-played with her on how the phone call with the pharmacy might go. Barbara called the pharmacy during the home visit and was able to get the answers to her questions.

To ensure Barbara would be able to attend her follow-up appointments, her Health Coach confirmed she had friends who would be able to transport her to her schedule medical visits. Barbara’s Health Coach also reviewed with her potential red flags regarding her condition and advised her what to do in case she noticed one.

Over the next three weeks, Barbara’s Health Coach followed up with her several times, making sure she was recovering and taking the steps necessary to prevent another hospital stay.
Finding Options and Resources

**Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC)**

Launched in 2019, the Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) was created to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries access programs that pay for healthcare, food, and more. The Benefits Enrollment Center is supported by a grant from the National Council on Aging (NCOA).

Through this program Medicare beneficiaries receive enrollment and application assistance with the following core programs:

- Low Income Subsidy (LIS)/Extra Help
- Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The BEC at Senior Connections officially began accepting referrals in late March of 2019. As of September 30, 2019, the BEC has assisted 171 Medicare beneficiaries complete 358 benefit applications with a total value over $1,200,000 in benefits.

**BEC Locations:**
- Senior Connections – 24 East Cary St., Richmond, VA 23219
- Hanover Community Resources
- VCU Health Hub at 25th
- Powhatan DDS
- Goochland Co.
- Chesterfield DDS

**Impact Story:**
A client who moved to the Richmond area from out of state was referred to the BEC by the Richmond Office on Aging and Persons with Disabilities. The client had Medicare, Medicaid and SNAP from the state he lived in previously.

Once he relocated to Virginia, he had to reapply for Medicaid and SNAP. Within a few short weeks, a Benefits Outreach Specialist was able to help him apply and get approved for both Medicaid and SNAP benefits, which allowed him to get settled with minimal interruptions.

Support to Stay Home

**Mobility Management and the Ride Connection Program**

Access to safe, supportive and reliable transportation services are fundamental building blocks of a healthy, connected community and healthy, connected individuals.

Mobility Management is an innovative, person-centered approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Ride Connection helps older adults and their caregivers, and persons with disabilities, have the knowledge of and access to transportation to help them age safely at home and live healthy, connected lives. Our ride counselors offer transportation education, travel training, and access to public transportation options.

Perhaps most critical, we provide transportation to medical appointments.

**What our Riders Say:**
- 100% of our survey respondents said Ride Connection helps improve their access to medical care.
- 100% of our survey respondents said that without Ride Connection, they would miss medical appointments.
- 92% of our survey respondents said that Ride Connection helps manage their overall healthcare costs.

Support To Stay Home

**Home Delivered Meals**

Senior Connections’ Home Delivered Meals program connects older adults who are homebound and unable to meet their basic nutritional needs to a healthy diet, a friendly face, and a safety check. The Home Delivered Meals program sponsors older adults who are unable to cover the cost of the meal service. By providing nutritious, diet-specific meals and social interaction, the Home Delivered Meals program helps keep older adults independent and safe in their homes for as long as possible. For over 40 years, Senior Connections has partnered with Feed More, our local Meals on Wheel provider. Through this partnership, both agencies are better able to reach those in need within the community. Referrals and Information are exchanged between Senior Connections and Feed More through Virginia No Wrong Door, giving both agencies the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to individual needs. Program volunteers, who provide meal receipts with a friendly smile and important safety check, are key to the program’s success. As the eyes and ears providing social contact, volunteers extend the program beyond a simple meal.

**Impact Story:**
Elliot lacked the energy and stamina he needed to take care of his everyday needs when he was referred to the Home Delivered Meals program. Before enrolling in the program, Elliot was having his to him from various local restaurants. He was not following a healthy diet plan and incurring additional expenses, such as delivery cost. Shortly after being enrolled in the program and maintaining a healthy diet, Elliot noticed a change in energy level. He found he had the energy to move about more and to take better care of himself. Elliot’s overall health improved, impacting his quality of life in a positive way. Elliot’s family is thankful for the peace of mind that comes with knowing their loved ones nutritional needs are being met and are happy to see the improvement in his overall well-being.

**Ride Connection**

Our goal at Ride Connection is to help older adults and persons with disabilities have knowledge about, and access to, transportation for medical and non-medical needs to help them age in place at home and live a healthy and socially-connected life. Adults age 60 and over (and adults under age 60 receiving SSA disability benefits) are eligible for service.

Ride Connection:
- Provides information on mobility planning, education and referrals.
- Provides transportation to a limited number of medical appointments each month.
- Provides assistance with accessing public transportation.

For more information, please contact the Ride Connection Hotline at (804) 672-4495.
Human Services Transportation Coordination Entity

As a sign of Senior Connections’ critical role in transportation services and leveraging our collaborative spirit, Plan RVA designated us as greater Richmond’s Human Services Transportation Coordination Entity (HSTCE). The HSTCE works with community partners to promote, facilitate, educate and help coordinate regional transportation efforts to improve the quality of life in our area. In May 2019, we hosted community partners, consumers, advocates and service providers to complete A Framework for Action, a self-assessment tool for communities working towards a coordinated human services transportation system. From that symposium, the HSTCE has begun work on a strategic plan to improve access to transportation to reduce health disparities.

“Opening observation, it’s bold, ambitious and well thought out.”
HSTCE Steering Committee Member

Finding Options and Resources
Virginia No Wrong Door

Celebrating our 10-Year Anniversary as the lead agency for Virginia No Wrong Door in the Greater RVA where collaboration is key.

With Virginia No Wrong Door (NWD), there is literally no wrong door to begin the process of finding help when needed. NWD empowers individuals to make informed decisions, to exercise control over their long term support needs, and to achieve their personal goals and preferences.

The cornerstone of NWD is Person-Centered Thinking. Treating people with dignity and respect. Recognizing strengths as well as needs. Supporting the person’s own goals and preferences.

Senior Connections and our NWD partners can help individuals understand their options and access services quickly. If a caregiver calls after a loved one experiences a stroke, through NWD our care coordinators can connect them to one of our many partners for home modification, in-home respite and legal services.

NWD: By the Numbers FY2018-19

2399 referrals were sent by Senior Connections staff to 189 unique services offered by our partner agencies. Connecting individuals to needed resources efficiently and ensuring that they only have to tell their story once. Reducing duplication of effort among providers.
Law & Money

Should you or a pro prepare your taxes?

By Riley Adams

For some people, tax season poses little worry, and the process occurs painlessly. For others, preparing taxes is a stressful situation.

Imagine handling numerous W-2s, 1099s, navigating new rules and tracking a laundry list of write-offs related to your business, side jobs, real estate holdings or other income sources.

While certainly not impossible to do it yourself (DIY) with the best tax software, this can still be a time-consuming activity. In some instances, it may make sense to outsource your tax preparation to a professional simply to avoid the headache or mistakes.

When debating which path you should follow, ask yourself how comfortable you feel doing your own taxes. Then, to help gauge when it makes sense to DIY your tax return versus hire a tax professional, consider the following circumstances.

Do it yourself if:

- You only have W-2 income and claim the standard deduction.

If you only claim Form W-2 income on your return and do not need to enter income information from multiple accounts, financially speaking, you would be best served by filing your own tax return. This is especially the case when you also only claim the standard deduction to reduce your taxable income.

Tax reform sought to reduce the complexity of preparing tax returns for individuals by doubling the standard deduction. In tax year 2019 (filing returns in 2020), the standard deduction amounts come to $12,200 for individual filers and $24,400 for those married filing jointly. To make it worth itemizing deductions now, you will need to have a lot of charitable contributions, mortgage interest or other deductible expenses to itemize.

- You experienced no changes from your previous tax situation.

If nothing major occurred regarding your tax situation this year, relying on your work from last year with numbers from this year might make sense. This is especially the case where hiring a tax professional doesn’t fit in your budget.

If nothing changed, in all likelihood you can roll forward most of the information and elections included on last year’s return. However, make sure to track any other sources of income or deductible expenses.

Hire a tax pro if:

- You were self-employed or owned a small business.

Tax reform brought significant change to the tax code, especially for those who worked for themselves or owned a business. Of note, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act introduced the qualified business income (QBI) deduction, allowing eligible self-employed people and small-business owners to deduct up to 20% of their QBI on their taxes.

- You sold a business or route to retirement.

If you sell your business, hiring a tax professional becomes almost requisite. While preparing the forms yourself is certainly within the realm of possibility, none of the DIY tax software options offer support for preparing Form 8594, Asset Acquisition Statement.

As such, you will need to wade through the process of agreeing on a sales price with the seller, classifying your assets appropriately, and then ensuring the forms match on both the buyer’s and seller’s tax returns for the year.

Whether you file your taxes yourself or hire a professional, set aside time to review your tax return for accuracy. While a professional certifies accuracy, your return is only as good as the information you provide. In other words, garbage in, garbage out.

Therefore, pay close attention to the details on your return, whether you handle it yourself or not. Keep a copy of it and any supporting documents for your records for at least three years in case of an audit.

This article was written by and presents the views of Riley Adams, CPA, owner of Young and the Invested. Check adviser records with the SEC or with FINRA.

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What do you know about financial fraud?

By Elliot Raphaelson

Promissory notes and Ponzi schemes are the leading products or schemes that are likely to trap investors in 2020, according to Christopher Gerold, the president of the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA).

Also on the top five list (based on investor complaints and ongoing investigations) are real estate investments, cryptocurrency-related investments, and social media- and Internet-based investment schemes.

NASAA is the oldest international organization devoted to investor protection in the United States, Canada and Mexico. It is the voice of 50 state security agencies responsible for efficient capital formation and grassroots investor protection.

I spoke with Gerold and other NASAA representatives to determine how investors can protect themselves against common signs of investment scams.

According to Gerold, the most common telltale sign of an investment scam is an offer of guaranteed high returns with no risk.

He also indicated that many of the threats facing investors involve private offerings, which are exempt from federal securities registration requirements and are not sold through public stock exchanges.

He recommended NASAA’s investor fraud quiz (nasaa.org/investor-education/investment-fraud-awareness-quiz). I took the quiz and found it to be informative.

Here are some of the questions and answers (see the website for a detailed discussion of the answers to the quiz):

1. Which of the following phrases should raise your concern about an investment?
   a. High rate of return
   b. Risk-free
   c. Guaranteed against loss
   d. You must invest now
   e. All of the above

   Answer: e. Beware of any salesperson who tells you an investment is risk-free and provides a guaranteed high rate of return.

2. Security laws protect investors by requiring companies to:
   a. Show profits before they can sell stock
   b. Provide investors with specific information about the company
   c. Pay dividends
   d. Repay investors who have lost money

   Answer: b. Security regulations are based on a disclosure system: Laws require companies to provide investors with specific information. Companies don’t have to show profits or pay dividends to sell stock. There is no requirement to repay investors who lost money investing.

3. In which situation are you taking the least amount of risk?
   a. Buying a certificate of deposit (CD) in the U.S.
   b. Investing with someone you know from your church or community association
   c. Investing offshore
   d. Investing with someone who contacted you by phone

   Answer: a. Although buying a CD is low risk, you should investigate insurance levels in the event of the bank’s failure. In addition, you should consider inflation risk when you invest in low-return investments.

   All your investments shouldn’t be in low-risk investments if you need capital growth as part of your investment objectives.

   4. A fellow book club member tells you about an investment opportunity

   See FINANCIAL FRAUD, page 16
**Growing trend in clothes shopping: rent**

By Anne D’Innocenzio

Renting clothes could be the future of fashion—or it could just be a fad.

A growing number of traditional retailers are now offering customers the option to rent clothes for a monthly fee instead of buying them.

Bloomingdale’s, Banana Republic and Urban Outfitters are the latest to offer the services. Even footwear chain Designer Brands said it’s considering launching a shoe rental service.

Now a booming $1 billion business, the clothing rental sector is expected to reach $2.5 billion by 2023, according to research firm GlobalData. When combined with resale, it will account for 13% of the total $360 billion U.S. clothing market within the decade, up from 7.3% today.

“You no longer have to buy into the myth of continuous consumption...There’s pride in wearing something as opposed to pride in owning something,” said Jennifer Hyman, CEO and co-founder of Rent the Runway, which in 2009 pioneered the business model that many retailers are now trying to replicate.

For clothing retailers, rentals offer a glimmer of hope at a time when they are dealing with mounds of unsold goods that often need to be deeply discounted. Several have already gotten into the second-hand business, led by companies like the Real Real and ThredUp.

J.C. Penney and Macy’s, for instance, have partnered with ThredUp to sell gently-worn clothes in a couple dozen locations. Nordstrom is testing resale at its women’s flagship store in Manhattan and online.

**Better profit margins**

Many in the industry consider these necessary steps as clothing retailers watch their fortunes erode. Last year, clothing retailers accounted for an outsized share of retail bankruptcies, according to a recent report by consulting firm AlixPartners.

“Clothing retailers are dealing with pressures on multiple fronts,” said Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics. “Heavy promotions, chronic traffic declines, e-commerce investment. And now they’ve got rental and resale services as well. The rental market is small, but it’s going to grow, and they have to invest in it.”

Christine Hunsicker, CEO and founder of CaaSlde, a startup that manages inventory and shipping for retailers, said rental services have anywhere from a 20% to 25% operating profit, compared with only 5% for traditional retailers.

But unlike Rent the Runway, a dedicated rental service for high-end designer clothing, the economics for traditional retailers— from added expenses for marketing, dry cleaning and shipping—pose significant challenges.

Some experts wonder whether it even makes sense for lower-priced clothing chains to get into the rental business, since customers could just buy the clothes used or get them at a deep discount. Also, the clothes may not hold up well after multiple wears.

Elizabeth Kashin, 53, of Indianapolis, said she tried Urban Outfitters’ Nuuly rental service last month. She never received her package of six items but was charged anyway. After contacting customer service via social media, she got another package but said the clothes didn’t look clean.

“I can go to a second-hand store to get a better experience,” she said.

Urban Outfitters said that it is listening.

See RENTING, page 18

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**Stand Up Straight and Feel Better**

Discover the Perfect Walker, the better way to walk safely and more naturally.

It’s a cruel fact of life, as we age, gravity takes over. Our muscles droop, our bodies sag and the weight of the world seems to be planted squarely on our shoulders. We dread taking a fall, so we find ourselves walking less and less— and that only makes matters worse.

Well, cheer up! There’s finally a product designed to enable us all to walk properly and stay on the go. It’s called the Perfect Walker, and it can truly change your life.

Traditional rollators and walkers simply aren’t designed well. They require you to hunch over and shuffle your feet when you walk. This puts pressure on your back, your neck, your wrists and your hands. Over time, this makes walking uncomfortable and can result in a variety of health issues. That’s all changed with the Perfect Walker. Its upright design and padded elbow rests enable you to distribute your weight across your arms and shoulders, not your hands and wrists. Its unique frame gives you plenty of room to step, and the oversized wheels help you glide across the floor. Once you’ve reached your destination you can use the hand brakes to gently slow down, and there’s even a handy seat with a storage compartment. It’s sleek, lightweight design makes it easy to use indoors and out and it folds up for portability and storage.

Why spend another day hunched over and shuffling along. Call now, and find out how you can try out a Perfect Walker for yourself... in your own home. You’ll be glad you did.
Beware of potential 2020 Census scams

By Jim Miller

Unfortunately, scams have become a persistent problem when the U.S. Census Bureau does its once-a-decade count of the U.S. population. Here’s what you can expect from the 2020 Census in the coming weeks, and how you can protect yourself from potential scams.

Census forms coming soon

In mid-March, you and nearly every other U.S. household will receive an invitation in the mail to respond to the 2020 Census. It only takes a few minutes to complete the census questionnaire.

This year, you will have the option of completing the questionnaire either online, by mail or by phone. The invitation will include detailed instructions of what you need to do.

If you don’t respond to this invitation letter, you will receive several follow-up postcard reminders from the Census Bureau by mail.

If you still don’t respond by late April, a census worker will come to your door to collect your response in person.

While census participation is very important and required by law, you also need to be vigilant of census-linked scams. This is especially important for older adults, who tend to be prime targets.

The Census Bureau warns against phishing email scams as well as con artists masquerading as census workers who will try to solicit your personal financial information.

Here are some tips that can help you protect yourself:

Guard financial information

Don’t give out your personal or financial information. The Census Bureau or a legitimate census worker will never ask for your Social Security number, bank account number, credit card number, money or donations. And they will never contact you on behalf of a political party.

If you’re asked for any of these, whether it be via phone, mail, email or in person, it’s a scam and should be reported to rumors@census.gov.

Don’t fall for email

The Census Bureau will not send you an unsolicited email to request your participation in the 2020 Census. So, ignore any emails you get that may direct you to a census website. It may look real, but it is fake — and may be infected with malware.

Also, don’t reply to the email or open any attachment because they could contain viruses that could infect your computer.

Forward the email or website address to the Census Bureau at rumors@census.gov. Then delete the message.

Check ID of census workers

If someone visits your home to collect a response for the 2020 Census, make sure you verify their identity. A legitimate census taker must present a field badge that includes a photograph of themselves, a Department of Commerce watermark and an expiration date. Census workers will also be carrying a Census Bureau laptop or cellphone, as well as a bag with a Census Bureau logo.

Also, remember that a Census worker will only ask you the questions that appear on the questionnaire — your name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, phone number, type of residence and number of people living with you. They will not ask for sensitive personal information, such as your Social Security or credit card number.

If you have questions about their identity, you can call 1-800-923-8282 to speak with a local Census Bureau representative. If it is determined that the visitor who came to your door does not work for the Census Bureau, contact your local police department.

For more information on the 2020 Census, visit 2020census.gov.
By Jaime Eckels

When it comes to tax planning, there are few more emotionally charged decisions than those around charitable giving. People tend to see their donations as a vital way to give back to society and to feel connected to a broader community, whether it be on a local, national or even spiritual level.

The task of deciding where and how to give has become more important, and more complex, as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which reduced a key incentive for charitable giving.

The near-doubling of the standard deduction for joint-filing married couples (it stands at $24,800 in 2020) means that many families no longer benefit from itemizing their deductions, of which charitable giving has traditionally been a significant component.

Only around 16 million households are estimated to have itemized their deductions in 2018, down from 37 million.

There are early signs that charities are suffering the effects of this change. Individual giving fell 1.1% in 2018 to $292 billion, with deductions in 2018, down from 37 million.

Consider a family that has potential deductions of $10,000 in mortgage interest payments, $8,000 in property taxes, and wants to give $5,000 to charity ($23,000 total). On an annual basis, the family wouldn’t have enough deductions to break through the standard deduction threshold and so would get zero tax benefit from their donations.

By bunching two years’ worth of their $5,000 in donations into the same tax year, they would exceed the standard deduction level by $3,200 (in 2020) and thus be able to reduce their taxable income by that amount.

Give from a retirement fund

Since older adults often own their home outright and thus don’t deduct mortgage interest, they’re even less able to achieve tax benefits through itemized deductions. But they do have a powerful alternative in qualified charitable distributions (QCDs). If you’re taking required minimum distributions (RMDs), it can be advantageous to donate directly from the IRA account via QCDs.

These distributions, which were made permanent in 2015 as part of the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act, allow retirees to avoid paying income tax on distributions of up to $100,000 and can satisfy their minimum distribution requirement.

The donations get transferred straight from the IRA to a qualified charity, and the income never shows up on their 1040. This strategy has a secondary benefit of reducing adjusted gross income (AGI), which can affect your Medicare premiums and the taxability of Social Security benefits.

Give appreciated securities

The longest U.S. stock market bull run in history has left a lot of people’s brokerage accounts inflated with unrealized gains. These profits are a great source of charitable gifts, but the moment you sell the stock, you’ll have to pay capital gains tax.

For annual donations of $1,000 or more, you may be far better off to transfer the long-term appreciated stock directly to a charity. The gain simply disappears, leaving neither you nor the charity on the hook for it.

The one catch is that this doesn’t lend itself to a last-minute scramble to organize your donations at the end of December. It generally takes time to make sure your charity has a brokerage account, arrange the transfer, and allow time for it to go through.

Give yourself a few months or ask those questions now, when the people who run the charity might be in less of a rush, too.

If you’re giving consistently to charity, it means you’ve given thought to who you want to support and why. It only makes sense, then, to give more thought to how you support them as well.

This article was written by and presents the views of Jaime Eckels, CFP, relationship manager at Plante Moran Financial Advisors. Check adviser records with the SEC or FINRA.

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Renting

From page 16 to feedback so that it can “make the experience even better for Nuuly’s subscribers.”

It said it’s on pace to have 50,000 subscribers in the first 12 months of operation.

Returns can be a hassle

Renters face the same challenges that still dog Rent the Runway. Consumers complain about spotty customer service and a slew of added fees.

For example, Rent the Runway charges $50 for every item that is late returning an item, up to double the rental value of that item.

Although retailers should have return kiosks in their stores in key cities, right now most don’t have any. Shoppers must drop off their garment bags at a UPS or the post office.

Rent the Runway has had to adapt to increasingly demanding customers. It started out with special-occasion dresses but launched children’s wear last year, as well as pillows and home decor items through a partnership with West Elm.

Vara Pikor, a 26-year-old insurance broker from Manhattan who’s been using Rent the Runway for many of her clothing needs, said she is hooked.

“This could be my forever habit,” she said. “I have less stuff in my home.”

—AP
Barcelona’s architecture, history, sports

By Glenda C. Booth

Antoni Gaudí, Barcelona’s renowned architect, once observed, “There are no straight lines or sharp corners in nature.”

Straight lines are few in Gaudí’s hometown of Barcelona, a Mediterranean city of 5 million in northeastern Spain, sprawled between the mountains and the sea.

A winding, narrow street connects with yet another winding street, which spills onto a bustling plaza of merry buskers — and from there, more narrow, winding streets lead to other plazas.

Many buildings sport decorative ironwork, balconies, bay windows, turrets, painted tiles, flower boxes, carved relief, mosaics, frescoes and statues.

Inspired by nature, Gaudí’s one-of-a-kind buildings throughout the city are fanciful amalgams of swoops, curves, wavy lines, undulating roofs, pillow-like corners and ornate turrets.

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, a region proud of its identity. Most locals speak two languages, Spanish and Catalan, and English is common. The Catalanian red and yellow flag hangs from many balconies — a reminder of movements to secede from Spain.

Rambling along La Rambla

The city’s boulevards have wide sidewalks, plentiful cafés and comfy benches, all ideal for people-watching. Budget-conscious visitors can easily explore Barcelona on foot, by bus or subway.

Total immersion is the only way to fully feel the vibes of the mile-long La Rambla, a broad, plane-tree-lined, pedestrian avenue traversed by 150,000 people a day. At times, it seems like all of the city’s 7.5 million annual visitors are ambulating along the road from the Placa de Catalunya to the sea.

Walkers can easily spend half a day poking in and out of cafés, shops and flower stalls (and dodging souvenir hucksters). At the midpoint of Placa de la Boqueria is Joan Miró’s sidewalk mosaic, his gift to the city, centered by an anchor, a reminder of Barcelona’s attachment to the sea.

At the Mercat de la Boqueria, a market that opened in 1217, barrels bulge with products like ham, snails, dried mushrooms, fish, fruit, vegetables and olives.

Gorging on Gaudí

Barcelona’s jewels are the Catalan Modernism architectural wonders designed by the beloved Gaudí (1852-1926). Exploring his creations feels like an adventure on par with Dr. Seuss or Alice in Wonderland.

Gaudí’s flamboyant, imaginative designs include parabolic archways, organic shapes, cone-shaped towers, tree-like columns and colorful tiles. Many towers and turrets have imaginative “toppings.”

Gaudí’s masterpiece is La Sagrada Familia, a fantastical, unfinished cathedral. Gaudí became its chief architect in 1883, and planners hope it will be finished by 2026, the centenary of the architect’s death. (He is buried in its crypt.)

Another Gaudí masterpiece is Park Güell, a former estate that Gaudí converted into a “temple of nature” with colorful mosaics, sculptures and an abundance of plants. The park is a delight for all ages.

A ride to the top of Montjuic, the “city’s green lung,” offers views of the city and Quarter, dates back to the Romans and is the historic core of the old city. Visitors can explore the ruins of the Roman colony called Barcino under the Museum of History and learn about the area’s formative years and long, creative life by studying its paintings, sketches, lithographs, etchings, aquatints and linocuts.

Barcelona’s largest and most celebrated building, La Sagrada Familia, is unfinished but open to tourists. Construction began 137 years ago but was interrupted by the Spanish Civil War and lack of funding. The city hopes to complete the basilica by 2026, the centenary anniversary of the death of Antoni Gaudi, its primary architect.
When you’re traveling with grandchildren

By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

My husband and I are interested in taking our two grandkids on a big trip this summer and are looking for some good ideas. Can you recommend some travel companies that offer special travel packages for grandparents?

—Doting Grandparents

Dear Doting,

There are a number of travel companies today that offer specialized, multi-generational trip packages for grandparents and grandchildren. They plan everything for you, with most activities for the two generations together, but some just for adults so you can get an occasional breather.

Available in various trip lengths and price ranges, these tours are designed for children, typically between the ages of seven and 18, and are usually scheduled in the summer, or sometimes during breaks when the kids are out of school.

Here are some top tour companies to check into that will take you and your grandkids on a fun, well-planned vacation:

Road Scholar (RoadScholar.org):
This well-established not-for-profit organization has offered educational travel to older adults since 1975. They currently offer 130 different programs geared to grandparents and grandchildren.

About 75% of the grandparent trips are domestic; the rest are international. Some of the most popular destinations include the U.S. National Parks, Costa Rica, the Galapagos Islands and Paris. The average cost per person per night is $250 for domestic trips; $360 for international.

Tauck (Tauck.com):
This is a large tour operator that offers 22 foreign and domestic multi-generational trips. Some of their most popular excursions are Costa Rica, European riverboat cruises, and Cowboy Country, which takes you through Wyoming and South Dakota.

Austin Adventures (AustinAdventures.com):
This adventure travel tour operator offers 119 family friendly trips ideally suited for grandparents and grandchildren.

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<td>July 30-Aug 3</td>
<td>Explore Nashville Music City USA</td>
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<td>Aug 5-9</td>
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<td>Culinary Tour / Pigeon Forge TN</td>
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All Pricing is listed for 2 guests per room – Double Pricing. Single, Triple and Quad pricing will vary. All tours include round-trip Motorcoach transportation by Modern, Air-Conditioned, DVD and restroom equipped Deluxe Motorcoach, Hotel accommodations and Admission to all listed attractions. Baggage handling is provided at each night’s lodging as indicated in the catalog. Please refer to our cancellation policy in the 2020 Catalog of Tours or on our website.
Traveling
From page 20
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land.

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Journeys International (JourneysIn-
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Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC

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Enjoy belly laughs at Hitchcock parody

By Julinda D. Lewis

Try this recipe: Take 3 parts Alfred Hitchcock thriller, stir in 1 part Monty Python and mix well. Half-bake at a high temperature for 1 hour 45 minutes. Yields: Patrick Barlow’s theatrical spoof, The 39 Steps, now onstage at Hanover Tavern. Serves: 150 hysterically laughing theater patrons.

The play is a parody of the 1935 Hitchcock movie of that name, a murder mystery, which in turn is based on John Buchan’s 1915 thriller by the same name. But where the typically suspenseful Hitchcock black-and-white film seems slow-moving by today’s standards, Barlow’s stage play is fast-paced and colorful. “Funny” and “hilarious” were among the words I heard between bursts of belly-holding laughter from the audience.

Barlow’s 2005 adaptation of the original concept by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon is played strictly for laughs. Four actors play more than 150 characters — sometimes simultaneously — interchanging hats, props and accents.

The hero of the show is Alec Beard, making his Virginia Rep debut as Richard

See 39 STEPS, page 25

Paul Major, Audra Honaker, Irene Kuykendall and Alec Beard play 150 characters in the Tony Award-winning play The 39 Steps, a parody of Alfred Hitchcock movies, which runs at the Rep’s Hanover Tavern through March 29.

Bring the natural benefits of sunlight indoors.

Ever since the first human went into a dark cave and built a fire, people have realized the importance of proper indoor lighting. Unfortunately, since Edison invented the light bulb, lighting technology has remained relatively prehistoric. Modern light fixtures do little to combat many symptoms of improper lighting, such as eyestrain, dryness or burning. As more and more of us spend longer hours in front of a computer monitor, the results are compounded…and the effects of indoor lighting are not necessarily limited to physical well-being. Many people believe that the quantity and quality of light can play a part in one’s mood and work performance. Now there’s a better way to bring the positive benefits associated with natural sunlight indoors.

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March into the battle against crabgrass

By Lela Martin

As the weather warms, outdoor warriors prepare for battle: us vs. weeds.

Spring lawn care for cool-season fescue lawns does not typically include seeding or fertilizing. However, spring is the right time to prevent and control the gardener’s arch nemesis: stealthy crabgrass.

It’s important to understand your adversary. Crabgrass is a warm-season summer annual grass that germinates right before the first growth period of lawn grasses in the spring. Its seeds lurk in the soil until the conditions are right (i.e., soil temperature above 55°F and adequate moisture).

Because of its early spring lead, crabgrass has a competitive advantage against cool-season lawn grasses (e.g., fescue, bluegrass and ryegrass).

Crabgrass has a horizontal growth pattern (unlike turfgrass, which grows vertically). It is so vigorous that it chokes out cool-season lawn grasses (e.g., fescue, bluegrass and ryegrass).

Because of its early spring lead, crabgrass has a competitive advantage against cool-season lawn grasses (e.g., fescue, bluegrass and ryegrass).

Virginia Tech’s turfgrass weed scientist, Dr. Sean Askew, determined that pre-emergent herbicides should be applied when forsythia starts to drop its bright yellow blossoms.

Pre-emergent products also combat other annual grass foes such as barnyardgrass and goosegrass, as well as a few annual broadleaf weeds.

What are best herbicides?

For crabgrass prevention, look for products that contain one or more of these active ingredients: benefin, benefin plus trifluralin, dithiopyr, pendimethalin or prodiamine.

These chemicals are not specific; therefore, desirable grass seed cannot be sown when preemergent herbicides are applied. However, there is one preemergent herbicide that can be safely applied prior to or at seeding of cool-season turfgrass in the spring: siduron (i.e., Tupersan™). It’s available for sale in garden centers and big-box stores. But be cautious of adding fertilizer (specifically nitrogen) to your lawn in the spring.

You may find “weed and feed” products available for sale in garden centers and big-box stores. But be cautious of adding fertilizer (specifically nitrogen) to your lawn in the spring.

Here in Virginia, nitrogen can overstimulate the shoot growth of cool-season turfgrasses at the expense of the root system. This added fertility in spring can injure tall fescue and lead to decline in the turf during the summer months.

If you choose a crabgrass preventer that also contains fertilizer, choose a product with slow-release nitrogen, which should be indicated on the label.

Organic option

An organic alternative, corn gluten meal (CGM), works against crabgrass by releasing a protein that slows the development of weed seedling roots, leaving seedlings vulnerable to drought. Therefore, CGM is not effective in periods of extended rainfall.

Some other weaknesses with CGM are that it lasts only a few weeks, thereby requiring two to three applications. As with most chemical preemergents, it cannot be used when seeding.

It should also be considered a weed and feed product. If you want to try CGM, perhaps use it once in early spring, and add a half rate of synthetic preemergence crabgrass herbicide, making sure that the herbicide does not contain any fertilizer.

Application advice

Once you have purchased the appropriate preemergent herbicide, use a broadcast spreader to distribute the granules.

It is necessary to water preemergent herbicides soon after application. Most products must receive at least one-quarter inch of water within 48 hours of application to keep the herbicide from decomposing due to the effects of the sun. Hopefully, Mother Nature will supply rain this spring, but a sprinkler is the next best method.

Preemergent herbicides are typically active in the soil for six to eight weeks. Some lawn care strategists recommend a second application around Memorial Day. If it’s hot and dry by late spring, the second round may not be necessary.

Don’t mow too low

Although crabgrass suppression is a battle, most weed problems in Virginia can be attributed to a single mistake: mowing the lawn too short. Keep your mower set at a minimum height of three inches.

For long-term success, the best strategy to control weeds in turf is to nurture a healthy, dense lawn by following correct cultural practices.

Remember to conduct a soil test every three years to determine your nutrient needs, and diagnose insect and disease problems correctly before treating. Your local Cooperative Extension office can help.

Note: Always follow herbicide label directions and obey label warnings. Do not assume that more product is better; often more product may cause turf or environmental damage.

See GARDENING, page 25

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39 Steps
From page 23
Hannay. Wrongfully accused of murder, this Canadian living in London sets off on a zany adventure involving a train ride to Scotland to prove his innocence. En route, he gets caught up in a nebulous conspiracy involving British military secrets.

Beard is the only actor to play just one role, and the part of Hannay seems tailor-made for him. He has the handsome face and stature of a leading man, but easily segues in and out of comedic elements.

Similarly, Irene Kuykendall is the Woman — actually, she plays the three glamorous women in Hannay’s madcap life: the sultry and mysterious Annabella Schmidt; Pamela, his unwilling accomplice; and finally Maria, the oppressed wife of a rigid Scottish man, policemen, professor, professor’s wife, sheriff, farmer, train passengers, people at a political rally, a baby and more — are played by Paul S. Major (Clown 1) and

Multiplicuous characters
The other characters — the maid, milkman, policeman, professor, professor’s wife, sheriff, farmer, train passengers, people at a political rally, a baby and more — are played by Paul S. Major (Clown 1) and

Gardening
From page 24
Commercial products are named in this publication for informational purposes only. Virginia Cooperative Extension does not endorse these products and does not intend discrimination against other products which due to the script, or if the director started to run out of steam. One can hardly blame anyone for needing to catch a breath by the middle of the second act.

With this play, Nathaniel Shaw, Virginia Rep’s artistic director, makes his directorial debut at Hanover Tavern. This is quite a different pace and space than his previous Virginia Rep directing credits for Once, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and West Side Story, all at the November Theatre.

The design team for The 39 Steps includes Ruth Hedberg’s attractive period costumes and Terrie Powers’ simple, functional scenic design, consisting primarily of an armchair, table, doorframe, window frame and some boxes that do double and triple duty as seats, storage and anything else needed.

A special nod to the hardworking stage crew who, instead of remaining in the background, hold up signs (Applause, Bang!), deliver props and make scene changes with premeditated humor.

The whole kit and kaboodle is supported by Derek Dumais’ sound design and some effective lighting by BJ Wilkinson.

Espionage, adventure, romance, a dash of hijinks. In an early scene in

also may be suitable.

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

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Crossword Puzzle

Grand Slams. Stephen Sherr

Across
1. Home/Handyman Services
6. All the houses on one side of the street
10. Political Leader
14.最小的元素
16. smallest unit of a number
17. The least grand part of all
18. Prefix relating to a Mediterranean nation
23. Subject to a baggage surcharge
26. For Sale
30. DISH NETWORK $59.99
33. Prefix relating to a Mediterranean nation
34. Used the information from the
35. The last great racehorse of the 20th century by ESPN
36. “ERROR” with a transposition error
38. DIY
40. DISH NETWORK $59.99
42. Facing or Appealing a Denied Claim
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Answers on page 25.
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