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Pets

and the
positive impact
they have on
our lives

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Baypath Humane Society of Hopkinton, Inc. volunteer Marie McDonough, with one of the shelter's guests.

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AARP's 2017 budget priorities

BY MIKE FESTA, STATE DIRECTOR
AARP MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts elected officials prepared the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) commonwealth budget proposal, a \$40.5 billion spending plan which funds key priorities.

The Massachusetts fiscal year begins on July 1. Governor Charlie Baker made his budget recommendations in January; the House made its budget recommendations in April; and the Senate released its recommendations in May. The budget conference committee will release their recommendations in June.

AARP believes the com-

monwealth must now invest in vital programs, services and budgets to protect our aging population. We know that with each budget, difficult decisions must be made. But, we also know that the most vulnerable among us must be protected.

The aging population of Massachusetts will continue to grow along with its unique issues related to financial, health, caregiving and long-term care needs. Both planning and action by the commonwealth are required to make our society work well on behalf of all residents.

There are more than one million commonwealth residents age 65 and over, and according to the recent Massachusetts Commission on Elder Economic Security report, 6 in 10 single elders do not have the income to meet their basic needs.

According to estimates from the University of Massachusetts

Donahue Institute, the number of adults 60 and over in Massachusetts will soon eclipse the under-20 age cohort for the first time in recorded history. By the next census in 2020, the 60-plus group will comprise 24 percent of the population. AARP Massachusetts believes it is incumbent upon policy makers to recognize the changing demographics.

AARP Massachusetts budget priorities include programs and services that recognize and support the critical role of family caregivers; help people stay in their own home and community; strengthen the financial security of Massachusetts residents; and encourage age-friendly communities. Specifically, we recommend the following:

Full and adequate funding to provide home- and community-based care that enables older and disabled persons to remain healthy and independent, in-

cluding raising the income eligibility limits for basic home care services and some cost-sharing requirements;

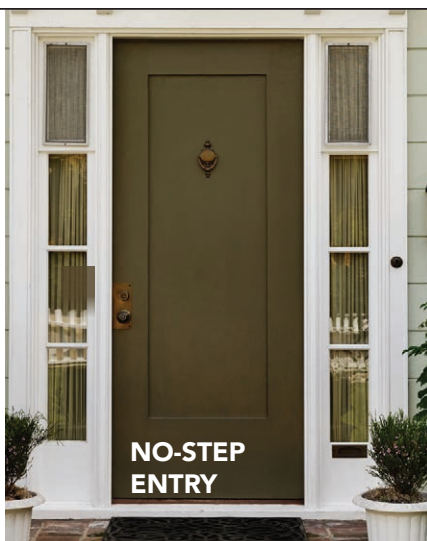
Development of a long-term care continuum that includes high quality, affordable skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, adult day health services, senior housing and home and community based services, to meet the needs of our aging population;

Full and adequate funding to maintain the 10-day nursing home leave of absence and the nursing home residents' personal needs allowance;

Full and adequate funding of protective services, including adult guardianship, the FAST teams, and the Money Management Program;

Support for family caregiver assistance, including education and training, counseling, legal

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pursue your passion

Framingham man creates art with a chainsaw

By JANICE BERGE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

FRAMINGHAM - Standing in a small 10-by-10 mesh tent at the Framingham Pinefield Shopping Center, one can find Sylvio Chauvin carefully carving pinewood into owls, bears, dogs, eagles and benches. Wearing protective chaps and covered in sawdust on a sunny Saturday afternoon, Chauvin is surrounded by several onlookers shouting things like, "Hey man, you are so talented!" or "I love natural looking things at my house. Can you make me a bench?" Chauvin smiles and slowly puts his Stihl chainsaw down to answer all of their questions.

Once Monday rolls around, Chauvin works in construction, but spends his evenings and weekends in solitude mastering the art of carving wood. His love for cutting pine logs into works of art started six years ago when he saw a man in New Hampshire sculpting lifelike masterpieces.

"I find this work to be very relaxing," he said.

The most common requests are for replicas of peoples' dogs. Since this is a part-time job for Chauvin, the labor time can rack up from three to 24 hours depending on the intricacy and



Left: Sylvio Chauvin with one of his creations

Below: A Bruins bear carved by Chauvin



PHOTOS: JANICE BERGE

detail of the piece.

"My hardest piece to cut is the eagle," he said, "and the easiest would be the owl."

These artistic creations of pinewood can range in price, and can weigh anywhere from 10 to 300 pounds. As Chauvin finishes carving his objects, he brushes and protects his pieces with a three-part combination of linseed oil, spar varnish and

mineral spirit which is similar to paint thinner. He usually recommends to his buyers that once a year they layer a coat of this protective sealant on his creation.

To challenge his talent for carving wood, Chauvin attends the Chainsaw Carvers' Rendezvous in Ridgeway, Pa. This eight-day event has carvers from around the world. They are presented with an eight-foot log which allows them to showcase what they can master with that timber. Once the objects are completed, several roads are closed off, and all of the sculptures are displayed on specific streets. The rendezvous includes seminars and other fun activities for the attendees and participants.

For more information on Chauvin's work, contact him at sylviochauvin@gmail.com.

AARP's 2017 budget priorities

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consultations, respite care, adult day services, and programs that help individuals pay relatives and friends who provide care;

Funding to create a "common application option" for MassHealth applicants to get SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and sufficient case worker funding to support increased SNAP caseload; and

Full and adequate funding

for the Councils on Aging and Senior Centers.

Stay up-to-date on the latest caregiving and advocacy news with AARP Massachusetts. Visit www.aarp.org/ma or call toll-free at 866-448-3621. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com.

Mike Festa is the state director for AARP Massachusetts. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com.

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Miniature horse 'Rosie' brings joy to all ages

By BONNIE ADAMS
MANAGING EDITOR

When Barbara Shaer would go to visit her mother, Ida Baker, who was living in a nursing home, another regular visitor there was a therapy dog. Since Shaer had recently retired from a career in health care, her brother Stephen Shear suggested that she consider doing pet therapy as well – but with a twist.

"He knew I loved horses so he suggested I do it with them," she said.

Intrigued, Shaer, who lives in Mansfield, started researching the idea, specifically with a miniature horse.

"It seemed like such a beautiful thing," she said. "I knew it was something I wanted to do."

Her search led her to a beautiful little class A miniature silver dapple horse, Rosie, who at the time was living in Connecticut with her previous owner. Af-



Barbara Shaer and "Rosie" with a young fan.

ter buying Rosie, Shaer started working with the organization Pet Partners in order to train and then eventually be certified with Rosie as a therapy team. Assisting her along the way as well was a young friend, Mason Rober, 14.

After becoming certified in July 2016, Shaer tapped into her network to spread the word that she and Rosie were available for visits. And in a year's time, they have gone to a number of facilities throughout southeastern Mass. and Rhode Island, such as libraries, assisted living and dementia care facilities and daycare for those with disabilities.

"It's been busy but extremely exciting," she said. "Everyone loves the idea."

At every visit, Rosie enthalls all she meets, Shaer said.

"She has a warm, cuddly personality," she noted. "People just love being in her presence and she loves being with them. She walks

PHOTO COURTESY OF BARBARA SHAER

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About the cover photo: Photographer Beth Oram frequently offers her services to local animal rescue organizations to help promote the valuable work they do. She took the charming cover photo of Marie McDonough, a Baypath Humane Society of Hopkinton, Inc. volunteer, who is holding one of the nonprofit, no-kill shelter's little guests. "I didn't grow up with pets, in fact, I was pretty scared of dogs when I was a kid!" Oram said. "But then, a dog loved me, and everything changed. I'm grateful to have a skill that I can use to help more people and animals become connected, and fall in love." For more information visit www.bethoramphotography.com and baypathhumane.org.

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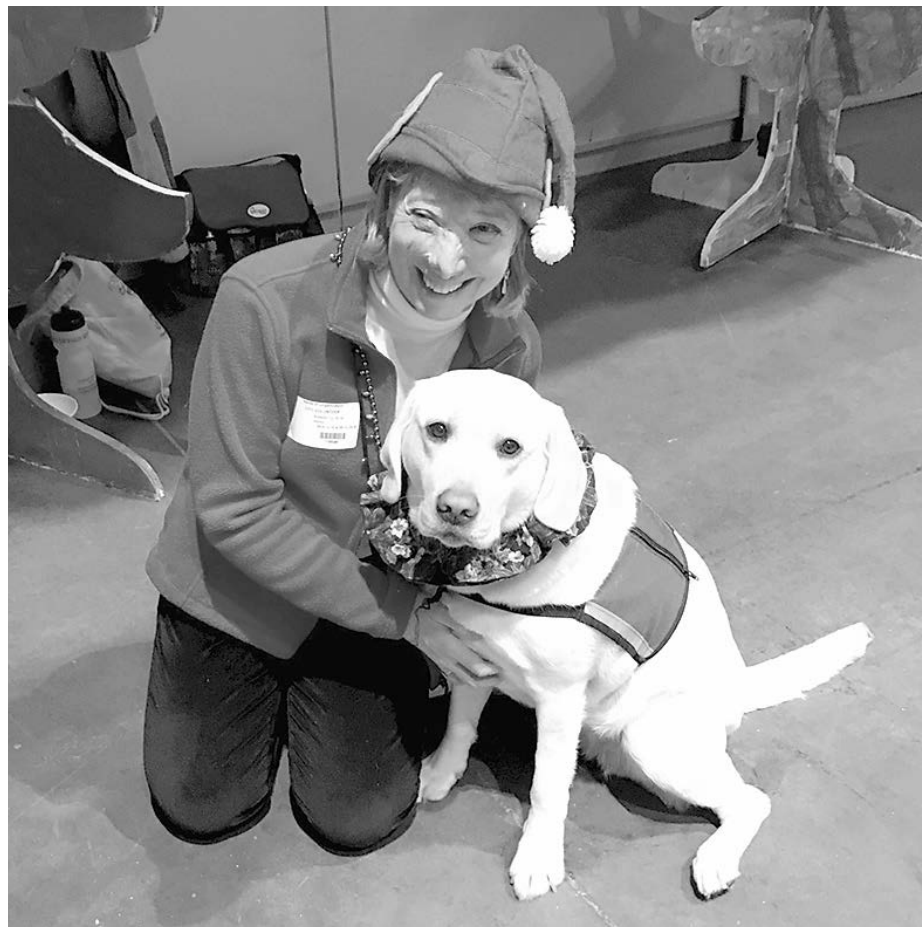
Offering pet-assisted therapy

By BONNIE ADAMS
MANAGING EDITOR

Nearly 25 years ago, Joel Wolff and his wife, Penny Schultz, along with their dog, started volunteering as a therapy team. Now, the couple volunteer (and Wolff serves as president) with the Pets and People Foundation, a nonprofit organization that offers “people therapy through pets.”

The foundation, started in 1985 and based in Acton, helps coordinate volunteer teams, human and dog (or on occasion, cat), for visits to residents of nursing homes, assisted living homes, special needs facilities, half-way houses, some children’s facilities, and some senior daycare centers and hospitals.

“We go to where people



Penny Schultz with “Aspen”

PHOTO/JOEL WOLFF

there,” as the more popular member’s escort.

“Ninety percent of the time they know the dog’s name but not yours,” he laughed.

Not every dog is cut out to be a therapy dog, just as not every person is suited for the work. The foundation ensures that both the human and the dog are extensively vetted before they are certified.

“We have been in existence for 32 years and have never had a biting incident,” Wolff said. “I attribute that to our certification process.”

Wolff said that many times an older rescue dog might actually be a better candidate for a therapy dog as opposed to a younger puppy.

“The rescue dog will have already had some evaluation and possible problems noted,” he said.

The foundation is based in Acton but teams make visits from Eastern Massachusetts from Worcester east to the Atlantic ocean, and from Falmouth north to the border with New Hampshire. There is no charge for the visits. A small fee is assessed for the testing of teams which helps pay for the organization’s expenses.

As their website states, “our budget comes entirely from donations, and our inspiration comes from the people whose faces light up when a dog, cat or other animal comes walks into a room to give unconditional love and attention to someone in need.”

Volunteers are also always needed, Wolff said, for help with administrative tasks or fundraising.

“If you believe in our mission, but don’t or can’t do therapy visits, there are still ways to help. We’d love to have you!” he said.

For more information, call 617-600-4670, email info@petsandpeoplefoundation.org or visit www.petsandpeoplefoundation.org.

need comfort,” Wolff said. “It could be an assisted living facility to visit seniors. Sometimes we go to libraries for reading programs. Kids might feel uncomfortable reading in front of other kids or adults but not a dog. Dogs are not judgmental.”

Teams have also started visiting local high schools to help students during final exam periods. Sometimes it’s a more somber occasion when a loving dog is needed as a recent time when Wolff and his dog met with students at Acton-Boxborough High School to offer support after the loss of two of their fellow classmates who had recently passed away.

A Westborough couple, Tania and Bob Pano, brought their Golden Retriever, Cassie, and two Scottish Fold cats, Lynsey Lu and Mackenzie Connor, to comfort those who gathered at the finish line of the Boston Marathon after the tragic 2013 bombings.

Wolff knows that being the human member of the team often just means “just being



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Sharing love of music from Westborough to Grafton

By ED KARVOSKI JR.
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

GRAFTON/WESTBOROUGH – While working a 25-year banking career, Cam Sowa also spent periods of time regularly traveling distances from her Westborough home to play flute at several out-of-town venues. Now retired, she's enjoying her nearby and longtime musical relationships with St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Westborough and Apple Tree Arts (ATA) in Grafton.

Perhaps an acceptance of travelling began when her father's work as a chemical engineer moved the family a few times. While living in upstate New York, Sowa attended a school with a new band. Students were tested to determine if they had the qualifying skills for a music class.

"I passed the test," she declared. "They asked us what instrument we wanted to play. The only instrument I thought I'd like was the flute. A flute sounds pretty and adds so much to melodic pieces."

The family lived in New Jersey when Sowa was a seventh-grader playing flute in her school orchestra and marching band. She fondly remembers coming home from school and hearing her mother playing Frederic Chopin compositions on the piano. They'd spend afternoons listening to classical music together on a record player.



Cam Sowa

Another move brought the family to Massachusetts. While scouting for a house during the summer, they lived in a cottage at Lake Quinsigamond in Shrewsbury. Come September, Sowa attended Shrewsbury High School with hopes of playing flute in its marching band.

"To join the band, one had to audition," she recalled. "My skills weren't up to par, so I didn't make it into the band and was very disappointed."

Two months later, the family settled in Westborough in 1957. Westborough High School provided her flute lessons and welcomed her to play in its marching band. Since that move, she has called Westborough her home and St. Stephen's Church her parish.

While raising her daughters Cindy and Michelle, Sowa rekindled her love for music in

the mid-1980s. She joined a musical group at St. Stephen's called On Eagles Wings. They toured the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts.

Among their performance venues was a church in Whitinsville. After their concert, a parishioner invited Sowa to join a new flute choir based in Northbridge. Sowa accepted the invitation and performed with them for two years.

Closer to her home, Sowa played flute and piccolo in the musical "Annie, Get Your Gun" with the Westborough Players' Club during its 1987-'88 season. Soon afterward, she heard that a flute choir was starting at the Thayer Performing Arts Center in Lancaster. She auditioned and was accepted to perform with the choir.

In 2000, a St. Stephen's parishioner asked Sowa if she'd give their daughter flute lessons. She did instruct her and ultimately more students with private lessons.

"I taught for a couple years, but then I worked my banking job for 10 hours a day, so couldn't do it anymore," Sowa explained.

In 2007, a neighbor and friend suggested that Sowa join the ATA Community Chorus in Grafton. She somehow found time to give it a try.

"I told my friend that I couldn't sing," Sowa relayed. "My friend said, 'Join anyway – you can learn to sing.'"

Sowa did learn to sing. Additionally, since 2008, she has served as the ATA board vice president. She also yearned to return to playing flute. Sowa took flute lessons for three years from the same teacher who instructed her daughter Cindy while in high school. Now, Sowa still sings with the ATA chorus and joined its flute choir in retirement. She appreciates the opportunity to volunteer with ATA, a nonprofit community school serving varied types of artists from young children to adults.

"I'm very pleased to be a part of such a great organization as ATA," she said. "What we do there is good for so many people of all ages."

Her longtime commitment to music ministry also continues at St. Stephen's. She served a three-year stint as its music coordinator and now performs with the church choir.

"It's great to be involved in the community, especially with nonprofits because they help so many people in a lot of ways," she said. "As we get older, we need to keep active and do good work. To me, that's what it's all about."

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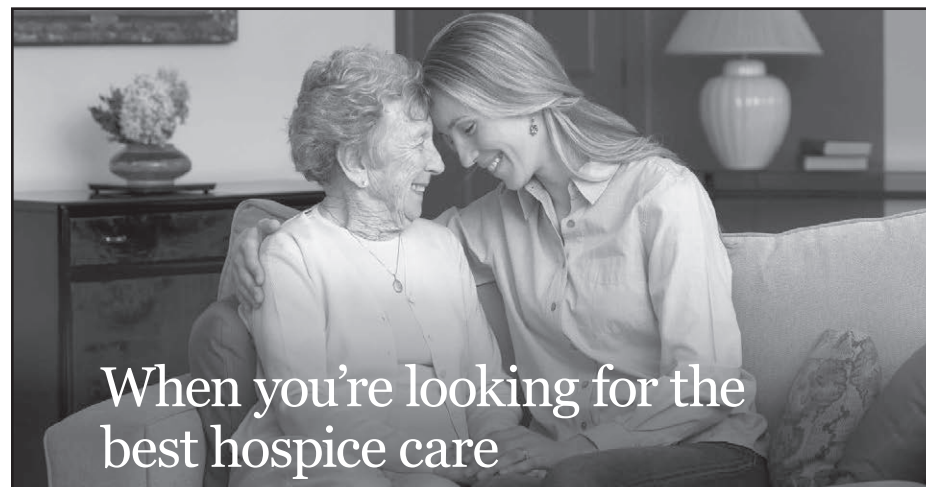
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Holocaust survivor speaks to middle school students

By JANE KELLER GORDON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

NORTHBOROUGH - The entire 8th grade class at Robert E. Melican Middle School in Northborough sat hunched forward - almost breathless - during an assembly on May 17. It was Holocaust survivor Sam Weinreb (91) who held their attention.

For a full hour, over-and-over, Weinreb said to them, "I want you to know, I want you to know."

He told his remarkable story in great detail, as he has to over 300,000 students.

"I never said no when I was asked to speak to a group of people," said Weinreb.

Since moving to Brookline with his wife Goldie two years ago, Weinreb speaks about once a week. His connection to Melican is his neighbor who is the grandmother of eighth-grade student Lainey Bechta.

Introducing Weinreb, Bechta spoke of how her class read



(l to r) Sam Weinreb, Lainey Bechta (8th grade student), and Kay Senior (8th grade teacher)

"Night" by Elie Wiesel, and "The Diary of a Young Girl," by Anne Frank.

Like many survivors of the Holocaust, fortitude and luck played a huge role in Weinreb's survival.

Born April 5, 1926 in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, Weinreb was almost 13 when the Nazis

captured his parents, two brothers, and six-year-old sister. He returned from a bar mitzvah lesson to find his house locked and empty. He never saw them again.

Weinreb escaped to Hungary - by train and on foot - with the help of a non-Jewish neighbor, and two others.

He lived in Budapest with an

uncle for a few weeks, until someone reported them to the police. He planned to move on to another contact, but that person was reported as well.

For eight months, Weinreb lived on the streets, eating food from trash bins.

Weinreb said, "Finally, I got so upset that no one would help me that I went to the police station and told them I lost my whole family, and that my grandparents lived in Hungary. The policeman slapped me in the face. Then they sent me to prison, with no charge and no trial."

He was released after two harsh years.

"I was told that I would stay with my grandparents, who lived in a small remote town. Every Tuesday and Friday I needed to check in with the police. Those days the police called me names and beat me."

Six months later, the Nazis entered Hungary, and rounded up

Survivor page 10

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Holocaust survivor speaks to middle school students

Survivor

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all of the Jews, including Weinreb. Jammed into cattle cars, they were sent by train to the death camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. Many died - especially children - during the almost four day journey.

At the entrance of Auschwitz, Weinreb, then 17, found himself in the left line, with those sent to work. Everyone in the right line was immediately gassed.

For work, Weinreb carried bricks to a construction site, which in fact, was not a site at all. He survived a job at a coal mine thanks to other prisoners who shoveled coal into his pile. He could not lift the shovel.

With clear memory, Weinreb recalls meeting Elie Wiesel, who advised him how to survive roll calls by moving around the lines at Auschwitz.

Before the war ended, on a freezing cold night, Weinreb and his fellow prisoners were forced

out of the camp on a death march. According to Weinreb, "... only 400 of 5,000 survived."

He decided to escape.

"I thought to myself, 'I will not let them kill me,'" he told the students.

In the middle of the night, he ran until he reached a forest and collapsed.

Weinreb was told that Russian soldiers found him lying on the ground, unconscious.

"One told me, 'Son, don't worry, we are going to take you to a military hospital.' I weighed 80 pounds then. I spent six weeks there. They saved me," he said.

When he recovered, Weinreb returned to Bratislava to find his family. He did not, but reunited with his childhood friend Goldie, who later became his wife.

At that time, Weinreb chose to leave Czechoslovakia and move to a displaced person's camp in Germany, which was supervised by the Americans.

Goldie would not go with him, but they stayed in touch, and she encouraged him to go to America. That happened with the help of an officer from the American Embassy in Munich.

"The officer put his arms around me and said, 'Son, you are going to America, right now,'" he recalled.

Weinreb eventually brought Goldie to America. They have celebrated their 67th anniversary. They raised a son and daughter in the Pittsburgh area, where Weinreb became an expert watch repairer, and eventually, owner of

a jewelry store.

His wife has been living with Alzheimer's for 14 years, but she is a survivor, and she is still here.

Weinreb wrapped up his talk by saying, "It is now more than 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. That is a very long time. This is a difficult subject. I didn't have an easy time talking about this in the beginning. Now I can."

At that point, the eighth graders - witnesses to history thanks to Weinreb's willingness to share his deeply personal story - all took a deep breath and applauded.

Miniature horse 'Rosie'



PHOTO COURTESY OF BARBARA SHAER

"Rosie" brings joy wherever she goes.

Rosie

Continued from page 4

right up to everyone, whether they are in a chair, wheelchair or a bed. She will gently just put her head right in their laps so they can get nuzzle with her."

Rosie has a "bond with all ages," Shaer said, whether it is a child who wants a ride or to offer a kiss, a mentally or physically challenged teen who lights up upon seeing her or an elderly person who, although unable to communicate, still feels the magic that Rosie brings.

"So many people are trapped inside their own bodies," Shaer said. "To be able to have that

bond with these people and to bring them a sense of joy is so special. It may just be for a day, it may just be for a moment in time, but to offer this gift to them is very special."

The two will also go to help with many fundraiser events, many times accompanied as well by Mason.


"Rosie is always a draw!" Shaer said.


Rosie has her own Facebook page (www.facebook.com/RosietheMini) where Shaer documents their visits. On it, the photos tell the story of just how much joy this little horse can bring into the lives of all she meets.

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Charlottesville brings America's history to life

BY VICTOR BLOCK

The mansion in Virginia which Thomas Jefferson called Monticello is a perfect example of an 18th-century estate. Its 33 rooms are filled with elegant furniture and architectural touches imported from Europe.

About 10 miles away stands Pine Knot, a simpler cottage that lacks a stove, well and bathroom facilities. Theodore Roosevelt preferred its modest ambience as a place to escape from the pressures of life as president.

These two houses say much about the men who once stayed in them. They're among the attractions in Charlottesville, Va., that bring to life chapters of the nation's past.

Nearby is one of the places that makes Charlottesville synonymous with Thomas Jefferson. He placed high on his list of accomplishments founding the University of Virginia as an "Academical Village" available to students regardless of their birth or wealth.

Visitors see it much as it appeared when it opened for classes in 1825. Pavilions surrounding the lawn still house rooms occupied by scholars and faculty. The Rotunda which overlooks the setting is a scaled-down version of the Pantheon



Monticello

in Rome.

Jefferson's architectural genius also is evident at Monticello, his beloved plantation home. Features that he introduced, many gathered when he lived in Europe, include a dumbwaiter, skylights and French doors.

In contrast to the elegance of Monticello is the modest

cottage where Roosevelt stayed with his wife Eleanor. Personal touches include a list of birds which he spotted and letters to their children decorated with sketches of cartoon-like figures.

Charlottesville adds life and color to important chapters of the nation's past. That becomes evident during strolls along the

Historic Downtown Mall. The brick-paved walkway is lined by historic buildings that today house shops and restaurants. During Colonial times the route was called "Three Notch'd Road," named for nicks carved into tree trunks to mark the way.

Introductions to two other presidential homes also support Virginia's nickname as "The Mother of Presidents." Four of the first five presidents, and eight in all, were born in the state.

Guides at Montpelier, the home of James Madison, describe his prominent place in history including his instrumental role in drafting the Constitution and its first 10 amendments, and serving as the fourth president. He authored a number of important documents in the rooms where visitors stand.

The Ash Lawn-Highland plantation was home to the fifth president. James Monroe negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, and the Monroe Doctrine that he established formed the cornerstone of America's foreign policy for more than a century. Visitors are immersed in the atmosphere of a working farm, including demonstrations of spinning, weaving and open-hearth cooking.

A setting very different from plantation homes is tucked into a horseshoe bend of the James

Travel page 14

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Travel

Continued from page 12

River south of Charlottesville. The village of Scottsville (population about 600) was a river port during the 18th century. Flat-bottomed boats transported tobacco, grain and other cargo to Richmond, and returned with goods imported from England and France.

A small museum recounts the story of the town and river. Exhibits in the Canal Basin Square include a packet boat, which over 150 years ago plied the James River, and a list of tariffs charged for transporting cargo and passengers. Among fares were “White person, 12 and older, 1 cent per mile” and “Coloured persons, 5 and up, 1/2 cent a mile.”

No trip to Charlottesville would be complete without at least one stop at a winery, and even here the influence of Thomas Jefferson is felt – or,



Charlottesville's Historic Downtown Mall

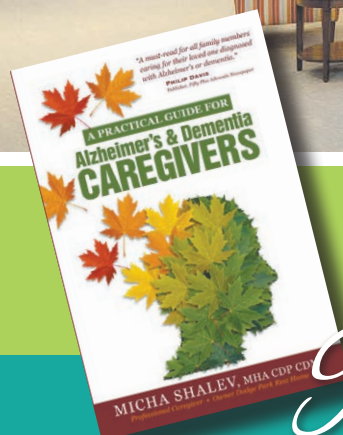
PHOTO SUBMITTED

rather, tasted. He planted vineyards and dreamed of producing wines equal to those of the Old World. However, a series of misfortunes doomed that effort, and for some 200 years, Virginia's infant wine industry failed to achieve distinction.

That changed recently as local winemakers began to produce improved vintages. Virginia now has some 150 wineries and Jefferson would be proud to know that his native state is the fifth largest producer in the country.

Jefferson's failure as a wine maker pales in comparison with his many achievements, and those of his famous neighbors, who were among the founders of our country. A visit to Charlottesville brings their stories to life in a setting as varied as were those early leaders.

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Volunteering in the community - Scituate Animal Shelter

BY BONNIE ADAMS
MANAGING EDITOR

As a nonprofit no-kill animal shelter, the Scituate Animal Shelter helps over 500 dogs and cats find their new forever homes every year,

according to Executive Director Maryann Regan. The organization is primarily volunteer-run and funded solely by private donations.

"Most times we have 20 to 50 animals, depending on the time of the year," Regan said.

"We mostly have dogs and cats but occasionally have a rabbit, rat or ferret."

The shelter has a small staff, which makes the 200-plus volunteers critical to its ongoing success. Many of those volunteers, Regan noted, are over the age of 50.

"They do everything for us, from cat care, dog walking, working at the front desk, administrative work, youth outreach/education, landscaping, and so much more," Regan said. "They are so

Volunteering page 17

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Volunteering in the community - Scituate Animal Shelter

Volunteering

Continued from page 16

important in keeping the shelter going. There is so much love, respect and commitment here.”

The shelter’s main goal, of course, is finding homes for the animals. But they also do community outreach and education, which includes actively working with seniors in Scituate to help them to be able to keep their animals.

The Mary Hooper Elder Pet Care Program (HELP) provides emergency assistance with pet food when needed and may be able to assist with medical needs of pets when possible. The shelter can also offer basic checkups and assistance with vaccines.

“It’s tragic and sad when a person has to give up their pets,” Regan said. “We know what’s



PHOTO/SCITUATE ANIMAL SHELTER

(l to r)
**Scituate
Animal
Shelter
volunteers
Diane
St.Ours,
Mariette
Ouimet, and
Charlotte
Lawrence**

best is for the animal and the person is for them to stay together. We truly believe in helping people as well as animals.”

If you yourself are not a dog or cat owner, volunteering

at the shelter is a great way to get your fix of furry love. But if dog walking or cat care is a bit too much physically, you can offer to volunteer with such other things critical to keeping

a nonprofit going such as helping with administrative tasks, managing databases and mailing lists; helping with public relations and social media, or volunteering with fundraising efforts. If you don’t have time for a full-time pet, serving as a foster family might be a short-term option. (During kitten season, there is always a need.)

“Whatever your skill, we can use it,” Regan said. “The only requirements are that you are kind to animals and can work with people.”

The shelter is located at 780 Chief Justice Cushing Highway, Scituate. For more information call 781-544-4533, email info@scituateanimalshelter.org, visit scituateanimalshelter.org or Facebook (Scituate Animal Shelter of Massachusetts).

An exotic kind of love

BY BONNIE ADAMS
MANAGING EDITOR

Belinda Rempelakis’s first foray into the world of animal rescue came, as it so often does, at the behest of her daughter. But although Rempelakis does have a much-loved rescue dog, 14-year-old Peanut, it is another group that she is most passionate about rescuing – so-called exotics – mice, rats and ferrets.

Her work as a rescuer of this unique group started when her daughter, Andrea, was working at a local pet store while in high school. A little mouse, who was missing an eye, was deemed unsellable and therefore available for employees to adopt.

“She called me up and asked,” Rempelakis recalled with a laugh, “and I said, ‘why not?’”

When Andrea and then her sister Emily moved onto college, Rempelakis, who was then also working from home, had a desire to fill her empty nest. With the total support of her husband, Mike, she decided to go to the local MSPCA to adopt more mice and then rats, of which she



PHOTO COURTESY OF BELINDA REMPELAKIS

**Belinda Rempelakis with
“Diesel” and “Bandit”**

had when she was younger. Ferrets were then later added into the family. Currently she has four rats, six mice, and six ferrets.

Much of what she has learned about caring for these exotics has been by “trial and error,” she said. She is also diligent about getting them proper medical care, of which she readily admits, is an “expense.” At least three hours a day are devoted to care, feeding, cleaning and

playtime. Vacations with Mike are hard to come by as exotics cannot just be left to the care of just anyone – it requires someone with the knowledge needed.

Not only that, many of the exotics she adopt tend to be “seniors or ones with special needs, the ones who no one else is interested in.”

All of this is worth it, she stressed.

“These are our babies and this is their forever home,” she added.

It is gratifying, she noted, when the love and care she gives her rescues comes back to her.

“There’s a level of trust that has to be earned depending on what situation they were in,” she said. “But when they do trust, it’s beautiful.”

Rempelakis acknowledges that while her situation may seem unusual, the inherent need to feel fulfilled and help others is not.

“If you find yourself at loose ends, maybe like I was, an empty nester, then find someone to help,” she said. “There are plenty of animals, kids or others who need your help. Volunteer and help someone.”

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caregiving tips

How to stop a loved one with dementia from driving

By MICHA SHALEV
MHA CDP CDCM

When an individual is diagnosed with dementia, one of the first concerns that families and caregivers face is whether or not that person should continue driving. A diagnosis of dementia may not mean that a person can no longer drive safely. In the early stages of dementia, some – though not all – individuals may still possess skills necessary for safe driving. Most dementia, however, is progressive, meaning that symptoms such as memory loss,



Caregiving Tips

visual-spatial disorientation, and decreased cognitive function will worsen over time. This also means that a person's driving skills will decrease and, eventually, he or she will have to give up driving. Many people associate driving with self-reliance and freedom; the loss of driving privileges is likely to be upsetting. Some individuals, recognizing the risks, will limit or stop driving on their own. Others may be unable to assess their own driving skills and may insist on driving even when it is no longer safe. Families and caregivers may have to intervene when an individual's symptoms pose too great a traffic risk.

You can assess an individual's level of functioning by observing his or her day-to-day behavior outside of a motor vehicle. Following are some signs that a person no longer has the necessary skills to drive safely. The loved one:

- Has become less coordinated.
- Has difficulty judging distance and space.
- Gets lost or feels disoriented in familiar places.
- Has difficulty engaging in multiple tasks.
- Has increased memory loss, especially for recent events.
- Is less alert to things happening around them.
- Has mood swings, confusion, and/or irritability.
- Needs prompting for personal care.
- Has difficulty processing information.
- Has difficulty with decision-making and problem solving.

It is important to compare present behavior with the person's behavior before the onset of dementia. For example, weigh an individual's degree of "difficulty engaging in multiple tasks" in relation to his or her prior ability. Changes in behavior will be most noticeable to family and friends who have closely interacted with the individual over time. Share and discuss your observations with other family members, friends and health care providers.

The safest option for assessing a person's driving skills is to arrange for an independent driving evaluation. Prior to the evaluation, inform the examiners that the person being evaluated has dementia. Evaluations are sometimes available through driver rehabilitation programs or state departments of motor vehicles (RMV).

Another option is to write an open or a confidential letter to your loved one's primary care physician, expressing your concerns. Fortunately, you might be invit-

ed to the next physical, in which Dad, or Mom or their spouse, may be present. The doctor will do a thorough evaluation, then began to ask either the individual a series of questions, and then finally approaching the subject of "still driving".

You may also want to consider, dependent upon the state in which you reside, would be to contact the RMV in your state. Quite often, you can file a concern with this office and they might (hopefully WILL) follow-up. I know that the state of Massachusetts has some very tough restrictions.

If the individual has some physical limitations, and all family members are on board with this, I would suggest investigating if there are any ride services....often supervised through senior centers, local bus company and even local public transportation services etc., that would give the person both motility, and add safety at the same time. Also, if you live close, maybe family members could share this responsibility and possibly disarm the individual's car.

Ideally, an individual will limit or stop driving on his or her own. However, some individuals with dementia may forget that they should not drive or insist on driving even though it is no longer safe. While it is important to maintain respect for the individual's feelings, you must put safety first.

As a last resort, you may have to prevent his or her access to a car. Some methods to do that include:

- Hiding the car keys.
- Replacing the car keys with a set that won't start the car.
- Disabling or selling the car.
- Moving the car out of sight.

Micha Shalev MHA CDP CDCM CADDCT is the owner of Dodge Park Rest Home and The Adult Day Club at Dodge Park located at 101 Randolph Road in Worcester. He is a graduate of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners program, and well known speaker covering Alzheimer's and Dementia training topics. The programs at Dodge Park Rest Home specialized in providing care for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The facility is holding a FREE monthly support group meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month for spouses and children of individuals with dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease. He can be reached at 508-853-8180 or by email at m.shalev@dodgepark.com or view more information online at www.dodgepark.com. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com.

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money matters

Reverse Mortgages: Time to trust?

By ALAIN VALLES, CRMP
PRESIDENT,
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“An excellent start is to read the only federally approved consumer booklet published by the National Council on Aging, ‘Use Your Home to Stay at Home.’”

and supporting children and grandchildren. These cash flow hurdles can damper the goal of remaining independent in one's home.

Potential solution: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2016 homeownership rate for seniors ages 65 and older was 79 percent with approximately two-thirds owning their homes without a mortgage. Millions of older homeowners have the opportunity to live financially independent in their homes by

utilizing a reverse mortgage. But even though reverse mortgages have been available since 1987, only a small percentage of eligible seniors have utilized a reverse mortgage to augment their financial retirement strategy. The primary reason is lack of trust.

Why the lack of trust: The recent Urban Institute report found that the top concern about reverse mortgages is “getting scammed”. Other worries include losing one's home, and the cost. Kent Healy of “The Uncommon Life” states “...our greatest problems are twofold: one, a lack of information and two, perhaps most importantly, a plethora of wrong information.” My take is the lack of trust in reverse mortgages is lack of education (uninformed) and pervasive untrue myths about reverse mortgages (misinformed).

Get the facts: The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines trust
Reverse mortgage page 20

SUPER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

“People of the Past”

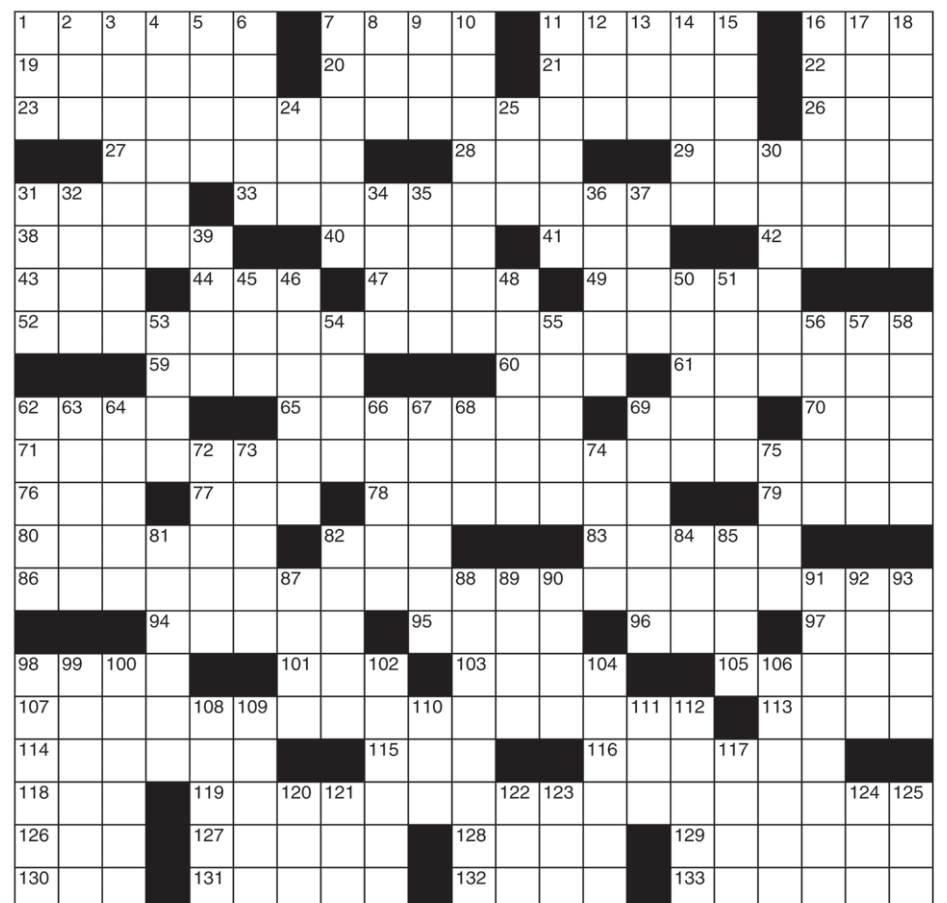
(answers on page 20)

ACROSS

- 1 Ousts
- 7 Fig. on a new car sticker
- 11 Isle of Minos
- 16 Pro music providers
- 19 Lost lady in “The Raven”
- 20 “That clarifies it”
- 21 Saabs, say
- 22 Use scissors
- 23 Enron scandal figure was inactive?
- 26 Suffix of fruit drinks
- 27 — Pie (cold treat)
- 28 Sternward
- 29 Lucas of film
- 31 By way of, briefly
- 33 “Three’s Company” actor started dozing?
- 38 See 82-Across
- 40 Money owed
- 41 Floral wreath
- 42 Puppies
- 43 Lyric writer Gershwin
- 44 Lyric work
- 47 Toe part
- 49 “Lulu” composer Berg
- 52 Watergate whistleblower had anxiety?
- 59 Island near Molokai
- 60 — for “apple”
- 61 Charles of CBS News
- 62 “CSI” actress Elisabeth
- 65 Solar system members
- 69 Ending for pent- or hex-
- 70 Citi Field stat
- 71 Reds great met a tough challenge?
- 76 Santa — (hot desert wind)
- 77 Unveil, in poetry
- 78 Swiss resort lake
- 79 Greek mountain
- 80 “Is there an echo —?”
- 82 With 38-Across, they have film bloopers
- 83 “This —!” (fighting words)
- 86 Teen sleuth noted the subtle difference?
- 94 “Gladiator” actor Davis
- 95 Mrs. Addams, to Gomez
- 96 Bygone flight inits.
- 97 “Aquarius” network
- 98 Chilly
- 101 Hereditary helices
- 103 Small needle case
- 105 Have one’s cake and eat —
- 107 “The Ward” actress hallucinated auditorily?
- 113 Te- — (giggles)
- 114 Blueswoman Smith
- 115 Fuzz figure
- 116 Machine for sowing
- 118 Become old
- 119 “The Great Ziegfeld” figure caused a road jam?
- 126 UNLV part
- 127 Valuable store
- 128 River of Pisa
- 129 Not coastal
- 130 Pack carrier
- 131 Targeted
- 132 In order
- 133 States of change

DOWN

- 1 Bugling beast
- 2 Winning sign
- 3 Cochlea site
- 4 Relative of an attaché
- 5 Trying trip
- 6 Take effect
- 7 What to call an English nobleman
- 8 Retirees’ fund org.
- 9 Marina del —
- 10 Like a smug know-it-all
- 11 OPEC, e.g.
- 12 Mai tai liquor
- 13 Sked guess
- 14 Pacific island nation
- 15 Actor Will
- 16 U.S. capital and environs
- 17 Deemed
- 18 Infuses
- 24 Wellness gp.
- 25 Awry
- 30 Horse-track has-been
- 31 Slim and fit
- 32 Greek Juno
- 34 Eatery card
- 35 Impose — on (forbid)
- 36 Pages (through)
- 37 “— & Stitch”
- 39 Long couch
- 45 Room with a 39-Down
- 46 Pass
- 48 Hate
- 50 Horse to bust
- 51 All mixed up
- 53 Abstract artist Paul
- 54 Scrabble pick
- 55 Tight-fisted type
- 56 Karloff of film
- 57 Timber wolves
- 58 City near Minneapolis
- 62 Seville locale
- 63 Hair dye
- 64 Fan of the Jazz, usually
- 66 Attorney or heir follower
- 67 Nutty candy
- 68 Misc. abbr.
- 69 Nails the test
- 72 Actors Cullin and Calhoun
- 73 Pages for think pieces
- 74 Handling the matter
- 75 Kind
- 81 Schools, to the French
- 82 “Hero” co-star Davis
- 84 NYC-to-Seattle dir.
- 85 Berry from Brazil
- 87 Bike, e.g.
- 88 Weight-loss strategy
- 89 Narrow strip of land: Abbr.
- 90 Feng —
- 91 Russian news agency
- 92 Penetrating woodwind
- 93 Sarges, say
- 98 Jewish mystical tradition
- 99 Last letters
- 100 Dwell (on)
- 102 Like insteps and rainbows
- 104 Hip place
- 106 Winter bug
- 108 Gaucho rope
- 109 “The Dance” artist
- 110 Female goat
- 111 Fetch
- 112 Sans — (font style)
- 117 Pioneer Boone, to townfolk
- 120 — de plume
- 121 Hail, to Ovid
- 122 Rap’s Dr. —
- 123 A, in Italy
- 124 Opal ending
- 125 LPs’ successors

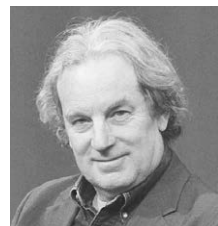


viewpoint

Trump's budget: A 'great' hole in economic security

BY AL NORMAN

Rich people don't need much financially from the federal government. But at the other end of the economic ladder, government can often play a critical role in



Push Back

protecting the well-being of citizens. For this reason, it is not surprising that most of the people who are hurt when the federal government cuts its spending are low-income people. President Trump's 2018 budget released in late May brings bad news for millions of people living on a limited income.

According to the report, "Insecurity in the States 2016," by the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, 61 percent of residents age 65 and older living alone in Massachusetts have

...Government can often play a critical role in protecting the well-being of citizens. For this reason, it is not surprising that most of the people who are hurt when the federal government cuts its spending are low-income people.

incomes below the level needed to meet their basic living expenses without going into debt. Massachusetts ranks second in the nation for the percentage of elders living in economic insecurity - behind only Mississippi.

President Trump's budget eliminates or slashes funding for a number of key safety net programs that help elders living in economic insecurity:

- The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The president eliminates funding for fuel assistance, a reduction of \$3.9 billion that helps low-income households and families, in-

cluding many older adults, with heating and energy bills throughout the year. Especially critical in New England winters.

- Medicaid and Food Stamps. The president proposes massive cuts to Medicaid, food stamps and income assistance programs for low-income Americans. The Trump budget would reduce assistance for low-income Americans by nearly \$1 trillion over 10 years, over half of which would come from Medicaid alone. The Trump plan would allow states to block grant the Medicaid program for all eligibility categories - including for older adults and people with disabilities who make up the bulk of Medicaid spending. The administration estimates these reforms would result in a \$610 billion reduction in Medicaid spending over 10 years on top of the \$840 billion cut assumed in the American Health Care Act. The food stamp program (SNAP) supports 4.8 million adults age 60 and over every year, but only reaches three out of five seniors who qualify for this support. The Trump budget proposal would cut SNAP by 25 percent, or \$193 billion over 10 years.

- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). The president's budget zeroes-out the \$52.1 million for the SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) program, which provided 76,000 Massachusetts seniors last year with free health insur-

ance counseling for Medicare and Medicaid needs. SHINE is a cost-effective, volunteer-driven counseling service that is the only source of counseling that is not tied to insurance providers.

- Senior Jobs: The president eliminates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the only workforce development program that specifically targets older adults in or near poverty, and the Senior Corps programs (RSVP, Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion). Many of these jobs supplement workforce needs at local community-based organizations serving seniors.

It's hard to see how any of the president's cuts make America great again. They will instead create a "great" hole in the nation's safety net that helps poor seniors pay their household bills and stay above water. Congress should ignore the president's budget, and give us a plan that helps feed the poor, heats their homes, and provides them with basic health and long-term care supports.

That would be a truly "great" budget.

Al Norman is the executive director of Mass Home Care. He can be reached at info@masshomecare.org or 978-502-3794. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com.

Reverse Mortgages: Time to trust?

Reverse mortgage
Continued from page 19

as "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something." You've heard the words "reverse mortgage" but have you invested time to better understand the mechanics and debunk the myths?

The key is getting the facts from an independent third party and then talk with an experienced professional. An excellent start is to read the only federally approved consumer booklet published by the National Council on Aging, "Use Your Home to Stay at Home." You are welcome

to call or email me and I'll forward a free copy to you.

Also, HUD-approved non-profit reverse mortgage counselors are available to give you a non-vested education about the merits of a reverse mortgage. I'll be happy to give you a list. And lastly, with no obligation, I'll also be happy to give you various scenarios for your particular situation. That will allow you to compare different options to help you achieve your long-term goals.

Being better informed will allow you to trust deciding if a reverse mortgage is the best solution for you.

Alain Valles, CRMP and president of Direct Finance Corp., was the first designated Certified Reverse Mortgage Professional in New England and is the leading licensed loan officer in Massachusetts. He can be reached at 781-724-6221 or by email at av@dfcmortgage.com. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com.

Answers to Super Crossword

(puzzle on page 19)

E	V	I	C	T	S		M	S	R	P		C	R	E	T	E		D	J	S		
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'FLIPPING' the situation

BY MARIANNE DELOREY, Ph.D.

I hated fifth grade. Almost 40 years later I can say without exaggeration it remains one of the worst years of my life. It was the first time that I truly



Housing Options

had a hard time getting along with others, perhaps because we were all struggling with pre-adolescence in our own way. Time has a way of giving us perspective, so I thought I was mostly recovered from that horrible year of my life...that is, until my son started fifth grade. All of a sudden, my back was up for no tangible reason. I was braced for him having to repeat my definition of hell. The whole

year, however, has been smooth as silk for him – until the other night when he got teary talking about working with others on a dreaded “group project.”

The teacher wouldn't let him work with his friends. He got assigned to work in a group but someone else was doing the fun work. That part was late and he couldn't do his part without having the other part completed.

“Mom, I could do so much better if my teacher let me pick my group,” he said.

I took a deep breath. I may not have had the answers in fifth grade, but I had been working in multifamily housing for decades. I knew what to say.

“Your teacher knows something you don't. When you are out in the world, you don't always get to pick your coworkers, your neighbors, and other people you interact with. You have to learn to get along with and sometimes work with all kinds of people.”

“Yeah, but what happens if I can't?”

“You can't control other people. The best any of us can do is control how we react.”

We talked about the buildings of elderly people where I work. We talked about how unpleasant it might be to eat dinner next to someone with a drippy nose or who used perfume that smelled like gasoline. We talked about how sometimes, the best we could do was decide not to be bothered by something and that there was always a choice. We can always choose to be happy, even when things were bad. I told him how one day, I met someone who had decided that the smell of skunks reminded him of summer, and so he decided he liked the smell. I told him another story about how nobody wanted to sit next to a resident because she did not

have good table manners. One person asked if he could sit with her because he wanted to be kind. He decided it was more difficult to see someone sit alone than to put up with her poor manners. And so, he decided that an unpleasant situation was now pleasant because it was his choice.

A day or so after this conversation, my son told me they got to name their groups. In his group, they each got to include one word. Between them, they came up with Flaming Legendary Invincible Puppies, aka FLIP. He explained how he had influenced the others to come up with this name, and even if it wasn't completely his making, he had helped. This made me smile. He had FLIPPED the situation around. He had found a way to make the group his own in some small way, and he was back on track with the group.

Marianne Delorey, Ph.D. is the executive director of Colony Retirement Homes. She can be reached at 508-755-0444 or mdelorey@colonyretirement.com and www.colonyretirementhomes.com. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at www.fiftyplusadvocate.com

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Drosophila and I

By JANICE LINDSAY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Drosophila Melanogaster and her family came to visit. I was not happy about it. If she had come by herself or with just a couple of friends, I would not have felt the urge to kill.

But when I opened the two-quart covered pail that is my



Inklings

a kitchen composter, Whoosh! Out flew about a dozen of Drosophila's kith and kin. Fruit flies. A fly of the female persuasion had apparently gained entrance and done what lady fruit flies do, which is to lay somewhere between 100 and 1,000 eggs. That was all it took to turn my composter into Drosophila Incubator and my kitchen into a fruit-fly-skydiver's delight.

I slammed the cover down to trap the remaining siblings inside. I whisked the composter outside and scrubbed it. Now I had to deal with the pesky escapees.

Normally, I'm not an insect-killer. I generally consider permanent deterrence only if the insect (a) competes with us for food; or (b) considers us food. So kitchen ants, mosquitoes, ticks – bye-bye. As for others, I respect their space if they respect my space.

Fruit flies fall into the (a) category. Also, they are extremely annoying. They were not respecting my space. They soared jauntily around my kitchen, watching me with their beady red eyes (I couldn't actually see the eyes, but I knew they were there), floating around my head when I made salad, taunting, mocking, always at the edge of my vision.

You cannot catch a fruit fly in flight. As soon as you clap your hands where they are, they aren't.

But my husband ate a banana for lunch. Banana! There's nothing

a fruit fly likes better than a nice sweet rotting banana peel. I sliced a piece, flattened it skin-side down on the white countertop, threw in a rotting blueberry for good luck, and waited. With a wadded, wet paper towel.

Sure enough, here they came. Aim. Smash! One down. You can dispatch only one at a time, for your aim must be true, and the others startle and jump away. I felt like the creature in a monster movie, picking characters off one by one. The characters look around and ask, "Where's Fred?" No Fred, so they send Steve to look for Fred. Pretty soon, "Where's Steve?"

Fortunately, fruit flies have a short memory. Soon, they returned to the banana peel, and I was waiting.

In the end, I prevailed.

When my kitchen was finally fly-free, I researched fruit flies on the Internet. It turns out that they're native everywhere in the world, so they probably hadn't specifically targeted my particular kitchen. They do not usually en-

ter the house on fruit, but invite themselves in because they smell those juicy pears ripening on the counter.

Any ripening, rotting, or fermenting vegetable or fruit is their prime real estate and a fine place to raise a family, which, from egg to adult, takes about a week. They mate in two days and die a few days later. Given the right mushy, moist environment — and no acquaintances like me — they enjoy a short, pleasant, rot-engorged life.

I learned that fruit flies can be trapped. Take a glass jar or bottle, put ripe fruit, red wine, or cider vinegar on the bottom, and make a paper funnel at the opening. In they go; out they don't come. If you use wine or vinegar in a wide bowl or glass, you might not need the funnel.

In any case, they die well-fed and happy. It's the humane way. It has to be kinder than being flattened by some maniac wielding a wet paper towel.

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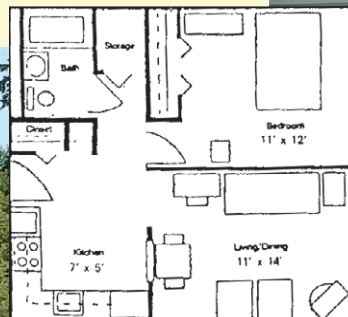
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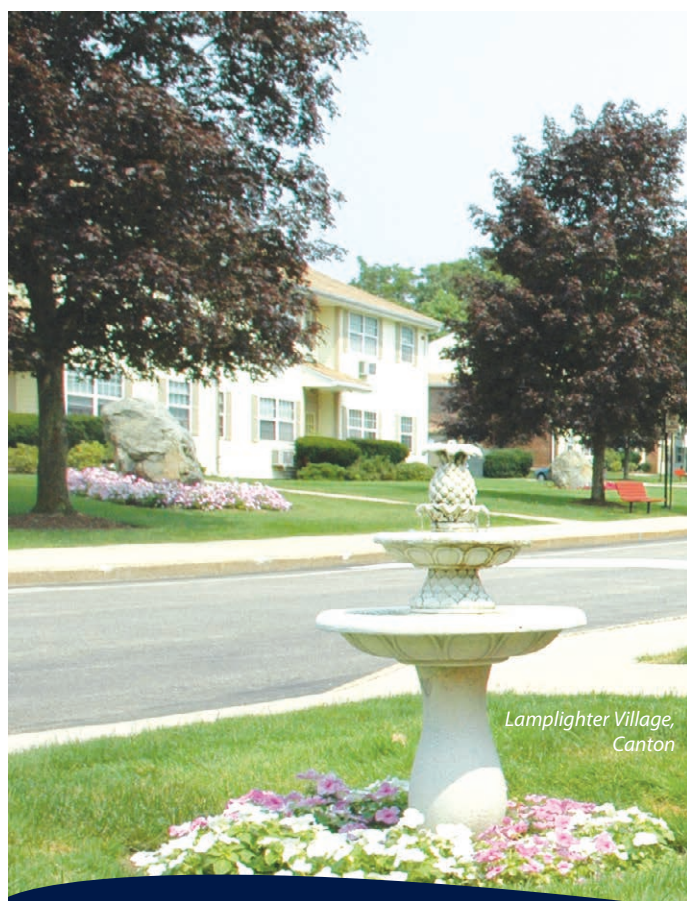


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