

Prime Times

- **Free Rides for Cancer Treatment**

provided by American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery

- **Over the Hill or Still on Top of It**

Prime Time is whenever you say it is

- **Local Forays**

enrich the mind and get steps done



American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery provides free rides for cancer treatment

BY WANDA CURTIS
Correspondent

Skowhegan resident Libby Ackroyd is a cancer survivor. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010 and was informed that she needed more than 30 radiation treatments. She had to travel five days a week for 6 1/2 weeks to the cancer center in Brewer for treatment. She wondered how she would get there if she became too ill to drive herself.

"My husband was only able to drive me one day a week," said Ackroyd. "I was thankful that two retired oncology nurses and a friend volunteered to drive me the other four days. I don't know how I would have gotten to my appointments otherwise."

The American Cancer Society estimates that this year more than 8,000 Mainers will be diagnosed with cancer. ACS reports that many individuals are concerned about how they will get to their treatment appointments. Especially in rural areas, it can be challenging to find transportation to treatments that often continue for many weeks or months.

Elisa Madore, program manager of Mission Delivery for the American Cancer Society in Maine, said that some cancer patients either don't own a vehicle or can't afford the gasoline, and don't have access to public transportation. She said that others who own a car may not feel well enough to operate their vehicle while receiving treatments. The good news is that ACS operates a free program designed to address those needs.

Road to Recovery is a nationwide program that provides transportation, free of charge, to individuals attending cancer treatment-related medical appointments. A team of local volunteers use their own vehicles and pay for the cost of gas to transport cancer patients to their appointments. Some volunteers are former cancer patients themselves. Many are retired seniors. Each volunteer undergoes a thorough background check and must meet ACS guidelines to participate in the program. The only age restriction is that volunteers may not serve as drivers after age 85.

ACS reports that since the program began running nationwide in 1983, volunteers have provided tens of millions of free rides for more than a million cancer patients to attend treatment appointments across the U.S.

"Potential volunteers must have a valid driver's license, a safe and reliable vehicle and proof of automobile insurance."

THERESA FREEMAN, AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Elisa Madore, program manager of Mission Delivery for the American Cancer Society in Maine.



Senior Andrea Sparrow supervises volunteer drivers.



Senior Libby Ackroyd is a cancer survivor who reaches out to help people who are battling seniors.

In 2018, the state of Maine's branch of the ACS served 162 patients with 1,438 rides through Road to Recovery and other transportation partners.

After recovering from breast cancer, Ackroyd decided to volunteer for the Road to Recovery program. She transports cancer patients from Kennebec and Somerset counties to the cancer centers in Brewer and Augusta. She also has transported them to other medical appointments, such as eye doctor appointments related to their cancer treatment. She said that her husband provides a lot of support for her behind the scenes. They're both retired school teachers.

"We get out the gazetteer and he helps me to locate the homes," said Ackroyd. "Sometimes we take a test run on Sunday afternoon so that I can be sure that I know exactly where I'm going."

Once the patient arrives at his or her destination, Ackroyd stays nearby until the treatment is completed. She said that she's available to attend appointments with them, but is also willing to wait somewhere nearby if they prefer to attend alone. She doesn't mind driving long distances, but she really doesn't like to drive in the snow. She said that once a person had an appointment that took all day and it started

snowing while they were at the hospital. She was worried about driving the long distance back to his home on slippery back roads. She was thankful that his wife lined up someone to meet them on the way home to transport her husband over the back roads.

Ackroyd said that she gets a lot of pleasure from volunteering. She said that the individuals she transports are always so grateful for the rides. She enjoys getting to know each of them personally.

"Each one has their own personality and something special to offer," said Ackroyd. "I don't just give to them, they give back to me and I learn something from each of them. I had a hard time when two older ladies that I transported died recently, back-to-back. I thought to myself, 'we're supposed to be helping them to get better.'"

Andrea Sparrow is another retired senior volunteer whose life has been touched by cancer. She retired early when her husband was diagnosed with lymphoma so that she could spend more time with him. Someone at the Alford Center for Cancer Care asked her about volunteering for the Road to Recovery program after her husband's death. She started out as a driver and now serves as a coordinator for drivers. She said that she

plans an annual gathering for the drivers to get to know one another and they work together like one big family.

"When I drove into Augusta one day and saw them beginning construction on the Alford Center for Cancer Care in the distance, I never knew that I'd spend so much time there in the future," Sparrow said. She said another relative was diagnosed with cancer after her husband was diagnosed.

ROAD TO RECOVERY ALSO ASSISTS CANCER PATIENTS BOUND FOR BOSTON

The Road to Recovery program not only makes it possible for cancer patients to attend treatment-related appointments here in Maine, but they also partner with other agencies to assist cancer patients to attend treatment-related appointments in Boston. Madore said that cancer patients and a family member or friend can travel by Amtrak for a special rate of \$12 each way. She said that they also partner with several hotels in the Boston area to provide inexpensive or free lodging for individuals from Maine who need to stay overnight for cancer treatment-related appointments.

URGENT NEED FOR MORE DRIVERS IN MAINE

According to ACS communications director Theresa Freeman, there currently is an urgent need for more drivers in Maine. She said that in 2018, ACS had 133 local volunteer drivers in the state. However, due to family commitments, illness and seniors needing to return to work to supplement their income, ACS now has only 78 active drivers in Maine.

"Potential volunteers must have a valid driver's license, a safe and reliable vehicle and proof of automobile insurance," said Freeman. "Drivers must be at least 18 years old and have a good driving history. They arrange their own schedules and can come as many or as few hours as their schedule allows. ACS provides free training to drivers and conducts criminal background and driving record checks. Our volunteers are the heart of the Society's work, and we are so grateful for the service they help us provide."

Anyone interested in learning more about the Road to Recovery program can visit cancer.org/drive. To volunteer or to request a ride, call (800) 227-2345.

Over the hill or still on top of it

BY SUSAN VARNEY
Correspondent

What's Prime Time? You know, it's us, people our age, over 50, in the prime of life. Retired, semi-retired, older working-full time, can't afford to retire, basically. Oh yeah, us.

So what do I do with this time of my life? It's no wonder I didn't know what prime time was - Prime time to me was when I was young, took to the woods, built a log cabin, worked as a gourmet chef, ran a rafting company, drove a bus, traveled, rode a motorcycle, painted, partied with friends and still had energy for cross-country skiing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, reading and writing, growing a garden and foraging.

As I aged, things that used to delight became memories — legends, even — and more sedentary pursuits took precedence.

I live on the Kennebec River and have since the 1980s, from The Forks to Hallowell. I love rivers, always have. The Kennebec is my favorite. Rivers are dynamic, always moving, changing with the seasons, the weather, the time of day and so many variables that it never gets boring. Well, almost never. Sometimes the constraints on rivers, like dams, riverside companies and pollution, make a natural wonder not so wonderful.

Most of us remember when no one wanted to live by the rivers, when they were discolored and stank of pollution from mills, industries, homes; when fish and birds died. I would hate to see that happen again because environmental standards are relaxed. Clean water, air and land are essential.

Sitting by the river is a favorite pursuit, drinking Lady Grey tea or black coffee, listening to the high peeping of the osprey

hunting, watching the kingbirds flit from the silky dogwood catching flies over the river. I enjoy reading, planning new gardens - shade gardens under the massive oak, pine and silver maples. The more sunny area at the front gets used for vegetables, wild flowers, herbs in raised beds and walkways.

Asking my neighbor if she considered this to be her prime time, she laughed having the same reaction I did.

"There was a time we didn't need a nap in the middle of the afternoon," she said.

Naps are and have always been welcome, especially when doing an intense job like working hard keeping up with the men in a landscape crew. No nap there.

Life is getting to know your territory, yourself and your resources. Go for a walk, find the local parks and public places, cemeteries, back roads to nowhere, get to know your neighbors and your neighborhood. Get to know the trees and their names, get to know the things growing in the waste places (the good, the bad and the ugly), the places where no one lives. (Well, almost no one. Is it true the riversides and centers on the thruway are being cut to keep the homeless out?) Visit the river's edge, the lesser used roadsides, scenic overlooks. Ask your friends about their favorite places, they are as important to my life as shopping malls are to others.

Get to know your library, get books to help you identify flowers, shrubs, trees, mushrooms, fruits in your area. The first book I got, as a kid of nine, was a bird book, which I still have, Roger Tory Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds."

My grandmother fed the birds, had a huge bird book and giant binoculars for identifying and watching. She was wonderful. Gramp had a big vegetable garden where he fended off woodchucks and deer



Susan Varney photo

Go exploring. Prime time is for doing those things you love to do. Take a walk around your neighborhood with your camera and make a photo essay.

— some things never change as I, too, try to discourage woodchucks and deer from my tiny garden!

Prime time is a time to try out crafts, recipes, books you've never had time for before now. Take pictures, get up early and work in the garden while the neighborhood is cool and quiet, take the dog for a walk, go to the farmers market or the library, eat

weeds instead of killing them with poisons that are killing us, too.

Know what is in season. Ask your neighbor if he minds if you harvest wild mushrooms from a tree in his yard or dig dandelions in season. Put up bird houses, feeders and bird baths. Create a sanctuary for your friends, neighbors and yourself because prime time is whenever you say it is.

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In some age-friendly communities older citizens learn to lean on each other

BY VALERIE TUCKER
Correspondent

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities defines such communities as livable, with the services and supports that make the town, city or neighborhood a great place for people of all ages. Age-friendly communities have walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for residents to socialize and participate in activities.

Patricia Oh serves as AARP's consultant to the Age-Friendly Communities Network initiative and travels the state speaking to municipalities and residents and helping develop a long-term plan.

"Some rural communities, whether or not they are in AARP's network, just want to take care of their own," she said. "They don't want to join our network, but sometimes, the folks who need help don't make themselves known."

Recruiting volunteers is usually a challenge, she said. Some seniors might need help with repairing their front steps and putting up storm windows, while others need a ride to the grocery store or doctor's appointment.

"We find that people want to make a difference in their communities, but sometimes they don't know how," she said. "That's where we help them put together a plan that meets their specific needs."

Other agencies are addressing the challenges of Maine's older populations. For more than 40 years, Spectrum Generations has offered practical expertise in helping towns identify their age-friendly features and benefits. They are the designated Central Maine Area Agency on Aging and a federally-designated Aging and Disability Resource Center. As the Aging and Disability Resources Manager, Sara Grant's job is to help communities in six counties assess the unique needs of residents age 60 and over.

"I wear many hats," she said. "We cover six counties in Maine, so we're a central source of information for a lot of people."

Her interest in age-friendly communities started years ago when she was working towards her Master's degree. She helped launch Augusta's effort to assess the availability and accessibility of resources for all age groups. The city now has a formally-established Age-Friendly Advisory Committee and a long-term plan.

Qualified seniors now can get sand bucket

"We don't have assisted living, a nursing home, hospice or anything like a Spectrum Generations. Even if an elderly person wanted to hire someone, there's no one available."

DENISE PLANTE, VOLUNTEER, JACKMAN COMMUNITY SUPPORT COMMITTEE



Contributed photo

The Somerset County town of Jackman is one of dozens in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities in Maine. Neighbors expect to help each other out, said volunteer and community organizer, Denise Plante. Last fall, volunteers gathered for an old-fashioned wood bee — sawing, splitting and stacking an elderly couple's firewood for the winter.

deliveries to their homes to help reduce winter-time falls and injuries. The volunteer snow-shoveling program and new benches at area shopping centers adds to seniors' safety and security. Whether or not towns and cities are in the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network, citizens can establish senior networks and services tailored to their community's needs and available resources.

Transportation is a roadblock for many seniors, Grant said. For example, for some individuals with very low income, Medicaid pays for specialized transportation, but only to qualifying services. To meet one-fifth of Maine Department of Transportation's public transportation service goals to provide more transportation to rural communities by 2025 will require an annual commitment of \$14 million. Some communities have established Neighbor-To-Neighbor or similar transportation programs which might include taking individuals to appointments or grocery shopping.

Affordable housing for seniors remains in short supply. According to Spectrum Genera-

tion's data, nearly 10,000 Mainers are on a waiting list, and that number is expected to climb to 15,000 by 2022. In January 2019, Governor Janet Mills released the \$15 million bond package approved by voters two years ago to finance new affordable housing units and home weatherization programs for low-income seniors.

Many rural Maine towns once thrived because everyone had jobs. But shoe shops and wood products manufacturing jobs have disappeared and young people have had to move away for employment opportunities. That means fewer taxpayers and older citizens on fixed incomes.

The town of Jackman is about 70 miles away from anything, said resident Denise Plante. Even getting by ambulance to a hospital could take hours.

"We don't have assisted living, a nursing home, hospice or anything like a Spectrum Generations," she said. "Even if an elderly person wanted to hire someone, there's no one available."

The community support committee decided



Contributed photo

In July, senior residents of the Chateau Cushnoc and the John Marvin Towers in Augusta danced to the oldies at their senior prom. Members of the Augusta Fire and Police Departments joined the evening's fun. Augusta Police Department Community Resources Officer Brad Chase arrived in uniform to escort resident Jane Rocque, even providing her with a wrist corsage before the start of festivities. Volunteers led by Chateau Cushnoc Service Coordinator Lynn Boardway helped with refreshments, music, decorations and invitations.

to do what they could with limited resources. They recruited volunteers to help with immediate and long-term needs. They get together for Mug Up lunches and socializing, and they find ways for caretakers of loved ones with long-term medical issues like Alzheimer's to get much-needed respite time. Some of the volunteers gathered last fall for an old-fashioned wood bee, she said.

"We got together a great group of volunteers to cut, split and stack firewood in late fall for an elderly couple," she said. "We know people have a lot of pride and don't want to ask for help, but this was something that needed to be done."

Plante said community groups have to be aware of people's reluctance to ask for help, whether it's because they can't pay or they can't do the physical work any longer. Many of the seniors' needs require specialized care and they are reluctant to let strangers into their homes.

That's a challenge, she said, but in a small community, most everyone knows each other already.

Natural solutions for going gray with style

Gray hair is a natural side effect of aging. The rate at which hair will turn to gray differs based on genetics and other factors. Some people may go gray seemingly overnight, while others may gray at the temples first before the rest of their hair gradually changes color.

Aging women often wonder if they should cover up their gray hair or embrace the silver. Going gray is no longer something that has women running to their stylists at the sight of the first gray strand. Some actually opt for silver even before their own gray sets in. According to a survey of hair trends by L'Oréal Professional, 28 percent of women embraced or considered opting for silver hair. The trend has continued to gain steam. Celebrities like Jamie Lee Curtis and Helen Mirren were some of the first to embrace their grays. Younger celebrities like Kendall Jenner, Pink and Lady Gaga have opted for silver tresses to make a statement.

But there are still many women who prefer

to transition gradually or avoid the harsh chemicals in some hair products. The National Cancer Institute states that more than 5,000 different chemicals are used in hair dye products, some of which are reported to be carcinogenic in animals. There are many natural ingredients that can add tint to hair to make gray less visible. Coffee, for example, can cover grays and add dimension to dark tresses. Chamomile tea is recommended for blonds to add natural highlights and perhaps camouflage their grays. Calendula, marigold, rosehips and hibiscus can deepen red shades or add some subtle red highlights. Henna also is a popular natural method to add a red-orange color to hair. Creating highlights to offset gray hair can work as well. Spraying lemon juice on hair and sitting in the sun can produce lightening effects.

Many women are seeking natural options to look their best. Embracing grays or creating subtle tints with natural ingredients can help women feel confident and beautiful.

What is a Trust?

SUBMITTED BY DANIEL J. ECCHER, ESQ.
Levey, Wagley, Putman & Eccher, P.A.
Special to Prime Times

Are you wondering whether a trust may be useful to your estate plan? Are you the beneficiary of a trust? Are you the trustee of a trust?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, read on!

The very most basic way to form a trust is to give something to someone else (a "Trustee") for the benefit of a third person or entity (a "Beneficiary"). I could write a check to a friend, made payable to "John Smith, as trustee for the benefit of Jane Doe," and in so doing, form a trust. Of course, I would want to give instructions to my friend, John Smith, as to how I wanted him to administer the trust, and I would want those instructions in writing. Furthermore, I would want John to agree to those instructions by signing them. These written instructions, signed by the "Grantor" or "Settlor" of the trust and the Trustee, would be called the "trust agreement."

Trusts are very flexible legal entities. One can form a trust during one's lifetime, such as in the above example; these are sometimes called "inter vivos" or "living" trusts. Alternatively, one can put trust language in one's will; these are called "testamentary" trusts. A common reason we help clients form trusts is that the beneficiaries are on some form of public assistance that has an asset threshold, such as Social Security or Medicaid; in these cases, we prepare special needs trusts.

Another common reason people form trusts is to preserve camps within their families. Trusts can also be very useful in long-term care planning. Additionally, trusts are helpful in minimizing estate taxes (allowing couples to maximize the "portability" of the estate tax exclusion).

For more information contact Daniel J. Eccher, Esq. at (207) 377-6966, or email d.eccher@leveyandwagley.com. Visit www.leveyandwagley.com.

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Local forays can enrich the mind and help get those 10,000 steps done

BY KATE CONE
Correspondent

It's on the nightly news at least once a week. Not the Red Sox score (that's every night), not the latest meme (check social media for that, if you really must), but the answer to life's big, BIG question: How much exercise is the right amount?

That answer depends on which reliable health organization du jour is asked the question, but the consensus is this: people over the age of 65 are not off the hook. In order to stay healthy or get there in the first place, one should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. Broken down into manageable chunks, that could mean 30 minutes a day for five days a week.

What is "moderate intensity?" According to the Mayo Clinic, a good way to gauge whether you are working at a moderate intensity level is to pay attention to how you feel while doing it.

Moderate activity feels somewhat hard. Here are clues that your exercise intensity is at a moderate level:

- Your breathing quickens, but you're not out of breath.
- You develop a light sweat after about 10 minutes of activity.
- You can carry on a conversation, but you can't sing. (mayoclinic.org)

For most of us, not being able to sing while exercising is a blessing to anyone who happens to be nearby. But being able to talk while doing a power walk, say, is a good measure that you're doing it right. Indoors or outside, slow or fast, there is some virtue in at least getting in your steps. The World Health Organization is said to recommend 10,000 steps a day, or about five miles. But Doctor Andrew Weil states that any movement is better than none, and after your own doctor approves a new exercise program, the following destinations will get you closer to your goal.

COLBY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

Colby College Museum of Art is the biggest art museum in the state and is a treasure to have right in Waterville. Just in time for a new fitness goal is the opening of its new exhibit, described as:

Wíwanikan...the beauty we carry is an exhibition of contemporary art of the First Nations people of what is now Maine and Maritime Canada. Collectively known as the Wabanaki, the Maliseet, Micmac, Passa-



Contributed photo

Vaughn Woods has a 90-minute hike that will get you at least 2,000 to 3,000 steps, maybe more. And the fact that the hike includes a guide and his or her expertise on the woods and its history makes this trip a no-brainer.

maquoddy, Penobscot, and Abenaki, our people have lived in and paddled through our homeland for thousands of years. (colby.edu/museum)

A stunning collection of baskets, sculptures, mixed-media and oral histories line the gallery walls, reminding us that someone was here before us, and they are still here sharing their stories. Most of these artists are still alive, yet capture the thousands of years of history of their peoples in the pieces here.

In addition, there are the exhibitions that linger: Alex Katz's paintings, with the recent addition of a series of illustrations he made for the novel *Moby Dick*; a group of etchings by Picasso, Rembrandt and Whistler; weathervanes and the museum's other collections of art.

A plus is the Starbucks' cafe in the lobby, which makes it a perfect meeting place for coffee or lunch with a foray into the galleries fortified with caffeine and food. The museum is free and open to the public. Located at 5600 Mayflower Hill, the museum is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, Noon-5 p.m.; closed Mondays and open on Thursdays until 9 p.m. during the academic year. Check website for holiday hours. Parking is alongside the museum or the Roberts parking lot. Call 859-5600 or email museum@colby.edu for more information.

VAUGHAN HOMESTEAD

Hallowell boasts a jewel of a destination that has existed for hundreds of years. The homestead of the Vaughan family from 1794 is open in summer for guided tours, offering the history of a time and place that we can long for, but never truly have. A good alternative is strolling through this rambling house and imagining life in a Colonial Hallowell. You'll still get some activity, just don't try to power walk through the parlor. Not polite.

The Vaughan Homestead is located at 2 Litchfield Road. Open only in summer, house tours are offered at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays throughout July and August by reservation. Cost is \$10 per person. July dates have gone by but tours are offered on August 13, 20 and 27. For information call 622-9831 or email info@vaughanhomestead.org.

VAUGHAN WOODS

If you're a person who gets lost in a parking lot - well it's the car that gets lost, of course - register to take a hiking tour with a guide. You will get your exercise, meet new people and discover the great outdoors. Here is how the Woods came into being:

At the turn of the 20th century brothers William and Benjamin Vaughan dreamed of restoring the industry-ravaged lost family land adjacent to their 1794 ancestral home.

Between 1890 and 1930, they worked tirelessly to re-purchase the land, deconstruct the mills, and, utilizing local labor, create a nature preserve featuring three miles of carriage roads, footpaths and stone-arch bridges, now known as Vaughan Woods.

The family committed to having the land and woods be available for the use of local people, and finally, in 1991, William's granddaughter, Diana Vaughan Gibson and her husband George, donated a conservation easement on Vaughan Woods to The Kennebec Land Trust, ensuring its protection for future generations.

A 90-minute hike will get you at least 2,000 to 3,000 steps, maybe more. And the fact that the hike includes a guide and his or her expertise on the woods and its history makes this trip a no-brainer. And you won't get lost.

See website (tklt.org/vaughan) for parking directions. Best parking is in the Hall-Dale High School parking lot. Police will issue a ticket if you park near the Homestead. Follow signs to Hall-Dale.

QUARRY ROAD TRAILS

Quarry Road is a year-round outdoor recreation destination for people of all ages and abilities. The area has been used as far back as the 1930s, when there was a rope tow ski area there. Revived in the 1940s, then the 1960s it was most recently resurrected from abandonment by a group of local volunteers who wanted the over-200 acres to become a vibrant part of an outdoor experience.

Twelve years later, the network of trails offers ample opportunities to get in a good walking workout in the summer and fall. In winter, Quarry Road becomes a destination Nordic ski area designed by an Olympian skier.

In summer, "trails meander along the beautiful Messalonskee Stream, through the woods, up and down rolling hills and around an open meadow. All (7.5 mi) of Nordic ski trails are available spring to fall for walking and jogging, along with four miles of single-track hiking/biking trails. Dogs are welcome as long as they are leashed. Just think, you have to walk only three of those miles (1.5 miles in, 1.5 miles back to the trailhead) to log 6,000 steps. Overachievers can do the whole trail and garner 15,000.

Quarry Road Trails is located at 300 Quarry Road in Waterville. Call 314-0258 or email trails@quarryroad.org to learn more.

Aging Well Living Well Expo offers learning opportunities for seniors Oct. 4

Special to Prime Times

Have you ever wanted to learn more about self-defense techniques? Or, perhaps, gain a better understanding of medical marijuana? Or maybe a lesson on downsizing your home?

The 12th annual Aging Well Living Well Expo will be held Friday, Oct. 4 at the Grand Summit Hotel and Conference Center at Sunday River in Newry, Maine. Featuring workshops and lectures, the day-long event is a learning opportunity for adults offering fun, food and exploration.

The Aging Well Living Well Expo is presented by the nonprofit SeniorsPlus, the designated Area Agency on Aging for Western Maine. Tickets for the Expo, which runs from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 4, are \$25 per person and include breakfast and lunch, as well as entrance to workshops. Tickets can be purchased at www.seniorsplus.org or by calling 1 800-427-1241. Raffle and Chondola ride tickets may be purchased for an additional fee. Seats are limited; advance registration is strongly recommended.

Attendees are invited to explore necessary, serious learning, such as planning for the end of your life, as well as first-time explorations like tai chi, painting and crafting, and acupuncture. The 30 workshops to be presented at the Expo cover a range of topics, including law, health, exercise, cooking and art. Workshop titles range from "Alzheimer's and Dementia Basics," to "Introduction to Self-Employment," to "80s House-Party Water Aerobics." Workshops run 75 minutes each.

A breakfast keynote address will be presented by health reporter Diane Atwood

"Our goal for the Expo is to offer new learning opportunities that highlight active aging and improved quality of life."

BETSY SAWYER-MANTER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF SENIORSPLUS

whose career path began with working as a radiation therapist at Maine Medical Center. She went on to become the health reporter at WCSH (NewsCenter Maine), the NBC-affiliated television station, a job she held for more than 20 years. She left in 2002 to manage marketing and public relations for Mercy Hospital (now Northern Light Mercy Hospital) in Portland.

In 2011, Atwood decided to combine the experience and skills she had acquired over the years to create the award-winning health and wellness blog Catching Health. This year, she expanded her media platform by launching the podcast, Conversations About Aging, which features interviews with people ages 60 to 100. Both the blog and podcast may be found at CatchingHealth.com and in the Bangor Daily News.

Atwood began her podcast Conversations About Aging after attending a conference on the issue of loneliness among older people. There, the importance of listening to people's stories was stressed so that the teller felt relevant. Atwood realized that she could do more than listen, she could record and share people's stories.

In the interviews that comprise her podcast, she encourages her subjects to think deeply about how they are living their lives. She pulls the information by asking them questions focused on the present, such as, "What makes it a good day for you? How do people treat you now that you're older?"

How do you want to be treated?" Their responses encourage a wider conversation about growing older. In her talk, Atwood will share some of the stories she's heard and the lessons she has learned.

"Our goal for the Expo is to offer new learning opportunities that highlight active aging and improved quality of life," said Betsy Sawyer-Manter, president and CEO of SeniorsPlus. Almost 300 attendees attended the Expo last year. A complete schedule of programming can be found at the SeniorsPlus website www.seniorsplus.org.

The mission of SeniorsPlus is to enrich the lives of seniors and adults with disabilities. Established in 1972, the organization believes in supporting the independence,

dignity and quality of life of those we serve.

SeniorsPlus covers Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties, where it is the Agency on Aging and the Aging and Disability Resource Center. The agency focuses on older adults, adults with disabilities and families, and offers a network of support, including information and assistance, short-term case management, Medicare counseling, caregiver support and respite, prevention education and Options Counseling. It provides nutritional services, including Meals on Wheels, and community dining in the tri-county, largely rural territory. In 2018, SeniorsPlus served 17,000 individuals.

SeniorsPlus is grateful for the support of its major sponsors of the Expo: Subaru of America, Turner Publishing, Inc., Healey & Associates, Central Maine Healthcare (CMHC), Martin's Point Health Care, Woodlands Senior Living, Home Care for Maine, Gleason Media and Senior Planning Center.

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Help! I'm afraid I'm losing my memory

Professional advises what to do next

BY TERRI HIBBARD
Correspondent

I forgot my debit card PIN at the grocery store checkout.

My dentist's office called because I had forgotten an appointment.

Am I headed for Alzheimer's?

If you're at all concerned about it, takes steps to find out, said Annette Beyea, DO, MPH.



**ANNETTE BEYEA,
DO, MPH**

"Any time a person experiences memory loss, it's important to alert your primary care provider," she said.

Dr. Beyea is medical director of Maine Dartmouth Geriatric Medicine and program director of Maine Dartmouth Family Medicine Resi-

dency's Geriatric Medicine Fellowship.

Early evaluation for any kind of memory problem is critical, she said, so that if help is needed, it can begin right away.

To find out if your forgetfulness is nothing to worry about or needs attention, your primary care provider should do a comprehensive examination along with lab work.

At this time, a detailed history, such as when symptoms began and whether the problem has worsened, will be recorded. Also, the patient will be checked for psychiatric or neurologic symptoms and changes in function.

"This assessment will help rule out any secondary causes of memory loss," Beyea said.

Among possible causes that need to be checked:

- Depression
- Infections
- Autoimmune, metabolic and endocrine abnormalities (such as hypothyroidism)
- Nutritional deficiencies such as B12.

Medications and alcoholism can interfere with absorption of this vitamin.

- Poisoning
- Head injuries or concussions
- Tumors
- Heavy alcohol use

Certain medications are associated with memory loss, especially anticholinergic med-

"Over the counter medications like Benadryl, Tylenol PM, Motrin PM and Advil PM are often used by older adults as sleep aids, but contain diphenhydramine, an anticholinergic ingredient that should be avoided."

ANNETTE BEYEA, DO, MPH, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF MAINE DARTMOUTH GERIATRIC MEDICINE, PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF MAINE DARTMOUTH FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY'S GERIATRIC MEDICINE FELLOWSHIP

ications. Among them are some anti-depressants, anti-nausea drugs and others available by prescription that should be avoided by older adults if possible. The American Geriatrics Society publishes an updated list of such medications every three years.

"This is why it is very important that a comprehensive dementia evaluation includes a medication review and discontinuation of strongly anticholinergic medications when possible.

"Over the counter medications like Benadryl, Tylenol PM, Motrin PM and Advil PM are often used by older adults as sleep aids but contain diphenhydramine, an anticholinergic ingredient that should be avoided."

MEDICARE'S ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT

Beyea is a firm believer in Medicare's annual wellness visit. Although we may shrug off the value of remembering three words and drawing a clock face, "The Mini-Cog® (which is the name of the test), is a very good screening tool for dementia."

However, it's a screening tool, not a diagnostic tool. If the patient has difficulty with the screening, "it doesn't mean you have dementia; it means there is a need for further evaluation."

Rather than wait until there are serious issues with brain function, Beyea said this yearly screening can often help avoid or at least minimize problems.

Memory problems often can be resolved or at least significantly improved with lifestyle changes, she said.

"Most importantly, lifestyle modifications such as adequate sleep, physical activity/exercise, good nutrition, avoiding heavy alcohol consumption and socialization are integral to brain health and overall function."

Also, treatment of cardiovascular risk factors such as untreated sleep apnea, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are a must for good brain health, according to Beyea.

"What's good for the body, is good for the brain," she said.

If cognitive problems show up with screening, the diagnosis might not be Alzheimer's, for which there is as yet no cure.

Vascular dementia, for example, may occur after a stroke or several mini-strokes but might be reduced or controlled by reducing risk factors: heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes,

WHEN A SPECIALIST IS NEEDED

When evaluation beyond your primary care provider is needed, a specialist, such as a geriatrician, a geriatric psychiatrist, neurologist or a neuropsychologist must be consulted. And yes, Maine has these specialists in Bangor, Portland and Lewiston, Beyea said.

When a person is diagnosed with dementia, history from the patient and someone close to the patient—along with a number of possible tests—will then be done by a specialist.

"A brain MRI, or a CT if an MRI cannot be performed, will help determine the type of dementia. An FDG PET that looks at metabolism in the brain might also be recommended.

"Less commonly, procedures like an EEG to evaluate for seizures or a lumbar puncture to look at cerebrospinal fluid are performed," said Beyea.

And if the diagnosis is Alzheimer's, although there is as yet no cure, there is help. First, those same lifestyle factors that help us lead a healthy life may improve quality of life despite dementia, including Alzheimer's.

DESPITE DEMENTIA, LIFE CAN BE GOOD

"Certain medications and interventions can be helpful to improve memory and maintain function in dementia," she said.

Cholinesterase inhibitors can be tried in all (mild, moderate or advanced) stages of Alzheimer dementia and Lewy Body dementia. However, Beyea stressed the importance of a three to six-month follow-up evaluation to see if the medications are helping, as not all dementia patients will respond and these medications shouldn't be continued if there

is no benefit.

"In moderate to advanced Alzheimer's disease, your provider might recommend another class of medications, NMDA receptor antagonists like memantine (Namenda). Also, there is evidence that low-dose vitamin E supplementation can improve memory and function in Alzheimer's disease with minimal risks," she said.

However, Beyea said that taking any supplement should always be discussed with a person's provider to make sure benefits outweigh potential risks. There is no evidence that taking vitamin E or any other supplement, even those advertised to improve brain function, such as Prevagen, can improve brain function.

Antidepressants to help improve associated symptoms, such as anxiety, sadness or lack of motivation may also be prescribed to dementia patients, Beyea said.

Finally, Beyea said "If dementia is diagnosed, know that many people are living rich and full lives with dementia. There are a number of resources available through the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org) and community organizations like your Area Agency on Aging to help persons with dementia live well."

WORRISOME SIGNS OF BRAIN PROBLEMS

According to information on the Mayo Clinic website (search mayoclinic.org + memory loss for more information), the word "dementia" describes a set of symptoms, including impairment in memory, reasoning, judgment, language and other thinking skills. Dementia usually begins gradually, worsens over time and impairs a person's abilities in work, social interactions and relationships.

Early signs of dementia:

- Asking the same questions repeatedly
- Forgetting common words when speaking
- Mixing words up — saying "bed" instead of "table," for example
- Taking longer to complete familiar tasks, such as following a recipe
- Misplacing items in inappropriate places, such as putting a wallet in a kitchen drawer
- Getting lost while walking or driving in a familiar area
- Having changes in mood or behavior for no apparent reason

For older citizens, giving up the car keys is their worst nightmare

BY VALERIE TUCKER
Correspondent

According to a Consumer Reports statistic, 38 million Americans 65 and older have a driver's license, and 3.5 million of those drivers are older than 85.

The 2018 Maine Highway Safety Facts report provides a closer look at the numbers of Maine crashes, ages of drivers, types of driving conditions, causes of accidents and times of day. Statistics over the past decade indicate that older drivers were less likely to be involved in accidents caused by speeding, alcohol or distracted and reckless driving. Older drivers were less likely to drive at night or during bad weather conditions and were more likely to wear seat belts.

Although Maine's data indicate that that seniors as a group are safe drivers, they do have more medical conditions, medication usage and changes in reaction times that increase the risk of accidents, serious injuries and even fatalities.

Since Maine's aging population is increasing, and driving represents independence, any talk about giving up the car keys can be difficult for everyone involved. Often, an eye doctor or primary care provider can start the conversation, sometimes more easily than a family member.

Dr. Jessilin Quint of Smart EyeCare in Augusta, said compassion is a critical part of any health provider's discussion, and sugar coating bad news is not beneficial for the patient.

"I think doctors really try to have those hard conversations," she said. "We all want our patients to be happy and healthy, but not being able to drive can be very isolating and depressing."

She shows her patients what to expect as conditions such as glaucoma or macular degeneration start to affect their vision and driving. This allows them to plan for ways to adapt and make alternative transportation arrangements, she said.

Sara Grant, Aging and Disability Resources Manager at Spectrum Generations, works with seniors in six Maine counties. She suggests that before starting the conversation about taking away a senior's car keys, it's a good idea to prepare some options for transportation. For older adults living in Maine cities, those options can be buses, taxis and other ride-sharing services that run regularly. For rural older adults who live miles from doctors' offices and grocery stores, losing the car keys can mean a more severe loss of independence.

"In rural areas, if you don't drive, you can really be isolated," she said. "Nobody ever wants to have that ability taken away from them."

The key to a conversation about stopping driving is that it not be an intervention with

the end goal of giving up the keys. Grant recommends that family members start with some reading. The Hartford Center for Mature Market Excellence has partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to provide several booklets that help broach the subject. Their downloadable "We Need to Talk" booklet and other resources for the mature market can provide great resources and ideas.

Elizabeth Dugan, author of "The Driving Dilemma: The Complete Resource Guide for Older Drivers and Their Families," suggests all drivers should create a plan before it's needed.

"Just as you plan for long-term care costs and your retirement, experts advise you should also plan for the time when you'll have to stop driving," she advises readers.

In Maine, all drivers renew their driver's licenses every six years, in person, and their vision is tested at every other renewal. People age 65 and older are required to renew their driver's licenses every four years, and those age 62 and older must pass a vision test at

every renewal. Maine also has a process for reporting a potentially unsafe driver. Maine's Bureau of Motor Vehicles Medical Advisory Board reviews all ages of drivers' physical, emotional and mental competence to stay safe behind the wheel as a result of information from a variety of sources: permits, licenses, renewal applications and accident reports; written reports from family, physicians, law enforcement personnel and other government agencies; signed statements from citizens. Law enforcement officers and physicians represent the majority of individuals submitting reports. Concerned citizens who want to offer their input can Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles website or call 624-9000, ext. 52124, to learn more about the process. Callers will be required to provide their name and contact information. For more information, check maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/vision.html and maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/medical. For transportation resources: see spectrumgenerations.org and for Mature Market Publications, thehartford.com/resources.



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Scott Longfellow leads the family legacy of Longfellow's Greenhouses

BY GREG GLYNN

Marshall Communications
Special to Prime Times

When Scott Longfellow graduated in 1972 from Hall-Dale High School, he envisioned a career in carpentry in combination with his other passion of gardening, perhaps even building his own greenhouse business.

As he ventured off to college at the University of Maine at Orono, he took business classes in his first year because there wasn't a horticulture program. A year later, as fate would have it, the college offered a new plant and soil sciences program. This is where Scott Longfellow met a lot of influential people in his career and he says the timing couldn't have been better.

"In the mid-70s, awareness for the environment and Earth Day became a thing, and people became aware that there is another whole level of ornamental gardening that was growing in Maine."

After graduating from college in 1975, he went back to his roots and joined his parents just as they were starting to plan and construct their life's dream of building a modern greenhouse business.

In 1977, Scott Longfellow's parents opened Longfellow's Greenhouses at the location in Manchester. During his early 20s, Scott Longfellow was learning the family business from his parents and learning the ropes of business in an industry that was growing faster than any plant they've ever sold.

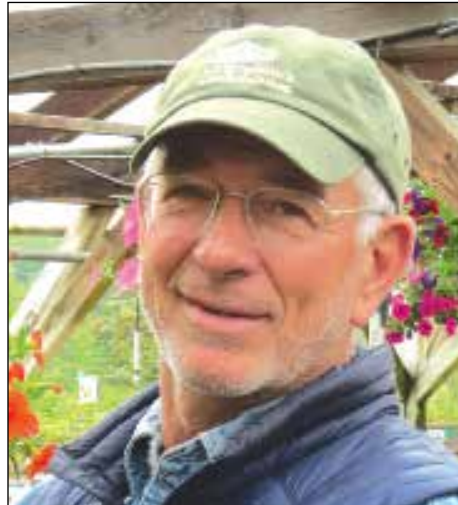
"I feel there was a big explosion in the industry in the mid to late 70s and we had our foot in the door at exactly the right time to be part of that, and growth was just a natural thing and every year sales increased."

The younger Longfellow worked for 10 years as the general manager before he and his wife, Sandy, bought the family business from his parents in 1987. The business was booming and then competition came along, but not in the form of another local greenhouse. It was technology. Soon computer screens were captivating people and as Scott says, it was a shift in society.

"All of a sudden people wanted to sit behind their computer and I think that took a lot of people's time away from their passion from gardening; it was a new thing that really exploded in our society that occupied people's spare time."

With all shiny objects and new toys, the newness wears off. Longfellow shared he is seeing a new trend in the gardening world from the next generation of gardeners.

"I feel people of all ages are coming back to gardening, including millennials. They (millenni-



"I feel people of all ages are coming back to gardening, including millennials."

SCOTT LONGFELLOW

als) grew up with technology, so they don't have that bewildered eye-popping experience of all this technology; it has just been part of their lives. Suddenly, they are noticing plants and looking at what they do and saying, 'this is so cool.'"

Scott and Sandy Longfellow have three children, William, Evan and Ellie, who are all part of the millennial generation. He was quick to share Ellie's ability to use technology, noting the rapid growth of her own Instagram account with hundreds of followers. He's proud that Ellie has worked seasonally at the Greenhouse for many years and has used her skills and passion for gardening to help with Longfellow's social media accounts. Social media is just one of the changes Scott Longfellow has seen in his nearly 50 years in the business.

Evan has worked in the business most of his younger years, but has chosen to start a career working for the USDA. Even though he has another career path, he still helps during the busiest times, and is always very interested in what's happening at Longfellow's.

"We are always keeping up with the changes in the industry and are, what I consider, a very good garden center on a national standard, not just Maine standards. I feel what we offer here at Longfellow's is just as good as what you will find at garden centers across the country."

During the interview, his son, Will, who is very involved in the day-to-day operations at Longfellow's Greenhouses and is in line

to take on his father's role with the family business, demonstrated his maturity. He respectfully asked to interrupt our chat with an opportunity for an order with a supplier who he had on the phone. Will and Scott made the decision to place the order.

"We have very high standards," said Longfellow when talking about their products and staff. "The age of my employees is a challenge because many are starting to retire and it's hard to find people with good horticulture experience to replace them. I have been very blessed that I have a lot of new employees in the wings that will be able to take on that challenge. So many of our people have been working for us for more than 20 years."

It's the horticultural experience of his employees that has led to rave reviews about Longfellow's customer service and friendly staff. One of Scott's favorite things about his job is hearing comments from customers about how a staff person helped them make a decision or shared advice about how to do something in the garden. He feels fortunate and confident that the current

crop of employees at Longfellow's can fill the shoes of people who are about to retire.

At 65, Scott's work ethic hasn't wavered, but like every great leader, he is preparing himself for what is next. With retirement in the future, his plan is to grow the business in a direction that will prepare it for the next generation of the family to take it over.

Longfellow is already getting his staff prepared to run the business without him being there. He raved about working with his family, especially his wife and co-owner, Sandy, sharing that she is such an important part of the business's success.

Scott plans to retire in about five years, but it's clear he has grown a strong business and family tree.

"I think working with my family is a luxury. I wouldn't trade it for anything. There are tough parts to it, but by far and away the positives outweigh the negatives," he said. "The fact that I am able to have my children and wife work with me in our business is priceless, not very many people have that opportunity."

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UMA Senior College has a lot to offer

BY UMA SENIOR COLLEGE
Special to Prime Times

Are you in on one of the best-kept secrets in Central Maine? It's UMA Senior College (UMASC)! Though Senior College has been around since 2001, we still run across senior citizens who haven't heard of it, or if they have, somehow have the idea it's not for them.

We understand that some seniors may find the idea of "college" off-putting, but in reality our organization offers an experience that is quite different from a regular institute of higher learning. In fact some have said that it is "how college ought to be."

At UMA Senior College we believe that learning is not only about improving your mind, but also about having a good time doing it. We are proud of the wide variety of classes that we are able to offer. In addition, our students enjoy the opportunity to meet new friends and to maintain connections with old pals. In fact one of the stated purposes of Senior College is to enrich the social life of people of retirement age. Best of all, there are no exams, and homework, if any, is optional.

Students participate for the joy of learning, and the sole compensation for our instructors is the opportunity to teach students who are eager to learn and who are at least fifty years

old. Except for a part-time administrator, the entire operation is run by volunteers at no public expense. Take a course at a price you can afford with no grades or pressure! Interact and learn with classmates and instructors your own age!

At UMASC our classes typically meet two hours a week for eight weeks; topics are suggested by students or are chosen by volunteer instructors on subjects about which they wish to share knowledge or experience. Opportunities may include excursion activities such as visiting light houses or waterfalls or museums in Maine. You can attend classes on watercolor painting, poetry, wood carving, or the natural world. Sometimes there are courses of practical value on topics such as financial and legal matters pertinent to older people, computer and internet skills, or issues related to seniors' health such as improving your balance and choosing your diet. History courses on the Revolutionary and Civil Wars have always been popular. For the more studious, there are literature courses, classes involving political or philosophical issues, or the relationship between science and religion. Recently, we have added some "activity" courses: one on bridge for beginners, and one on petanque. Both have spawned offspring with groups forming clubs that continue to play.

Typically we offer around twenty-five courses each semester; not all these topics are offered every semester, but you get the picture. And the cost is nominal. Annual membership in UMASC is \$25 (valid in any of the seventeen senior colleges in Maine) and \$30 tuition per course (scholarships available). Almost all of the books or other materials are provided free of charge. Oh, and yes, there are also poetry groups, book groups, walking groups, a bridge club, and a petanque club. We also offer free "Brown Bag" lectures every Tuesday in January and February on a variety of topics.

Equally exciting is the UMASC Concert Series which brings top-notch popular, folk, bluegrass, and classical music eight Sunday afternoons a year to all area residents. Most concerts are held in UMA's Jewett Auditorium. Ticket prices are intentionally kept low at \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, and children are free. The 2019-20 series includes State Street Jazz, October 20; Paul Sullivan, November 17; Katahdin Valley Boys, January 12 (snow date January 26); Christine Letcher, February 9 (snow date February 23); Maine-ly Harmony, March 8 (snow date March 15); The Gawler Family, April 5; and Sarah Geller, May 17.

UMASC's newest program is The Forum on the Future Series, designed to provoke discussion on the kind of future we want for our

grandkids or on topics of pressing interest to senior citizens. The 2019-20 academic year, expert featured speakers and panelists will give presentations on the following: Women in Government, September 22; Citizenship/Immigration, November 3; Our Divided Country, February 2 (snow date February 16); and Criminal Justice System, March 22 (snow date March 29). There is always ample opportunity for audience members to interact with the speakers, and these events are free and open to all.

UMA Senior College is fortunate to have had tremendous support from UMA. The University has provided us with office space, rooms for classes, and office help. Our work is managed by standing and ad hoc committees which are overseen by a capable and dedicated board of directors; this has proven to be both efficient and effective.

Become aware of a little known secret - Senior College activities can and will enhance your life. We hope you will join with us in making our later years fun and full of learning. For more information, call 621-3551, or email us at admin@umasc.org; our web address is www.umasc.org. Check out our website for information about this fall's offerings and additional information about the concerts and Forums on the Future.



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