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A sabbatical of sorts

Spring is such an optimistic time of year, as colorful flowers burst into bloom all around us.

This spring in particular we are all ripe for a change of scenery, for some new beginnings following the past year’s awful pandemic. It’s partly the season’s rising of the sap that has me itching to do something creative myself this spring.

Regular Fifty Plus readers know that our cover stories often profile local residents who have followed their passions — or discovered new ones — later in life.

You may remember reading about our recent Celebrations of the Arts — amateur art competitions for people over 50 that have both recognized and helped encourage painters, sculptors and poets throughout our readership area.

Our hope was to draw out those who may have stepped away from a childhood talent or passion in the interests of making a living.

Or to entice older adults who had never tried their hand at art or poetry to give it a whirl and see what they’re capable of.

We knew we were onto something when we received more than 900 entries in our first Celebration of the Arts. I also realized that I was in good company, right there with many of our readers, eager for an opportunity to rekindle a passion from my past.

Of course, writing (and editing) are among my passions, and I have been joyously engaged in them for 32 years.

But going back to my earliest school days, playing the piano and composing short musical pieces were my chief hobbies. Well, maybe not my earliest school days. It took a few years of rather tedious lessons (and forced practice) before I was able to play the music that really brought me pleasure.

After that, it was hard to stop me. My parents went from imploring me to practice to wondering when they’d have a moment’s peace.

Stop I did, however, once I got to college or shortly thereafter. Life and its many requirements for survival moved me into other fields where I had a better chance of making a living.

Still, whenever possible, I would get myself to a recital or concert, or listen to records I pulled the old “press pass” trick and asked to visit their piano camp in Baltimore that summer as a member of the media. From that experience, I wrote a cover story.

You probably know what happened next. I joined the group, I started attending piano camp, and next thing you know, I’m asking my wife if we can buy a baby grand.

I now practice the piano almost every day (a little), and feel I am almost back to the level I had reached when I stopped playing. I have also rediscovered my original compositions from high school.

Which brings me to this column. I have decided I owe myself a brief sabbatical of sorts: seven weeks to devote myself whole-heartedly to music and composition. I have no particular end goals in mind. I just want to see where it takes me and what it feels like.

Fortunately, we have such a wonderful staff at the Fifty Plus that I don’t expect you will even notice my absence. Except for this column, that is. You will be hearing from our managing editor, Margaret Foster, and from a special guest columnnist in our June and July issues.

As you are driving around with your car windows open this spring, if you happen to hear some tinkling ivories on the wind, I hope they remind you of me and make you think about pursuing your own passions.

See you in a couple of months!
When caregivers face abuse, there’s hope

By Eileen Abbott

When Pam M.’s husband, Keith, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, the Richmond couple felt confident she could care for him. “I thought, ‘Keith and I can handle this. We love each other.’ But you don’t realize the extent it changes your entire life. I was prepared for him not knowing me, but not for the anger towards me,” she said.

One day, that anger, a common symptom of Alzheimer’s, came out in a frightening way. “He put his hands around me and tried to choke me,” Pam said. “I tried to yell for help. I couldn’t pull him off.”

She said that’s the moment she realized she needed assistance in his care. Though Pam had stood by her husband’s side as caregiver until nearly the end of his life, she decided to place him in a memory care facility, where he died in 2019.

With the number of aging adults increasing nationwide, there’s a good chance you may be a caregiver one day, if you aren’t already.

For many, in addition to the exhaustion of caring for an aging loved one, there’s a difficult challenge behind the scenes: caregiver abuse. Although elder abuse is a hot-button issue, the “other side of the coin” — abuse of caregivers — often goes unaddressed.

Dementia can change personality

For some people, the aging process magnifies an already abrasive personality. However, in many cases, a disease such as Alzheimer’s or dementia can cause behavior changes.

Suzy S. noticed a change in her normally pleasant husband, David, nearly 10 years ago.

She originally met him when he was a student at University of Richmond and she was studying at East Carolina University. “He was a charming gentleman,” Suzy remembers about her first date with the handsome football player.

The couple fell in love and later wed. “We’ll be married for 54 years in June,” she said.

Her husband, now 77, was diagnosed with dementia several years ago. At the time, Suzy was determined to take care of him. But although her husband had always been a good, kind man, “with dementia, the filter goes,” she explained.

“The language he used — it was as if somebody else was talking. He became increasingly difficult. He would scream at me,” Suzy said.

“He never hit me, but he pushed me. I think the hardest thing is you see this person that’s fading away.”

After years as her husband’s caregiver, she eventually sought outside support and help. Her husband is now in assisted living.

Help is available

According to organizations that provide caregiver support in our area, manyRichmonders seek help after having been mis-treated. Some caregivers endure verbal abuse or, like Pam, even physical abuse by a spouse, parent, grandparent, relative or friend.

How can you cope with this if it’s happening to you? Several local organizations and support groups can help.

Both Pam and Suzy received assistance from Circle Center, a licensed, private nonprofit adult day care service. Located near Willow Lawn, Circle Center provides meals, nurse check-ins and activities for older adults as well as support groups (and a much-needed break) to caregivers.

“A well-run adult day care center can create moments of joy,” said Jay Burkhardt, Circle Center’s director of social work. “We preach a lot about self-care here,” he said. “It’s vital. If you try to do it on your own, it will wear you down.”

Circle Center was a lifeline for Pam. “Jay saved my life,” Pam said, remembering how overwhelmed she felt.

Suzy also found solace at Circle Center’s caregiver support group. “Jay, in my opinion, is a hero,” she said. “If you’re lucky enough to get in the right support group, it’s a lifesaver,” she said.

“It takes courage to ask for help. None of your friends and family really get what you’re going through. The people in the support group, I believe, really do understand.”

Abused caregivers often feel isolated. If they speak up about the abuse, they may experience a lack of compassion from others because of a societal tendency to excuse inappropriate behavior of elders.

Yet continued mistreatment can create a crisis or breakdown in family relationships if the caregiver is not positively supported.

In addition to family caregivers, professional caregivers can also be on the receiving end of mistreatment and abuse. According to caregiver specialists, this can include racist or sexual comments, or inappropriate contact.

Burkhardt suggests that all caregivers try to find local resources before problems arise. “Seek out support ahead of time. Don’t wait until you are at your breaking point. Put those supports in place well ahead. Know what’s out there, put them in place, and don’t wait for a crisis.”

A team approach

Dee Caras, caregiver support specialist with Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging, also believes it’s crucial to have a plan in place.

“It’s key to have discussions. We must face our own mortality. Develop a plan of care that best supports everybody. I’m a big proponent of a team approach to care.”

Caras emphasizes the importance of self-care. “As a caregiver, prioritize that, and do not feel guilt about it.” This includes setting boundaries and having a discussion to clarify those boundaries ahead of time.

Pre-planning and a proactive approach can make a big difference, Caras said. “I see the difference...the peace that comes.”

Where to get support

Here are a few local resources for caregiver support:

Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging, Caregiver Support Services and Respite; seniorconnections-va.org/services/assistance-for-caregivers,

(804) 343-3000.

A Caregiver Spouses Support Group meets twice a month on the first and third Monday at 3 p.m. at Circle Center Adult Day Services: circlecenterva.org, (804) 355-5717.

At AgingCare, an online caregiver’s forum, people can seek help anonymously: agingcare.com.

The Alzheimer’s Association supports caregivers 24/7 through their helpline, 1-800-272-3900, and website: alz.org. In keeping with its long commitment to diversity and inclusion, it has announced a new outreach initiative to diverse communities.

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FP5/21

Makes a great gift 3
Does air pollution lead to Alzheimer’s?

By Andrew E. Budson, M.D., Harvard Health Blog

Have you ever spent the day in a city with such bad air pollution that when you blew your nose the mucus had a black tinge? Have you ever coughed as you breathed in diesel fumes from a passing bus and thought to yourself, “Well, that’s a year gone from my life”?

Could it actually be true — that air pollution leads to an early death? The answer, in fact, is an unqualified yes.

Air pollution causes heart and lung disease; early death
It has been known for some time that air pollution causes lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema, asthma, heart disease and stroke. One recent study in China estimated that for those ages 75 and older, there are 1,166 early deaths for every 100,000 people — that’s more than 1%.

But if it doesn’t kill you outright, can air pollution impair your memory and cause dementia in general and Alzheimer’s disease (one cause of dementia) in particular?

Studies link air pollution to cognitive impairment
Three studies from three different parts of the world suggest that air pollution might cause cognitive impairment, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

In the first study, researchers from China and the U.S. teamed up to analyze data from China. They found that long-term exposure to air pollution is related to poor performance on both verbal and math tests. Moreover, the poor performance on the verbal tests was more pronounced for older individuals, especially for men and those less educated.

In the second study, researchers in England studied 130,978 adults ages 50 to 79 from 75 medical practices in greater London. They found that from 2005 to 2013, 2,181 older adults from this sample were diagnosed with dementia: 39% with Alzheimer’s disease, 29% with vascular dementia, and 32% without a specific dementia diagnosis. Adults living with the highest annual concentration of air pollution had the highest risk of dementia — 1.4 times the risk of those with the lowest annual concentration. They also found that these associations were more consistent for those given an Alzheimer’s disease diagnosis.

In the third study, published earlier this year, researchers from the United States, including the University of Southern California and Harvard Medical School, studied data from 998 women ages 73 to 87 who had both cognitive tests and MRI scans. They found that those women who were exposed to higher concentrations of air pollution in the preceding three years showed two differences compared to those who were exposed to less air pollution. Cognitively, those exposed to more air pollution showed greater declines in learning a list of words. Anatomically, they showed more atrophy (shrinkage) in those areas of the brain that typically shrink due to Alzheimer’s disease.

Importantly, in all three studies, the researchers controlled for every possible other factor that they thought might make a difference. For example, in the third study they controlled for: sociodemographic factors (age, geographic region, race/ethnicity, education, income); lifestyle (smoking, alcohol, physical activity); employment status; clinical characteristics (diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, hormone therapy); and MRI-measured cerebrovascular disease.

Nonetheless, air pollution may not be the cause of the cognitive decline
The first thing to say is that I believe this correlation is real. The fact that three different groups analyzed data from three different continents and came to similar conclusions cannot be due to chance alone.

Thus, I firmly believe that the following statement is true: Higher levels of air pollution are associated with a greater risk of cognitive decline, dementia in general, and Alzheimer’s disease in particular.

However, that is not the same thing as saying that high levels of air pollution cause cognitive decline, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

Air pollution could cause Alzheimer’s disease, and many researchers provided possible mechanisms as to how that might happen. However, it is also possible that air pollution could be linked to some as-yet unidentified risk factor...
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Mind-body therapies that help ease pain

By Heidi Godman

I smashed my elbow recently. There was no bone break, just a bad bruise as a result of slipping in the kitchen and landing on my arm. But at times the pain has been excruciating.

So, I followed doctor’s orders: babying my elbow, icing it, and taking an occasional over-the-counter painkiller. (P.S. I wear sneakers in the kitchen now.)

Something else has helped, too: mind-body therapies. These approaches aim to change our awareness of pain and retrain the way we respond to it. The therapies can help us control pain — such as longstanding back pain — or live with it better.

While these techniques won’t erase pain, they can help change perception of pain intensity through distraction, relaxation and reframing of our thoughts.

Here are five mind-body therapies to consider for pain relief:

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)

This talk therapy teaches people to redirect their thoughts, feelings and behaviors in response to chronic pain.

For example, when a pain flare-up strikes, instead of blaming yourself and thinking, “Oh no, here it comes again,” tell yourself you’ve handled this before, and focus instead on your favorite place in the world: picture it in your mind, and feel how happy or relaxed you are when you’re there. A therapist trained in CBT can train you to hone your skills.

Deep breathing

We typically take short little breaths without noticing, especially when we’re in pain. Focusing on breathing and taking deep breaths quiets the mind and induces the relaxation response — a well-studied physiologic response that counteracts the stress response, and may lessen chronic pain severity. To practice deep breathing:

— Breathe in slowly through your nose, allowing your chest and lower belly to rise as you fill your lungs completely.
— Now exhale slowly through your mouth or nose.

Practice deep breathing for several minutes.

Meditation

Like deep breathing, meditating triggers the relaxation response and may reduce the perception of pain.

You can use many methods to meditate, such as transcendental meditation (repeating a word, phrase or sound to quiet your thoughts); yoga (a series of strengthening and stretching postures combined with breathing techniques); or mindfulness meditation (focusing objectively on negative thoughts as they move through your mind, so you can achieve a state of calm).

Here’s one simple way to meditate: Sit quietly, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Say a word such as “peace” or “one” each time you exhale.

Don’t worry about thoughts that come to mind; you can come back to them later. Continue to repeat your word and focus on breathing.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR)

This approach combines mindfulness meditation and yoga to build awareness and acceptance of moment-to-moment experiences, including pain.

A 2019 study published in the journal Evidence-Based Mental Health found MBSR was just as effective as CBT at reducing pain and depression and improving physical functioning, compared with usual care or no care. You’ll find MBSR programs at hospitals, universities and meditation centers, as well as online videos.

Relaxation

Relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation, may also help reduce the perception of pain.

To try progressive muscle relaxation, start with your facial muscles and work your way down the body. Tighten each muscle or muscle group for 20 seconds before slowly releasing the contraction. As the muscle relaxes, concentrate on the release of tension and the sensation of relaxation.

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Should you be screened for lung cancer?

By Jim Miller
Dear Savvy Senior,

What can you tell me about lung cancer screenings? I was a big smoker but quit years ago, so I’m wondering if I should be checked out.

—Former Smoker

Dear Former Smoker,

Lung cancer screening is used to detect the presence of lung cancer in otherwise healthy people with a high risk of lung cancer. Should you be screened? It depends on your age and your smoking history. Here’s what you should know.

Screening recommendations

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force — an independent panel of medical experts that advises the government on health policies — recently expanded their recommendations for lung cancer screenings.

They are now recommending annual screenings for high-risk adults between the ages of 50 and 80 who have at least a 20-pack year history and who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. This is a change from the 2013 recommendation that referred to patients ages 55 to 80 with 30-year pack histories.

A 20-pack year history is the equivalent of smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.

In 2020, lung cancer killed more than 135,000 Americans, making it the deadliest of all possible cancers. In fact, more people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast and prostate cancers combined.

Lung cancer also occurs predominantly in older adults. About two out of every three people diagnosed with lung cancer are 65 or older.

You’ll also be happy to know that most health insurance plans cover lung cancer screenings to high-risk patients, as does Medicare, up to age 77.

Screening pros and cons

Doctors use a low-dose computed tomography scan of the lungs (also called a low-dose CT scan, or LDCT) to look for lung cancer. If lung cancer is detected at an early stage, it’s more likely to be cured with treatment. But LDCT isn’t recommended for every high-risk patient.

LDCT scans have a high rate of false positives, which means that many will undergo additional (and unnecessary) screening or medical procedures — such as another scan three, six, or even 12 months later — to check for changes in the shape or size of the suspicious area (an indication of tumor growth). For some patients, the anxiety or worry that goes along with waiting can be a real issue.

You may need a biopsy (removal of a small amount of lung tissue), which has risks, especially for those with underlying health conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or emphysema. For example, in people with emphysema, there’s a chance of a lung collapsing during the procedure.

If you meet the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force criteria for high-risk lung cancer, the University of Michigan offers a

Air pollution

From page 4

tified factor that explains the association.

For example, it has already been fairly well established that some viral illnesses are associated with Alzheimer’s disease. It has also been well established that viral illnesses are more likely to be transmitted when people are gathered together indoors versus outdoors.

So, it may simply be that where there is greater pollution, people are more likely to gather together inside, shut the windows, and trade viruses with each other. The new virus they acquire may be the real cause of the increased risk of Alzheimer’s disease.

Now that’s just speculation — just an example of how a real association is not the same thing as evidence of causation.

What can you do if you want to reduce air pollution to lower your risk of Alzheimer’s disease? Directly or indirectly, we are all responsible for the air pollution in our cities, our country and our planet. We should each do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint.

We can work to reuse and recycle materials so that factories don’t need to produce as much. We can buy local foods that don’t need to be trucked across the country and shipped around the world. We can walk and bike instead of driving our cars (and, once we’re done with COVID-19, carpool and take public transportation).

Lastly, we can elect public officials who will advocate for local, national and international policy to reduce pollution. Those are just some of the things that we can do to clear the air.

Andrew E. Budson, M.D., is a contributor to Harvard Health Publications. © 2021 Harvard University. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.
To kick-start your day before breakfast

By Andrea Mathis

We’ve all been there — hitting the snooze button several times before rolling out of bed, rushing out of the house, skipping breakfast. You may not realize this, but your morning routine can determine the mood of your entire day.

Here are five easy things to do before breakfast to kick-start a great day:

1. Try meditating.
Meditation is a great way to start your day off right. It allows you to reflect and focus on what you want to accomplish for the day. It’s a great time to calm your mind and fill it with soothing, positive thoughts.

Studies have shown that meditation may help to reduce blood pressure as well as ease symptoms of anxiety and depression. It may also help people with insomnia.

2. Make time for a quick workout.
Feeling a little sluggish when you wake up? Try exercising. Morning workouts are one of the best ways to feel energized and boost your mood. In fact, a morning workout might even give you more energy than a cup of coffee or that expensive energy drink you can’t live without!

According to a study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, morning workouts can help to improve your attention span, visual learning and decision-making. Whether it’s an easy yoga session, a walk or something more intense, like spinning or running, any type of movement helps.

3. Drink a glass of water.
Everyone is a little dehydrated when they first wake up in the morning, which is expected after going several hours without fluids. Forgetting to replenish those fluids can have a negative impact on your day.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, the lack of proper hydration can compromise your alertness, energy and cognitive performance. It’s recommended to drink at least 8 to 10 ounces of plain water upon awakening to rehydrate.

4. Get in some family time.
Connecting with family and close friends is a great way to boost your mood. Whether it’s a quick cuddle while you’re still in your pajamas, a phone call or good morning text, or even an in-person visit for a morning walk, a simple conversation with family or friends can put your mind at ease and boost your mental energy.

5. Create a to-do list.
We all have those days when there are a million things to do, and not enough hours in the day to get them all done. To help your day run smoothly and stress-free, try creating a simple to-do list. A to-do list can help you stay organized and keep you focused on what needs to be done.

When creating your list, be sure to set realistic and attainable goals. Don’t overdo it. As you cross items off your to-do list, you’ll feel a sense of relief, accomplishment and motivation to keep moving forward rather than feeling tired and overwhelmed.

EatingWell is a magazine and website devoted to healthy eating as a way of life. Online at eatingwell.com.

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What can I do once I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Q: I got my COVID-19 vaccine! Now what?

A: First and foremost, congrats! You have joined millions of Americans who have been immunized against COVID-19. Like you, many are asking the same question: Now what?

Let’s first talk about what vaccine you may have received. The FDA has approved three vaccines to get you immunized: one each from Pfizer; Moderna; and Johnson & Johnson.

If you were told when you got vaccinated to come back for a second dose, you got a vaccine from Pfizer or Moderna. If you got a single dose with no need to return for a second, you got one from Johnson & Johnson. If you aren’t sure which you received, check the COVID-19 vaccination record card you received with your shot. The notes on the card will tell you what vaccine you got and when you got it.

If you got Pfizer, you probably got two shots about three weeks apart. If you got Moderna, you probably got two shots about a month apart. Johnson & Johnson, meanwhile, requires just one shot.

Regardless of which vaccine you received, it takes two full weeks after your final shot — the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or the single dose of Johnson & Johnson — for the vaccines to be completely effective and for you to be considered fully vaccinated.

Let’s talk about what you can and can’t do once two weeks have elapsed since your last shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers these recommendations for people who are fully vaccinated:

— You can spend time with other fully vaccinated people without wearing masks (within limitations set by your state and the CDC).
— You can gather with unvaccinated people from one other household, such as your extended family, as long as both households live only with each other.
— If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you will not need to self-isolate or get tested unless you develop symptoms.
— Use face masks and stay six feet away from others when in public.
— Follow the same face and distance precautions when you spend time with people from multiple households or with people who are at a higher risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19.
— Watch out for symptoms and get tested if you start experiencing them.

Remember, you are not considered immune until two weeks after your final dose; so keep social-distancing and mask-wearing as you normally do until then. And keep in mind that at this time the CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people continue to wear masks and socially distance in public because there is a possibility that the virus can be transmitted to unvaccinated people.

Chinmay Bondugula is a third-year Pharm.D. student at VCU School of Pharmacy. He studied biomedical sciences at University of Central Florida. After graduation he plans to pursue a career in ambulatory care or infectious-disease pharmacy.
Simple meat-free meatballs and burgers

By Family Features

Plant-based eating should be easy and delicious — and it can be. Rather than follow strict rules, simply add foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans and grains to more meals throughout the day.

Walnuts, for example, are a kitchen multi-tasker with uses well beyond baked goods. In fact, walnuts can be used as a simple, whole-food meat alternative.

One ounce of walnuts contains important nutrients, including 4 grams of protein, 2 grams of fiber, 2.5 grams of monounsaturated fat, 13 grams of polyunsaturated fat and 2.5 grams of essential omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid.

Try walnuts as an alternative to meat in recipes like these two, and find more plant-forward recipes at walnuts.org/plantrecipes.

Walnut Meatless Meatballs

Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup minced onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ cup California walnuts, chopped
- ½ cup cooked brown rice
- ¼ cup chopped roasted red peppers
- ⅛ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ⅛ cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
- 1 egg, beaten

Directions:
Preheat oven to 375° F and line baking sheet with parchment paper.

In food processor, combine oil, onion, garlic, tomato paste, walnuts, brown rice, roasted red peppers, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, Italian seasoning, parsley and egg. Pulse until combined but not mushy.

Form into eight balls and place on prepared baking sheet. Bake 12 minutes, or until firm to touch. Serve with sauce of choice.

Walnut Steak House Burger

Serves 4

Ingredients:
- 1½ cups California walnuts
- ¾ cup red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- ¾ cup cooked red lentils
- 6 tablespoons caramelized onions, chopped
- 1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ tablespoons steak house seasoning
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- Optional: add 1 egg and ¼ cup of panko for firmer texture

Directions:
Place walnuts in a food processor and pulse to coarsely chop. Add kidney beans and lentils and pulse to combine.

Add caramelized onions, Worcestershire sauce, steak house seasoning, olive oil and salt, and pulse until blended but not mushy.

Form into 4 large patties.

Heat grill or flat top. Brush patties with olive oil and cook for 2 minutes on each side or until nicely seared. Serve on a bun with burger toppings.

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Reasons golfing may cause wrist pain

By Sanjeev Kakar, M.D.

Dear Mayo Clinic: I golf about three to four times a week and have been doing so for the last two years. Lately, though, I’ve been experiencing pain in my wrists that makes golfing extremely uncomfortable.

A friend of mine had similar symptoms, and he ended up having surgery to treat tendinitis. Is there a way to reduce the pain that does not require surgery?

A: Wrist injuries can occur in people who play golf often, and can be due to overuse, poor mechanics or trauma. The right treatment depends on the underlying cause. The good news is that for most people with the type of wrist pain you describe, surgery is rarely needed.

Many golfing-related wrist injuries are a result of overuse — particularly in recreational golfers who may take a break during the winter months and then play a lot during warmer months.

For example, some golfers may go to the driving range and hit 200 balls in one session, or they may start playing several rounds of golf a week after being off the green for several months. Both situations could lead to wrist injuries.

Some wrist issues may be the result of poor mechanics. For example, if a golfer is swinging the club inappropriately or “casting” the club, it could lead to pain at the back of the wrist due to injury to a tendon called the extensor carpi ulnaris. In time, that can result in chronic wrist pain.

Wrist injuries also can come from some type of trauma. A golfer may be playing in the rough, for example, swing hard and catch the club in the long grass or the root of a tree. That can twist the wrists and, depending on the power of the swing, cause serious wrist tendon damage or even break a bone. Similar injuries may happen if a golfer takes a large divot out of the turf or hits a rock or other solid object with a club.

Treatments for wrist pain

When wrist pain and swelling first appear, the best steps are to rest the area and put ice on it to bring down the swelling. Using heat on the injured area can relieve soreness and stiffness too. A compression wrap or a wrist brace also may be helpful. If you try these home remedies and symptoms continue for more than a week or the pain continues to worsen, I would recommend seeking medical attention.

Before visiting your healthcare provider, you will want to think about when your symptoms began, how they started, and how long the pain lasts.

This information, along with a physical exam of your wrist, can also help shed light on how the injury may have occurred and determine if tests such as X-rays, ultrasound (US), computerized tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans are needed to diagnose the problem.

If the condition is tendinitis, it may get better with rest and hand therapy. You may need to wear a wrist brace as well in the short term — even when you are playing golf.

If that’s not enough, an injection may help reduce inflammation in the injured area to allow for healing. If you still continue to have symptoms, surgery may be an option for chronic tendinitis.

Though unlikely, it is possible you could have a fracture or broken bone in your wrist. If this is the case, a cast may be needed to allow the injury to heal, and hand therapy may be necessary.

Depending on the type of broken bone, however, surgery may be needed, and that’s why meeting a hand surgeon would be important.

To prevent future injury

To help prevent future golfing-related wrist injuries, take time to stretch before you play, including your back, legs, arms, elbows and wrists. Also, warm up with some easy practice swings before you begin a round of golf or start hitting at the driving range.

You may want to work on improving your swing, too. Taking a lesson with a golf professional may be useful to ensure your form is still good.

Finally, invest in quality equipment. Clubs with graphite shafts, and irons that are cavity-backed, reduce the vibration of impact and can help prevent injuries.

Something as simple as using fatter grips to keep you from squeezing the club too tightly and aggravating tendinitis also may be of benefit.

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

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WOMEN TAKE THE STAGE

May 17

The Richmond Performing Arts Alliance (RPAA) hosts its second annual “Women Take the Stage” event on Mon., May 17 at noon. This year, the event will be held virtually with keynote speaker Christine Simmons, COO of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the theme “Living Unapologetically.” Instead of having a set ticket price, the RPAA is asking for a minimum suggested tax-deductible donation of $50 to support the artists, teachers and classrooms RPAA serves. For more information, visit bit.ly/RPAAEvent.

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LINDBERGH PARTNERSHIP

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of Charles and Anne Lindbergh’s survey flight over northern Canada to Asia, the National Air and Space Museum is hosting their daughter, Reeve, who will reflect on her parents’ partnership. This free virtual event takes place on YouTube Thurs., May 20 from 8 to 9 p.m. For more information, visit bit.ly/LindberghPartnership.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
Could you have small fiber neuropathy?

There is neuropathy, and then there is small fiber neuropathy. These conditions are different.

I hope this column will help many people who are suffering and don’t know what they have. You might very well have small fiber neuropathy (SFN), and if you ignore it, in time it will lead to bigger problems all over your body. But if you get proper treatment and help, it is very treatable. I want to give you hope, while educating you about the disorder.

Only the small cutaneous (skin) nerves are affected in SFN. The main difference between SFN and typical peripheral neuropathy (PN) is that SFN attacks the “small unmyelinated fibers,” hence the name “small fiber neuropathy,” and it begins with sensations in your toes and feet. (Ed. Note: Myelinated fibers are nerve fibers in your brain, optic nerves and spinal cord that are covered by a protective sheath of myelin.)

Most other types of neuropathy have some degree of demyelination occurring, but again, the fibers destroyed in SFN are not myelinated; therefore, this condition does not respond to methylated vitamin B12 like you might suspect.

Here are a few common symptoms of SFN:
- Internal vibration or restlessness
- Pins and needles
- Numbness
- Muscle aches
- Electric shock sensations in the body
- Trigeminal neuralgia
- GI motility problems
- Postural orthostatic hypotension (low blood pressure when you stand up)
- Bladder problems
- Dysautonomia
- Redness on the feet, termed erythromelalgia

Erythromelalgia is fairly hallmark — episodes of redness, heat, pain or mild swelling in the feet usually, although it could be in the hands or anywhere in the body. It’s usually triggered by raising your body temperature, which means you may exit a nice hot shower, hot tub or steam room and discover one or both feet have turned red, for example. It’s temporary and likely goes away in a few minutes.

The bottom line: If you notice unusual tingling, weakness or pain in your hands or feet, or any of the symptoms above, see your doctor.

Testing for SFN requires a skin biopsy, and there are amazing new test kits available now that a physician can order. However, if your doctor does a regular EMG (electromyography) study on you, it will be normal. That’s the frustrating and confusing part — SFN does not show up on conventional EMG studies or nerve conduction studies.

The causes of SFN vary and may be tied to infections like Lyme disease or shingles, or endemic conditions like diabetes. Another frequent but hard-to-pinpoint cause is autoimmunity. About 40% of people with fibromyalgia, an autoimmune disorder, suffer with some degree of SFN.

One more interesting cause for this uncomfortable condition is the use of (or withdrawal from) SSRIs antidepressants.

As for treatment, it varies based upon the etiology (cause). We see best effects from intravenous immunoglobulins (IV IG), as well as anti-seizure drugs like pregabalin and gabapentin.

I’ve written a more comprehensive article discussing more symptoms and treatments, as well as proper testing. I will email it to you if you sign up for my free newsletter. To do that, visit my website, suzycohen.com.

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

Suzy Cohen is a registered pharmacist and author of The 24-Hour Pharmacist and Real Solutions from Head to Toe.
Executive Director’s Message
Dr. Thelma Bland Watson
Executive Director, Senior Connections

May is recognized as Older Americans Month by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) and as Older Virginians Month by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), as a time to acknowledge the contributions of older Virginians.

The theme for this year is “Communities of Strength.” Older adults are resilient and strong, as they have experienced many successes, failures, joys and difficulties during their lifetimes. During this unprecedented time of the pandemic, older adults have disproportionately experienced greater adverse effects. Their lifetime of experience and perspective also offers support and guidance to others and can help them through these difficult times. Older adults are a community asset, continuing to thrive despite various obstacles.

Senior Connections works with our clients to maintain and enhance both individual and collective well-being. Through collaboration with many community partners throughout our planning district, we are empowering older adults to remain in their homes by helping them to enhance their well-being. Their stories and contributions inspire us. We have continued to reach out to older adults to help combat the isolation felt by so many during this last year. Connecting with others is essential to our wellbeing. Phone calls, mailings and virtual connections have been some of the ways that we have managed to stay connected. A phone call check-in is a way for both the older adults and the caller to maintain social connections and often link the person with a needed resource. Meals have been provided to clients to not only deliver needed groceries but as a way to stay connected. Support and encouragement offered by so many have been a positive influence for these older adults.

We celebrate the strength of older adults and the Aging Network, with special emphasis on the power of connection and engagement in building strong communities. There are many things we all can do to nurture ourselves, reinforce our strength, and continue to thrive. Connecting with others is one of the most important—it plays a vital role in our health and well-being, and in the ways that make our communities thrive. From finding joy in small things and sharing our stories, to looking at the big picture and giving to others.

Thank you to all our local governments for supporting May 2021 as Older Americans Month, as this provides an opportunity for us to call attention to the strength of our communities. We appreciate the encouragement and support from state and local governments, funders and individuals to enhance the lives of many and to continue to strengthen our communities. In addition, we honor all of our program participants, volunteers and our phenomenal staff at Senior Connections.

Please join us in promoting the ways that we are connected and strong as a community.

Older Americans Month - Communities of Strength May 2021

In tough times, communities find strength in people—and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, we’ve seen this time and again in Central Virginia as friends, neighbors, and businesses have found new ways to support each other.

In our community, older adults are a key source of this strength. Through their experiences, they have built resilience that helps them to face new challenges. When communities tap into this, they become stronger too.

Each May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). This year’s theme is Communities of Strength, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

Strength is built and shown not only by bold acts, but also small ones of day-to-day life—a conversation shared with a friend, working in the garden, trying a new recipe, or taking time for a cup of tea on a busy day. And when we share these activities with others—even virtually or by telling about the experience later—we help them build resilience too.

This year, Senior Connections will celebrate OAM by encouraging community members to share their experiences. Together, we can find strength—and create a stronger future.

Here are some ways to share and connect:

• **Look for joy in the everyday:** Celebrate small moments and ordinary pleasures by taking time to recognize them. Start a gratitude journal and share it with others via social media, or call a friend or family member to share a happy moment or to say thank you.

• **Reach out to neighbors:** Even if you can’t get together in person right now, you can still connect with your neighbors. Leave a small gift on their doorstep, offer to help with outdoor chores, or deliver a homecooked meal.

• **Build new skills:** Learning something new allows us to practice overcoming challenges. Take an art course online or try a socially distanced outdoor movement class to enjoy learning with others in your community. Have a skill to share? Find an opportunity to teach someone, even casually.

• **Share your story:** There’s a reason storytelling is a time-honored activity. Hearing how others experience the world helps us grow. Interviewing family, friends, and neighbors can open up new conversations and strengthen our connections.

When people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities, and talents share experiences—through action, story, or service—we help build strong communities. And that’s something to celebrate! For more resources, visit the official OAM website at [https://acl.gov](https://acl.gov).
Virginia No Wrong Door: Building Communities of Strength

Each May, Senior Connections joins the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in observing Older Americans Month. This year’s theme is Communities of Strength. A time to reflect the resilience and strength of older adults and the aging network.

For several years, the ACL, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Veterans Health Administration have partnered to support Virginia’s efforts to develop a coordinated system designed to make it easier for consumers to learn about and access long term support services. In our state, it is Virginia No Wrong Door.

Virginia No Wrong Door (NWD) is a statewide network of community partners and shared resources linked through a virtual system, designed to streamline access to long-term services and supports (LTSS) - connecting individuals, providers, and communities across the Commonwealth. NWD Virginia offers a unique electronic tool to share information between certified community partners, enabling them to safely and securely access personal information, with consent, expediting an individual’s access to LTSS. The NWD web-based technology system gives partners the opportunity to offer person-centered decision support by sending and receiving real-time electronic referrals and securely sharing other important documents such as assessments and enrollments. Partners are also able to analyze aggregated data on an individual, an agency, their community, or data from the state. Virginia’s NWD System offers electronic tools from case management intake to complex care coordination to hospital and care transitions.

This May, Senior Connections celebrates older adults but also the strength of our Virginia No Wrong Door aging network in the greater Richmond area. Through partnership, strong connections and community engagement, No Wrong Door has helped build a strong community and network of providers that enhance individual choice and control as older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers navigate long term support services.

To learn more about how No Wrong Door can benefit your organization, or to request a demonstration, please contact Wendy Boggs, No Wrong Door Expansion Coordinator, at wendy.boggs@dars.virginia.gov or Colleen Wilhelm, NWD Operations and Outreach Manager at cwilhelm@youraaa.org or visit one of these websites below.

NWD Website
Website: https://www.nowrongdoorvirginia.org/

No Wrong Door Partners Service Individuals in the Greater RVA:
• Alzheimer’s Association Greater Richmond Chapter
• Brain Injury Services Coordination Unit (DARS)
• Circle Center Adult Day Services
• CA Human Services
• Community Brain Injury Services
• Commonwealth Catholic Charities (refugee resettlement services)
• Family Lifeline
• FeedMore
• InnovAge PACE Richmond
• International Rescue Committee
• Jewish Family Services
• Local Department of Social Services
• project:Homes
• Rebuilding Together Richmond
• Resources for Independent Living
• Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging
• Sheltering Arms Institute
• South Richmond Adult Day Care Center
• Sportable
• United Spinal Association
• Virginia Assistive Technology Service Unit, DARS

Many people find locating information about available long-term services and supports a daunting task. The mission of Virginia Easy Access is to make this search easier. Launched in 2021, The Virginia Easy Access website connects older adults, adults with disabilities, veterans, and families to information about a wide range of public programs and supports in a way that is accessible and easy to navigate. Visit https://easyaccess.virginia.gov/home for more information or to connect to services.
As we celebrate our aging network during May 2021 Older Americans Month, there are two organizations that define resiliency and strength with a combined 316 years of service in the Richmond area. While both organizations offer services across the lifespan, both specialize in providing comprehensive services for older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

Jewish Family Services, a non-profit celebrating 172 years of helping, offers care management services with home care, private and public guardianship/conservatorship, specialty in counseling older adults in living facilities as well as our volunteer services like telephone reassurance and friendly visitor program. Family Lifeline, a non-profit celebrating 144 years of caring, offers care coordination, nursing support and consultation, home care and visiting volunteers.

Helping individuals remain safe at home and socially connected is challenging, but in a pandemic year filled with uncertainty and ever-changing information, that challenge increased exponentially. At our Greater RVA No Wrong Door Advisory Council Meeting in March 2021, both organizations shared insights and reflected on providing in-home services during a global pandemic. When the rest of world stayed home, their professional care-providing staff continued to provide connection and service with those in need of in-home care.
Help Your Community Stay Safely Connected

The pandemic and its resulting social isolation have been hard on people of all ages. We can help each other through this time by sharing our strengths and our experiences — the resilience we have developed in our lives and what has gotten us through tough times in the past.

**Intergenerational Pen Pals**

Encouraging intergenerational pen pals can reduce isolation and increase resilience in people of all ages. Adolescents and young adults — many of whom are facing a significant struggle for the first time in their lives — can help them adjust to circumstances out of their control.

When older adults, with their diverse life experience, share their wisdom, time, and encouragement, they build connections with new generations.

There are lots of ways to start an intergenerational pen pal activity. Organizations serving older adults can work with local schools or youth organizations to find and connect potential pals. Churches and recreational organizations serving all ages can also connect members of different generations. Individuals can reach out to long-distance relatives or even nearby neighbors they’ve missed seeing over the past year.

**Distanced Outdoor Event**

Seeing other people in person — even with masks on and from a six-foot distance — can offer a richer sense of connection and community than virtual gatherings. The CDC says that outdoor gatherings with plenty of ventilation, masks, and social distancing pose less risk of spreading COVID-19. Additionally, as of April 27, 2021 — the CDC has issued new guidance for fully vaccinated people.

The new CDC guidance states that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask outdoors, except in certain crowded settings and venues.

Here are some ideas for bringing members of your community together for a safe afternoon or evening of outdoor entertainment and socialization:

- **Hold an outdoor movie screening.** Consider a comedy or other light-hearted movie. Sharing a laugh can bring people together. Make sure household groups sit six feet from other families.
- **Coordinate a musical event.** Music can help people to connect, heal, and much more. Hire a band, let participants show off their musical talents, or just play music from an app and let everyone make requests. Keep music levels down and encourage clapping and distanced dancing.

Follow all state and local health guidelines. Check your state health department lines. Check your state health department for safety information. Read the latest CDC guidance on events and gatherings.

**Group Project**

Working together creates community, even when you cannot be physically together. Celebrate contributions of individuals and what your community can accomplish together by organizing a group project. Each participant can work individually before their effort is combined to create a final masterpiece. All collection activities can be done without contact.

We suggest polling participants to see where their talents and interests lie, but here are some project ideas to get you started:

- Create a community quilt. Individuals can make squares on their own, which can then be sewn into a beautiful wall hanging or cozy blanket. The quilt can then be donated to a charitable organization or a community member. For tutorials, beginner patterns, and other ideas, search “how to quilt” on the Internet.
- Decorate a public garden or community walking path. Paint rocks with eye-catching designs and inspiring messages. Ask community members to paint their rocks individually, providing simple supplies, if possible. Then, collect them to display in your community.
- Establish a physical or virtual bulletin board. Fill it with photos, jokes, quotes, and/or good news from community members. Display in a public place or on your organization’s website.
- Plant a community garden of flowers or vegetables. Have participants plant in shifts to maintain social distancing or provide participants with seeds and a pot to plant them in at home. Collect all the potted plants to display together as one large container garden.
- Design a mosaic art project or mural. Each participant can take a turn adding their own touch.
- Don’t have a space that can be permanently altered? Use small canvases instead. Search “mini canvas collage” to spark your creativity.

**OLDER AMERICANS MONTH**

**MAY 2021**

**COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH**

We celebrate the strength of older adults.
IRS ignores those filing paper tax returns

I have been filing my federal tax returns on paper for more than 50 years. It was never any trouble at all. After all, I had been an enrolled agent for several years.

But that all changed after I filed my 2019 return.

I filed it in April 2020. The IRS still has not processed it. When I go to the IRS website and use the “Where’s my refund?” option, the IRS doesn’t even indicate that my return has been received.

After several months of not receiving an acknowledgment from the IRS that it has my return, I wrote to my congressional representative complaining about the delay. The representative asked me for permission to contact the IRS on my behalf, and I consented.

As a result of that intervention, I received a phone response from an IRS representative in December, who told me to file my return electronically. The IRS representative also told me that an IRS advocate was assigned to me, and that I could expect a response from her. I was provided her phone number.

I then contacted TurboTax to file electronically. However, representatives at TurboTax told me that after October, the IRS no longer accepted e-files for 2019, and that they could only file a paper return. They suggested that I file a paper return again by registered mail.

I followed their advice and filed a copy of my previous paper return again. This was against the IRS recommendation. The IRS says on its website not to contact them and not to rewrite. However, the IRS still has not indicated that it has received any paper return from me for 2019.

The trouble continues

I contacted TurboTax in March 2021 to file my 2020 tax return electronically. They prepared my return and tried to file electronically.

When you file electronically, the IRS asks for your adjusted gross income (AGI) for the previous year as a security measure. I entered the AGI from my 2019 return but, as I feared, the IRS rejected my e-filing because it has no record of that return!

After the rejection, TurboTax representatives then told me to enter zero for my 2019 AGI. I did that, and again the IRS has rejected my e-filing. (H&R Block informed me that its software also requires a valid AGI from 2019.)

TurboTax has now told me I must file by paper again in 2020 because the IRS won’t accept my request to file electronically. Naturally, I don’t want to file a paper return again. I have gone to the internet to see if my situation is common. I have found that others are faced with the same problem. It’s a Catch-22.

Millions of individuals have also filed paper tax returns for 2019 that have not been processed. Yet the IRS won’t allow e-filing because there is no AGI that matches their records.

Even though the IRS has assigned me a tax advocate who supposedly should be assisting me, she has not contacted me, and she doesn’t return my phone calls.

If millions of taxpayers like me are forced to file a paper return for our 2020 taxes, how long will the delay be? The IRS has already extended the April 15 filing date to May 17 because of its inability to process returns in a timely manner.

The IRS has no legitimate reason not to allow individuals whose 2019 returns have not been processed to file their 2020 returns electronically. I suggest you write to the IRS commissioner Charles Rettig, as I have done, at 77 K St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002, and demand that he inform his staff of this problem, and that they take whatever steps are necessary to accept e-filed returns from taxpayers who have no apparent record of AGI for 2019.

This situation is ridiculous. We are sim-
Things you need to know about insurance

By Sarah Schlichter

Insurance is notoriously complicated, and few people have the time or desire to pore over their policies. But some basic knowledge can go a long way. And that’s where an insurance agent can help, by clearing up some of the most common misconceptions they encounter.

Here are five things agents say are helpful for customers to know:

- **Insurance doesn’t cover everything**
  - When it comes to insurance, “Most people don’t understand the details,” said Andrew McGill, agent at The Insurance Shoppe in Tennessee. For instance, they often don’t realize that most homeowners policies won’t cover flood or earthquake damage. If your home is at risk for these disasters, you need separate coverage.
  - Auto policies generally cover only personal use of your car, so if you’ve picked up a side gig delivering groceries or meals during the pandemic, you likely need additional coverage, said Keya Pratt, agent and CEO of Pratt Insurance LLC in Richmond, Virginia. Otherwise, accidents you have on the job may not be covered.
  - Insurance policies of all types also generally exclude wear and tear, said Katherine Navarro Wong, a State Farm agent in Santa Rosa, California. She often gets calls from policyholders asking if their insurance will pay for things like broken dishwashers or aging gutters.

- **A gap in coverage can be costly**
  - There are various reasons you might let your car insurance policy lapse. Perhaps you’re having trouble paying your bills, or you no longer own a vehicle. But this could cost you, Pratt said. “People tend to shop insurance after they’ve already canceled their insurance, [but] unfortunately that’s a huge negative” when calculating your price. After a gap in coverage, insurers view customers as riskier and charge higher rates.

- **But if the pipe accidentally burst and ruined the wall and the flooring,” that would be covered.**

- **A gap in coverage can be costly**
  - There are various reasons you might let your car insurance policy lapse. Perhaps you’re having trouble paying your bills, or you no longer own a vehicle. But this could cost you, Pratt said. “People tend to shop insurance after they’ve already canceled their insurance, [but] unfortunately that’s a huge negative” when calculating your price. After a gap in coverage, insurers view customers as riskier and charge higher rates.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**May 24**

**FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS**

Are you financially prepared for a disaster? Learn about various financial preparedness items, such as flood insurance, and receive a FEMA Emergency Financial First Aid Kit. This free event takes place Mon., May 24 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at the Bensley Recreation Center. For more information, visit chesterfield.gov/parks (see page 31 of the Summer Programming Guide) or call Laura Wood at (804) 768-7904.

**May 27**

**WILLS AND TRUSTS**

Jeremy Pryor, an attorney with Carrell, Blanton, Ferris, hosts a free virtual workshop on federal estate and gift law tax changes, Virginia’s Power of Attorney and Advance Medical Directive Laws and probate. This event takes place Thurs., May 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/CBFWillsandTrusts.

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Paper returns

From page 13

ply trying to comply with the law and file our taxes, and we should not be punished because the IRS hasn’t processed 2019 paper returns yet.

I suggest you copy Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen with your correspondence to the IRS commissioner. You can reach her at the Treasury Department, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20220.

Elliot Raphaelson welcomes your questions and comments at raphelliot@gmail.com.

Insurance

From page 14

You can avoid this by shopping for quotes before your policy expires, buying nonowner car insurance if you’re between vehicles, and asking your carrier for leniency if you’re struggling to make payments.

You can’t cover risks after the fact

If you get into an accident and your car needs repairs, you might want a rental vehicle to help you get around. But by that point it would be too late to add rental car coverage to your policy, Wong said. Your auto policy would pay for this only if you had rental car coverage in place when the accident happened — not if you added it the day after.

The same goes for other insurance. For example, say a storm leaves an inch of water in your basement, but you haven’t purchased flood insurance. You can still buy coverage for future disasters, but it won’t pay for damage your home has already sustained.

Don’t skimp on liability insurance

Many people focus on buying enough coverage for their belongings, but the liability insurance on your policy may be even more important. It pays for injuries or property damage that you’re at fault for.

A lawsuit “is going to be more devastating than losing your laptop or ring,” Wong said. Including legal fees, the cost can total hundreds of thousands of dollars, especially if someone is seriously injured.

To protect yourself financially, buy enough liability insurance on your auto and home insurance policies to cover your net worth.

Your agent is there to help

Confused by your policy’s fine print? Don’t struggle through it on your own, said Jana Schellin Foster, agent at Nevada Insurance Agency Co. in Reno, Nevada.

“We’re here to take care of you and walk you through this process.”

—AP/NerdWallet

Get and check free weekly credit reports

By Lisa Gerstner

The three major credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — will continue to offer a free credit report to consumers each week at AnnualCreditReport.com until April 20, 2022.

The extension follows the bureaus’ move in spring 2020 to provide free weekly reports as the coronavirus pandemic struck the U.S., causing financial hardship for Americans who lost their job or faced a pay cut.

Before the recent announcement, the availability of free weekly reports was scheduled to expire in April. Typically, a free report is available from each bureau only once every 12 months through AnnualCreditReport.com.

Check each report for errors or signs of fraudulent activity — such as the presence of a credit card or loan that you never opened, or a collection account for a debt that you don’t owe.

The most effective way to block identity thieves from opening accounts in your name is to put a freeze on your report from each bureau. (You can add a freeze at transunion.com/freeze, experian.com/freeze and equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services.)

When a freeze is in place, a creditor cannot access your report in response to an application for new credit, thwarting crooks.

If you want to open a new credit account, you can temporarily lift the freeze.

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

Introducing Quingo® – the powerful, take-anywhere and go-anywhere mobility scooter that you never have to lift.

It’s a sad fact. Many people who have mobility issues and could benefit from a scooter aren’t able to use them away from home. Struggling to get it into a car or loading it onto a bumper-mounted lift just isn’t worth the effort. Even travel scooters can be hard to pick up and load into a car... and many are prone to tipping over. Now, there’s a better scooter, Quingo®. It’s easy to use, even for one person, and requires no more effort than opening a car’s tailgate and pressing a remote. Now anyone with a SUV, cross-over or mini van can go anywhere they want any time they want.

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Quingo® can load and unload itself in less than 60 seconds using the simple remote. The innovative “easy-in-and-out” ramping system can be installed in minutes, and then either remain in your car or be easily uninstalled when more room is needed.

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– Judi K, Exeter, CA

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Nashville tempts palate with reopenings

By Ann Cochran

Now that many of us are fully vaccinated, we can finally plan a getaway. Our first trip might be a road trip, perhaps a longer drive than we would have undertaken before.

After having to stay put for more than a year, I'm looking for a destination that's within a day's drive but feels different from my normal stomping grounds.

It only takes nine hours to drive from Richmond to Nashville, but it feels like it's a world away. I love Nashville for its creativity and talent in music, cuisine and beyond, for its friendly vibe and fantastic food. Even if it isn't in full swing, I would be happy to be in Music City.

Nashville's museums and restaurants are open, but attendance is limited, meaning more reservations and less spontaneity. Shops are also open, and so are Nashville's many lovely parks. And, of course, in a city known for its live music, indoor and outdoor concerts are resuming.

Live music rebounds

At the mother church of country music, the Ryman Auditorium — formerly known as the Grand Old Opry House — some concerts are being added to the light 2021 schedule. There's also an excellent back-stage tour of the building.

On Nashville's waterfront, the Ascend Amphitheater is a good bet, with a summer schedule that begins with ballet in mid-May and includes artists like Lindsey Stirling, Phish and John Legend.

The City Winery is already hosting shows in a large, well-ventilated tent with tables appropriately distanced. Also following mask and distancing protocols are 3rd & Lindsley and Marathon Music Works. A cool New York transplant, Brooklyn Bowl, will be opening its lanes and its music stage soon.

Along downtown's Lower Broadway (sometimes called NashVegas!) and its side streets, you'll find plenty of Nashville's iconic bar-restaurant-clubs, called honky-tonks. It's an exciting privilege to see songwriters present new material at places like the Bluebird Cafe and The Listening Room.

Just 45 minutes away is the new FirstBank Amphitheater in Franklin, Tennessee. Built in a quarry, its dramatic setting includes cliff walls and waterfalls. It's scheduled to open later this year.

About 90 minutes from Nashville, in Pelham, Tennessee, The Caverns is an actual underground music venue where PBS filmed a television concert series called “Bluegrass Underground.”

The pandemic caused them to vacate the caves, and in October 2020, The Caverns Above Ground Amphitheater was born. In addition to live music, there are two different tours of the caves; one is a challenging three-to-four-hour adventure.

The museum scene

Combining culture and music, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum has been the gold standard for years, with exhibits that demonstrate the influence Country music has had on many genres. “Sing Me Back Home” is its permanent exhibition, with an excellent film, stories and displays from Country's pre-commercial roots to the present.

Before leaving, book a tour of RCA Studio B, the oldest of Nashville's recording studios. Elvis, Dolly and many others recorded their hits here.

If you prefer to focus on one artist, I recommend the small but packed Johnny Cash Museum.

For a dose of beauty and history, spend a few hours at Cheekwood Gardens, a 55-acre complex with gardens, an art museum and an extravagant 36-room house built in 1929.

Belle Meade Plantation is an opportunity to tour a much older mansion, focus on African American history, explore the vast grounds, learn about thoroughbreds and end the day with a wine or bourbon tasting. Belmont Mansion was built around the same time, 1853, and has been meticulously restored.

Martin Luther King’s birthday this year marked the opening of the National Museum of African American Music. More than 50,000 square feet of exhibit space tell the stories of 400 years of African American music, from spirituals to the blues and jazz, all the way to hip-hop. The museum is the only one in the country, its website says, “with a dedicated focus on the impact of African American music.”

For a different slice of history, visit President Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, the plantation where he lived after his presidency ended in 1804 until his death in 1845. It is one of the oldest and largest historic site museums in the country.

Four decades of research about the 200 enslaved men, women and children who worked in the house and cotton fields have produced historically significant and fascinating information that's on display and presented by guides.

The Frist Art Museum is 20 years young but definitely world-class, with an acclaimed Picasso exhibit just wrapping up. Currently open four days a week, the museum changes its exhibitions every few months.

Its ArtQuest gallery has 30 interactive stations where, with the assistance of staff and volunteers, visitors of all ages can make a print, paint an original watercolor or create a sculpture.

Fine dining to cafeterias

Hungry yet? Eating in Nashville offers an embarrassment of riches, from fine dining to hot chicken, morning biscuits and “meat and three” dishes.

Like many restaurants, the fine dining Margot Café and Bar is open with limited

Patsy Cline, Willie Nelson and other musicians performed at the legendary Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, established in 1960. Located behind the Ryman Auditorium (formerly the venue for the Grand Ole Opry), Tootsie's is the most famous honky tonk on downtown Nashville's Lower Broadway, otherwise known as Honky Tonk Highway.
Nashville

seating, so reservations are highly recommended. Owner Margot McCormack, called the Alice Waters of Nashville by Time Magazine, specializes in the foods of Provence and Tuscany. Acclaimed chef Sean Brock chose Nashville for his first Husk outside Charleston. With a charming wraparound porch, this is a great choice for modern Southern cuisine.

Make reservations as far in advance as you can to experience a special occasion at the Catbird Seat’s u-shaped bar, where a nine-course ballet of a meal is skillfully prepared. Lots of music industry people dine at City House for Italian food influenced by the American South.

When in Nashville, one must try the Nashville Hot Chicken, poultry that’s buttermilk-soaked, cayenne-rubbed and deep-fried. Hattie B’s and Prince’s are well established and beloved, but they aren’t the only games in town.

“Meat and three” is a very Southern food category consisting of a protein and three vegetables (mac-n-cheese counts). At Arnold’s Country Kitchen, a James Beard America’s Classic, people have been lining up cafeteria-style since 1982.

For coffee refuels, stop at Barista Parlor, located in a converted transmission repair shop. Frothy Monkey, with several locations, also serves great coffee, brunches and more.

At Golden Sound, in an old recording studio, the baristas will recommend the ideal method for grinding the bean you choose. From the installations on the walls to the mugs and tables, locally sourced isn’t limited to breakfast meats and jams.

A unique dessert spot is Las Paletas, for savory (avocado) and sweet (corn, hot chocolate) ice pops created from old Mexican family recipes.

Unique shopping venues

Walking off a big meal goes nicely with shopping, and the 12 South neighborhood is ideal. No national chains here.

White’s Mercantile, a general store akin to Anthropologie, is owned by Hank Williams’ singer-songwriter-musician granddaughter Holly. Imogene + Willie sells custom-fitted “heritage blue jeans” that are popular with celebrities. Down the street, Judith Bright’s contemporary, affordable jewelry is handmade by local artisans.

There’s lots of great shopping all over town. A six-acre complex of shops and restaurants, called Fifth + Broadway after its location, opened in mid-March about half full. It has a vast food hall, live music venues and shopping. New tenants continue to move in.

Batch Nashville, at the Farmers Market, which should reopen soon, is a one-stop shop for all manner of Nashville-made goods, sold singularly or grouped in popular gift boxes.

Attached to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Hatch Show Print is a letterpress shop that sells both vintage and new posters made by hand with an enormous stock of wooden block letters and images that have been accumulating since the business started in 1879.

If you go

As we emerge from the pandemic, any travel requires making calls to confirm what’s open. And please note: not all websites are up to date.

Downtown hotel rates start at $145 per night; 12 new hotels opened in 2020, and 14 more are opening this year. From the hip Virgin and the luxurious Joseph, there are choices upon choices for every style and budget.

Airbnb is doing a brisk business as well. Don’t call too far in advance, since re-opening is a moving target.

Round-trip, nonstop flights from Richmond to Nashville start at $186 on Southwest Airlines.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 2+

HIGH NOON SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

From June to August, the Valentine Museum hosts outdoor concerts every Wednesday at noon. Enjoy free, socially distanced concerts with a mix of local musicians. For more information, visit thevalentine.org or call (804) 649-0711.

June 5

RICHMOND SYMPHONY IN THE PARK

Celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Pocahontas State Park with a performance by the Richmond Symphony at the Heritage Amphitheater. This event takes place Sat., June 5 at 8 p.m. Tickets are free; parking passes cost $10. Learn more and reserve your ticket and pass at bit.ly/PocahontasPremieres.

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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.

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Please mention promotion code 114945.
Springtime beckons at gardens nearby

By Victor Block

Onlookers gaze in awe at topiary sculptures of riders astride galloping horses and hounds pursuing a frantic fox.

Grandparents look on with delight as grandchildren make mud pies and dig in dirt to find ersatz dinosaur bones.

Exquisite statuary, ornate stonework and splashing fountains create a scene which could be set in Italy — but isn’t.

These seemingly disparate scenes have one thing in common: They’re all taking place at gardens located within a convenient drive of our mid-Atlantic neighborhood.

With flowers in full bloom and trees sporting a blanket of green, there’s no better time to get outside to enjoy one of Mother Nature’s most magnificent Technicolor shows.

Whether you’re an experienced horticultural expert, a casual gardener or merely someone seeking a pleasant getaway in beautiful surroundings, a visit to these nearby places can lift your spirits.

Lush gardens, wetlands and wildlife

Consider that fox hunting scene, which could take place in the English countryside. The shrubs, clipped and shaped into life-size figures, greet visitors at Ladew Topiary Garden in Monkton, Maryland, deemed “the most outstanding topiary garden” in the country by the Garden Club of America.

Among more than 100 forms that inhabit the expanse are a Chinese junk boat complete with sails, a graceful swan and a long-necked giraffe. Its 22 acres also contain rose, white and sculpture gardens. For more information visit ladewgardens.com.

That Italian-like setting is one feature, among many, at Maymont Gardens here in Richmond, part of a Victorian estate dating back to 1893. A Via Florum (“Flowering Way”) leads from the mansion to the formal Italian Garden.

Bears, bobcats and bison roam the wildlife habitats. Among other areas on the 100-acre estate is a Native Virginia Landscape, Wetland Habitat and Ornamental Lawn, which appears much as it did in the late 19th century (maymont.org).

A lush wetland area is one of five distinct habitats encountered at Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodland Garden near Lexington, Virginia. Another is the Play Trail, a fenced-in area where children can play in spaces created from natural materials.

Youngsters may get down and dirty in a Mud Kitchen, unearth “dinosaur bones” during a Dig to China, and crawl through a “bug tunnel” (boxerwood.org/garden).

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, has more than two dozen gardens, ranging from grand, decorative layouts to tiny kitchen plantings.

The highlight is the complex at the Governor’s Palace, which resembles those at 17th-century English country estates. It covers 10 acres and includes “falling gardens” (terraces) that were planted during the 1800s.

The Colonial Garden and Nursery displays heirloom roses and examples of culinary and medicinal herbs that were used by the colonists (colonialwilliamsburg.com).

Native plants, tropical orchids

Some outstanding gardens focus their collections on flora native to the Mid-Atlantic region. That’s the case at the Mt. Cuba Center in Hockessin, Delaware, where walking paths lead through hundreds of acres of plant life indigenous to the state.

The center was created by a du Pont who strayed from the family practice of filling gardens with imports from around the world. Instead, the focus is on gardens filled with floral displays found throughout Delaware (mtcubacenters.org).

Native plants, shrubs and trees also are on display at the West Virginia University Core Arboretum in Morgantown. Three miles of foot trails introduce visitors to more than 250 species of herbaceous plants and 80 types of trees, some of which are more than 200 years old.

Adding to the experience at the 91-acre arboretum is that more than 180 species of birds have been observed there (arboretum.wvu.edu).

While the greatest diversity of orchids is in the tropics, the orchid collection in the C. Fred Edwards Conservatory at the Huntington Museum of Art in Huntington, West Virginia, showcases about 100 species.

Along with pleasantly fragrant plants are unusual types such as the carnivorous pitcher plant, which traps insects, and a “sensitive” orchid that folds its leaflets when touched (hmoa.org).

Historic garden in D.C.

Gardens also can conjure up interesting chapters of history. The layout at Dumbarton Oaks is an inviting oasis in Washington, D.C. The mansion is surrounded by 16 acres of terraced gardens, kitchen plots, orchards and meadows.

The estate was the residence of Robert Woods Bliss — a diplomat, art collector and philanthropist — and his wife Mildred. In 1944, at the height of World War II, they hosted a series of diplomatic meetings among high-ranking delegations from the United States, United Kingdom, China and the Soviet Union. The gathering led to the establishment of the United Nations one year later.

Due to restrictions and temporary closures caused by the pandemic, it’s wise to check ahead before planning a visit to any of these gardens.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 20

LEARN TO COOK

Learn how to cook
Chicken Florentine, pasta with artichokes and chocolate-orange tarts during a free virtual cooking class with Mise en Place.

This event takes place Thurs., May 20 at 7 p.m., but videos and recipes are available for 30 days after the event.

For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/CookwithMiseEnPlace.

May 20

BLUEBIRDING

Are you curious about bluebirds?

Follow naturalist Terry Atkinson via YouTube as she documents the local bluebird population. The video is available starting Thurs., May 20 at 12 p.m. and can be accessed at tinyurl.com/pradults.
A virtual violin competition and festival

By Catherine Brown

In 1983, Joji Hattori, now 52, participated in the first-ever Menuhin Competition — a musical contest started by Yehudi Menuhin, one of the 20th century’s greatest violinists. This year Hattori is one of the judges of the international competition for violinists under age 22.

Known as the “Olympics of the Violin,” the Menuhin competition is typically held every two years, but, as we all know, 2020 was not a typical year. If it had been, 43 of the world’s best young violinists and nine jurors, including Hattori, would have traveled to Richmond last spring.

Because of the pandemic, the Board of the Menuhin Competition postponed the competition until this year. To adhere to current safety regulations, they decided to hold the event virtually from May 14 to 23.

The Menuhin Competition is more than a contest; it’s a musical festival and educational opportunity for both listeners and performers. Winning can launch a career in music, as Hattori himself found.

The competition encourages “young players who are extremely talented [to] be aware of their talent so they invest in their training to develop into international soloists,” Hattori said in an interview with Fifty Plus.

In-person performances, too

Cohosted by the city of Richmond, the Richmond Symphony, the University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University and VPM, the Menuhin Competition will engage the local community in a variety of ways.

The Richmond Symphony, for instance, will perform in-person concerts to open the competition, and they have commissioned works that finalists will perform.

Violinist and juror Angelo Xiang Yu will perform with the Richmond Symphony in a gala concert on Friday, May 14 and Saturday, May 15 at Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts. (Check richmondsymphony.com for ticket availability.)

In conjunction with the Richmond Symphony School of Music, the Menuhin Competition Trust will offer educational and engagement activities to Virginia-based violin students.

In addition, violinists will conduct virtual visits with schools and other community organizations to engage with local students and older adults.

In tandem with the competition, VCU will host a virtual Violin Day on May 8 with performances and workshops for students and teachers.

Events will be televised by VPM and are viewable for free on the Menuhin Competition website and on YouTube.

Nurturing young professionals

When Hattori participated in the first Menuhin Competition, he was only 14 years old. Though he didn’t win, he was encouraged that he reached the finals.

“What happens when you are 13 or 14 and a very good violinist is that often you are the best in your age group in your country. But there are many countries in the world,” Hattori noted. “It’s actually a very humbling experience to hear all the other competitors.”

Hattori participated in the competition again at 18, when he was awarded fourth place, and again at age 20, when he won first place.

For violinists the competition can launch a lifelong career, as it did for Hattori. Born in Tokyo but raised in Vienna, Hattori has enjoyed a versatile international career as a concert violinist, chamber musician and conductor of chamber and symphony orchestras. He knows firsthand how the competition can transform the trajectories of participants’ lives.

Violinists compete in one of two categories: junior, for violinists under 16; and senior, for violinists between 16 and 22. (This year, the youngest competitors are 12 years old.) For junior violinists, the competition provides an opportunity to interact with other talented young musicians.

This year’s participants include 19 students from across the U.S. as well as 24 others from all over the world. Winners will receive not only recognition but also cash prizes ranging from $1,000 to $20,000.

In addition, the winner of the senior category will be loaned a Stradivarius violin for two years.

How do jurors choose the winners?

As president of the Menuhin Competition Trust, Hattori has been instrumental in keeping the Menuhin Competition event going. He has been a juror in the past, too, and there’s an art to selecting the best violinists in the world.

“it’s quite easy to separate the more talented players from the slightly less talented,” Hattori said. “But among the top talent, if you have the 10 most talented players, it’s actually very difficult to number them in [winning] order.”

When judging the 43 violinists, jurors must evaluate musicality — the ability to tell a story through the music.

“It’s not enough just to feel it. They have to play it in such a way that emotion comes across,” Hattori said. “That’s something not everybody can do.”

Judging musicality through pre-recorded performances, as the virtual competition will require this year, may be harder to do than in person. But Hattori isn’t concerned.

“When I judge a video recording, I can’t tell as much how the sound of each violinist’s ‘projects’ in the concert hall [or] the emotional impact of the sound quality on the audience,” he said.

“Having said this, I am positively surprised how much ... I still can tell by listening to a recording online.”

Yet the Menuhin Competition is about more than identifying the world’s most talented young violinists. The jurors work hard to nurture the musicians by leading master classes and providing individualized feedback.

“It’s wonderful that they can get nine jurors’ opinions of how they can improve,” Hattori said.

To watch the competition, visit 2021.menuhincompetition.org or watch it on YouTube at youtube.com/c/MenuhinCompetition. For more information, contact the Richmond Symphony at (804) 788-4717 or email info@menuhincompetition.org.

Plants have clever ways of attracting butterflies, moths and bees. See story on opposite page.
Different flowers have different nectar, each with varying nutritional content.

By Lela Martin

Since between 75 to 90% of flowering plants require pollinators for reproduction, and since they’re clearly immobile, they must have strategies for attracting pollinators to themselves.

Pollinator syndrome describes the way plants have developed over time to attract pollinators. The more we learn about a flower’s appearance as well as its food rewards of nectar and pollen, the more nature amazes us.

Visual cues

The most obvious way flowers entice pollinators is by sight. And pollinators do not value the same flowers as we do. Part of the reason for the proliferation of flowering weeds is due to their visual appeal to bees, for example.

Many flowers use visual cues to attract pollinators: shape, size, showy petals and sepals, guides to nectar and color. Bees, butterflies and moths, bats and birds see these features while flying from above.

The bell shape of the blossoms of the native azalea attracts native ruby-throated hummingbirds. As the bird reaches the nectar, it contacts the reproductive parts of the plant and performs pollination service inadvertently.

On the other hand, beetles and other non-hovering pollinators are attracted to open and flat flowers that serve as landing areas, such as echinacea (purple coneflower).

Irises use the energy from their underground rhizomes to produce very large flowers. Their flower size helps them compete with surrounding flowering plants for the pollination services of bumblebees.

Plants also use coloration and patterns to signal the right pollinators. Nocturnal pollinators such as bats and moths locate night-blooming flowers that are white or very pale.

Aromatic aster, a fall-blooming plant, communicates its pollination status visually to monarch butterflies. Monarchs need to fill up on nectar before their long winter migration to Mexico. The florets in the center of the aster are yellow when they are full of pollen; once pollinated, the center turns red. Butterflies are considered to have the widest visual range of any form of wildlife.

Nectar guides (honey guides or floral guides), which are patterns to guide pollinators to nectar and pollen, can be visible to humans as well as to pollinators. Those include subtle lines, spots, swaths of color, or streaks such as those directing a bumblebee...

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Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven’t been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough... a personal electric vehicle. It's called the Zinger, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!" – Kent C., California
bleelee within penstemon (beardtongue).

Ultraviolet guides
Some nectar guides, unseen by our human eyes, are visible to bees who can see ultraviolet color. About 7% of all flowers show floral patterns in ultraviolet light that are not evident in visible light. In bee-pollinated flowers, there is a region of low ultraviolet reflectance near the center of each petal called the “blue halo.” Data have shown that the blue halo is the key visual signal that attracts bees. The subtle effect of the blue halo is produced from nanoscale ridges on the surface of flower petals that change the light when viewed from certain angles.

One flower that shows a bullseye effect in the ultraviolet range is rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan). The petals of the black-eyed Susan appear plain yellow to humans, but insects can see a larger and darker center than we can.

In the native flowering dogwood (our state flower and tree) as well as the kousa dogwood, what appears as a four-petaled flower is actually four bracts surrounding many small flowers. The bracts look white in visible light with small yellowish green central flowers. However, in ultraviolet light, the central flowers appear highly reflective, and the large bracts look dark.

Bribes with food
The majority of animals involved in pollination do so because the flower provides food (nectar and/or pollen) in exchange for unintentional pollination services. Nectar is primarily sugar water that contains amino acids, minerals, and vitamins in concentrations best suited to meet the nutritional needs of the pollinator.

Researchers studying different species of Impatiens flowers discovered that nectar varied, even within a genus. For example, the nectar of some species included more amino acids, which helped butterflies who lacked protein in their diet. Plants dependent on pollinators with high-energy needs, such as hummingbirds, produce highly-concentrated sugar nectar. Bees have been shown to be capable of perceiving differences in sugar concentration as small as 1 to 3%. Plants have changed over time to get the amount of nectar just right. If the flower offers too little, pollinators won’t be attracted to it. On the other hand, too much nectar will sate visitors quickly and they won’t have an incentive to look for more (effectively putting a halt to the pollination process). A large volume of nectar typically attracts bird pollinators.

Another food reward, pollen, is high in protein, which meets the needs of many bees and beetles. Some flowers produce two types of pollen: normal pollen that is involved in cross-pollination and sterile pollen that is a tempting food source.

Flowering time
Additionally, plants have evolved flowering times throughout the growing season to decrease competition for pollinators and to provide pollinators with a constant supply of food.

Plant native plants to entice the pollinators to your own back yard.

Note: This is part one of a two-part series. Lela Martin is a Master Gardener with the Chesterfield County office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
May 15+
GO PUBLIC GARDENS!
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens is celebrating the last weekend of Go Public Gardens! with special events. On Sat., May 15, The Latin Ballet of Virginia will perform “MISTICA: World Mythology Come to Life” from 1 to 1:40 p.m. and again from 2 to 2:40 p.m. On Sun., May 16, enjoy poetry readings in the Gardens with River City Poets. Visit bit.ly/LewisGinterEvents for more information. Call (804) 262-9887 with questions.

May 18
CONVERSATION WITH A DOCENT
Join this free Zoom workshop with a docent at the National Museum of African American History and Culture about the lives and achievements of individuals in the face of injustice. This event takes place Tues., May 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Register at bit.ly/ZoomWithDocent.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
May 27+
WALLED IN
From Thurs., May 27 to Sat. June 26, the Firehouse Theatre hosts both in-person and livestream performances of Walled in, a play written and directed by Andrew Gall. The performance follows the journey of a high-powered lobbyist who, as a student in a prison education program, is forced to read Henry David Thoreau’s Walden; or, Life in the Woods. Tickets are $33 and can be purchased by visiting bit.ly/FTWalledin.

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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The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Studies show that sunshine can lift your mood and your energy levels. But as we all know, the sun, unfortunately, does not always shine. So, to bring the benefits of natural daylight indoors, use the floor lamp that simulates the full spectrum of daylight. You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain. Its 27-watt compact bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb. This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes.

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Miscellaneous

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 14

WWII POW CAMPS IN VIRGINIA

Hear about WWII prisoners of war held in Virginia camps at a free lecture from a historian at the Richmond Public Law Library, Kathyrn Roe Coker, Ph.D., will present a virtual “Lunch and Learn” social justice discussion, touching on racial discrimination in the armed forces and the treatment of military personnel and prisoners of war. This free event takes place Mon., June 14 from 12 to 1 p.m. For more information or to register, visit bit.ly/WWIPOWs.

Food Coloring

Across
1. Prepare the cake batter
5. Pants pioneer, Strauss
9. “B__ boy”
13. Fire truck carry-on
14. Clapton, who is a 3-time inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
15. BP merger partner in 1998
16. “___ Lang Syne”
17. Snap up snappers
18. It counts down on a microwave
23. The Sound of Music
26.___blue moon
29. Elements of all of this puzzle’s components of all of this puzzle’s
34. “___ always meet each other with a ___”
36. Common score on hole 9 at Pebble Beach
37. Neighbor to LeBron
39. Novelist Jong
42. Switch ups
44. “___dah!”
46. Trig. function
48. Common part of ICU and SVU
50. Right half of a DOMINO
52. ___plus; 1987, ___D.C.
53. Because of all of this puzzle’s
56. “___-di-dah!”
59. Common part of ICU and SVU
61. ___ always meet each other with a ___
62. End of KFC founder’s rank
63. ___en ___ blue moon
65. Components of all of this puzzle’s theme foods
66. ___ all the way with a ___ smile” (Mother Theresa)
67. Northflowing African river
68. The only person to be both President and Chief Justice
69. The Sound of Music filming locale
70. Otherwise

By Stephen Sherr

Down
1. Volumizing hairstyle
2. Wander through Gracealand
3. Part of an archipelago
4. Conversion of tickets to prizes at the arcade
5. Southpaws
6. Canal connecting the Hudson and Niagara rivers
7. It was first called BankAmericard
8. “You boo the players you hate; ___ the ones I like”
9. Mideast ruler
10. East African
11. Headache reliever (or environmental disaster)
12. One each of the Carolinas and Dakotas
13. Embassy employee
14. Zilch
15. TV’s Warrior Princess
16. Tavern
17. Game with Skip and Reverse cards
18. 25-1, 5-3
19. Mideast ruler
20. Babe Ruth had 168 in 1921
21. Letters on a promissory note
22. One each of the Carolinas and Dakotas
23. Vol. in the back
24. Headache reliever (or environmental disaster)
25. ___ of all of this puzzle’s
26. ___ always meet each other with a ___
27. ___ en ___ blue moon
28. ___dah!”
29. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
30. ___ on hole 9 at Pebble Beach
31. ___ to Be Born
32. ___ of all of this puzzle’s
33. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
34. ___ of all of this puzzle’s
35. ___ always meet each other with a ___
36. ___all ___ blue moon
37. Components of all of this puzzle’s theme foods
38. ___en ___ blue moon
39. ___ always meet each other with a ___
40. ___ of all of this puzzle’s
41. ___ of all of this puzzle’s
42. ___ always meet each other with a ___
43. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
44. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
45. ___ always meet each other with a ___
46. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
47. ___ always meet each other with a ___
48. ___ always meet each other with a ___
49. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
50. ___ always meet each other with a ___
51. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
52. ___ always meet each other with a ___
53. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
54. ___ always meet each other with a ___
55. ___ plus; 1987, ___D.C.
56. ___ always meet each other with a ___
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70. ___ always meet each other with a ___

Click on Puzzles

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Answers on page 21.
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