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Loretta  
LaRoche

Acclaimed  
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advises...

‘Find the blessing  
in the mess’

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To learn more about the CARE Act and how AARP supports family caregivers visit **[aarp.org/MA](http://aarp.org/MA)**



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## AARP's Tax-Aide program provides older adults free tax help

By MIKE FESTA, STATE DIRECTOR  
AARP MASSACHUSETTS

**T**ax filing season is upon us, and AARP can help! Approaching its 50th year, Tax-Aide offers free tax filing help to anyone, especially those



**Mike Festa**

50 and older, who can't afford a tax preparation service. Tax-Aide volunteers make a difference in their communities by assisting many older, lower-income taxpayers who might otherwise miss out on the credits and deductions they've earned. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure they know about and understand the latest changes and additions to the U.S. Tax Code. You do not have to be an AARP member nor be retired to use this free service.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide has grown remarkably since its inaugural team of just four volunteers in 1968. The program now involves nearly 35,000 volunteers and serves 2.7 million taxpayers annually at more than 5,000 sites nationwide with free tax help.

AARP Foundation operates the AARP Tax-Aide program under a cooperative agreement with the IRS. To help you complete your tax forms, AARP's trained and IRS-certified volunteers will see personal information that you give them about you and your finances. This information is strictly confidential. They will not share your information with anyone except as necessary to accurately file your tax returns or as otherwise required by law.

Last year, 680 AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers helped more than 40,000 Massachusetts residents file their federal and state tax returns. The program is offered at approximately 124 sites in Massachusetts (and over 5,000 locations nationwide) including senior centers, libraries and other convenient locations.

In 2017, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers helped 2.5 million people navigate tax codes, ensure proper credits and deductions, and file their federal and state tax returns. Taxpayers who used AARP Foundation Tax-Aide in 2017 received \$1.37 billion in income tax refunds and more than \$222 million in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs). They also avoided any tax preparation fees and pitches for high-interest tax credit or refund loans.

Because of the complexity of the U.S. Tax Code, struggling taxpayers over 50 may overpay their taxes or have to rely on expensive and, for too many, unaffordable professional tax preparation services. Many have particularly difficult tax situations, including:

- Retirees whose previous experience with tax returns was limited to wages often face new provisions and complex forms to determine the taxable portion of their retirement income, different standard deduction amounts, permissible health care deductions and, if they sell their house, treatment of capital gains.

- For some people over 50, the spouse who had always prepared the taxes dies or becomes incapacitated, leaving the other overwhelmed and grief-stricken.

- Many people don't know about the tax credits they may qualify for. Tax-Aide's services make it easier for older, low-income taxpayers to file their tax returns and get the credits and deductions they deserve.

The program runs from February 1 through early April. Clients are asked to bring last year's tax returns, social security card, photo ID, and documents related to income, expenses, deductions, and healthcare coverage documentation to their appointment.

To find an AARP Foundation Tax-Aide site in your community during the tax season, call the toll-free number at 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669) or visit [AARP.org/findtaxhelp](http://AARP.org/findtaxhelp). Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).



# Positive attitude and volunteer work help Waltham woman enjoy life to the fullest

By BONNIE ADAMS  
MANAGING EDITOR



PHOTO: BONNIE ADAMS

**Doris Nigro**

WALTHAM — At age 87, Doris Nigro, is a lovely, well-groomed lady who has a positive, cheerful attitude about all aspects of her life. While she has seen her share of sadness at times, she always remains upbeat. Keeping active and living independently are important keys. But it is her large family and her volunteer work with the children who attend a school in Waltham that really contribute to her happiness, she said.

Nigro, who was born in Italy,

came to the United States in 1932 when she was 2 years old. She grew up in Lexington and then moved to Waltham when she married the love of her life, Tony.

"We weren't high school sweethearts, we met when we were seeing others," she said, with a twinkle in her eye. "But once we started dating that was it!"

The two were married for 54 years, before he passed away.

"He was the best husband and so handsome!" she said fondly.

The couple raised three children, Tony Jr. (who passed away in 2016), Dolores and Debra. Nigro is the proud grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of seven.

For 39 years, as she was raising her family, she worked at Raytheon as a group leader in the "best department," retiring at age 65.

Family continues to play an important part in her life. Almost the entire clan gathers every Friday night for dinner, she noted.

She is also a mother figure of sorts to the children at Our Lady's Academy, a Catholic pre-k to eighth-grade school in Waltham.

There she officially is a lunch volunteer, but what she offers the children is much more. For several years she also worked in the after-school program, where she kept an eye on the younger children and helped the older ones with their homework.

"Sometimes the kids just need someone to talk to, especially if they are having a hard day," she noted.

"I love doing it," she said. "I know the kids have loved me, too, because they have asked me to come to the dances and even their graduation ceremonies."

When she is not volunteering at the school she can often be found at the Waltham Senior Center where she enjoys the chair yoga and Zumba classes. Wednesdays she bowls and she also works out

at the local Planet Fitness on occasion.

"I also love to walk when the weather is nice," she said.

Although Nigro lives alone, and her family worries at times, she feels safe, she said, in large part to her "wonderful" neighbors.

"They really look out for each other, especially me," she said. "Everyone is so nice."

Nigro prides herself on her home, she said, doing all of the housework herself.

"If I can do something myself why wouldn't I?" she said. "I even mowed my lawn until up to two years ago."

Nigro's advice to others her age is to stay busy with things that you love and keep as active as long as you can.

"I love the school and the senior center," she added. "Being there [at those places] helps to keep my mind alert. I don't know what I would do without them."



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# Loretta LaRoche

## Acclaimed stress expert/humorist advises ‘find the bless in the mess’

By JANE KELLER GORDON  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

For more than 30 years, Loretta LaRoche, 78, has been helping people see life's difficulties from a different side — one that's funnier and less stressful.

An award-winning stress expert and humor therapist, she's published nine books, including “Juicy Living, Juicy Aging” and “Squeeze the Day.” She's appeared seven times on her PBS one-woman television show, as well as on CNN, ABC, and NBC. LaRoche has spoken here and abroad.

“My journey has been circuitous. I studied positive psychology, Buddhism, and Viktor Frankl's logotherapy [a theory



**Loretta LaRoche, 78, has been helping people see life's difficulties from a different side — one that's funnier and less stressful.**

“It went on from there. I was like a dog with a bone. I had an idea, and I was going to make it work,” LaRoche said.

These days, she is finding a lot of humor in television commercials.

“I think Americans are increasingly uptight, and that's why we're seeing all these laxative commercials,” she said. “And what's with bears jumping for joy over toilet paper?”

As for politics, she noted, “Thank God we have the court jesters to lighten the load... If you watch the news all the time, you'll need to go on medication.”

LaRoche recommends a “news fast” once in a while.

“Don't watch the news for a week. When you go back you'll have a better perspective, and maybe your critical thinking skills will improve,” she advises. “You won't let everything be rammed down your throat.”

One of her new projects is recording a jazz album. That's how she met Kenny Wenzel, 76, her partner of seven years. She calls him her “boy toy jazzman.”

“He's brought a lot of laughter and new ideas into my life,” she said. “You've got to bring people into your life who make you juicy.”

When it comes to choosing a partner, she added, “You can't make a table into a chair. It's important to make the right choices in life.”

As for aging well, LaRoche's advice is to keep on exploring new things, and keep on learning.

“Continuation of learning installs neuroplasty,” she said, adding, “People need to realize that if they're not dead yet, they should do something.”

For more information about LaRoche, and to see a list of her speaking engagements, visit her website at [www.lorettalaroche.com](http://www.lorettalaroche.com).

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that is founded on the belief that human nature is motivated by the search for a life purpose],” she said. “I read Norman Cousins's ‘Anatomy of an Illness.’ From all of that and more, I came to believe in the biology of humor.”

LaRoche's humor was evident when she was a child. She grew up a boisterous Italian family in Brooklyn. She described it as, “... like living in an opera. One minute we'd be laughing, and the next we were upset because the sauce wasn't done properly.”

Initially, her path was traditional. LaRoche graduated from Hofstra University with a degree in speech therapy and communication. She married and had three children. Then she divorced in her 40s, and needed to find a way to support herself.

LaRoche took classes in dance therapy at Lesley University. She started teaching exercise to music, and noticed that people were laughing during her classes. She and a nurse who attended her class started teaching a humor program for nurses.



# feb.

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\*E = Eastern edition \*C = Central edition

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# Southborough resident goes from skating mom to judge

BY NANCE EBERT  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

SOUTHBOROUGH - For the past 38 years, Shirley Taylor has spent countless hours at ice rinks across the country, judging skaters of all ages.

Her adult daughter, Tara, was obsessed with figure skating since the age of 5 and spent endless hours at the ice rink five days a week. She skated competitively. The family lived in Raynham at the time and while Taylor, herself, was not a skater, she was encouraged to become a judge.

"When you live at the rink like I did, friends joked that I might as well learn the judging aspect of the sport. It was a challenging process but I have my Gold Test in skating which means that I can judge up to senior level moves in the Field and Senior Level Free Skate," said Taylor.

It is not uncommon for Tay-



**Shirley Taylor has spent countless hours at ice rinks across the country, judging skaters of all ages.**

PHOTO/SUBMITTED

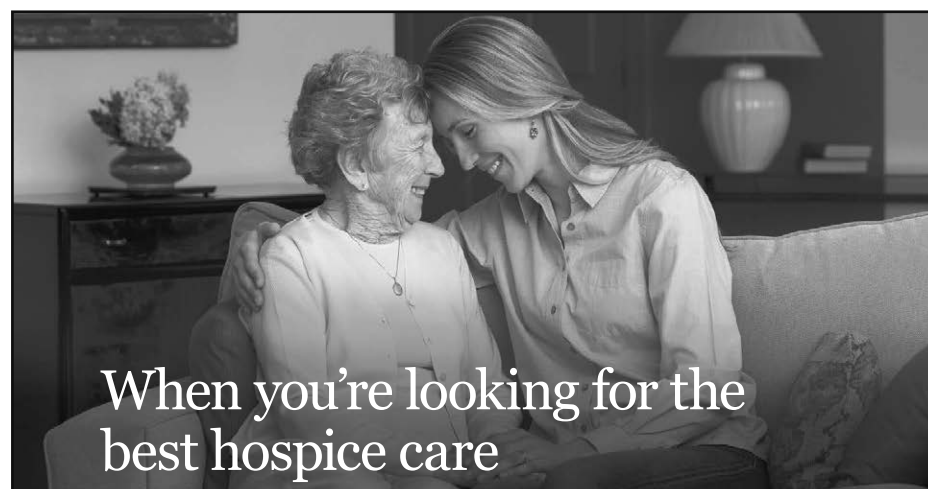
lor to travel 20,000 miles each year. She judges throughout New England as well as New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, California, Minnesota and Florida.

Although she is not paid for judging, she cannot say enough about how close-knit this group of people is to one another.

"This is such a social thing for me and I find the task of judging to be very rewarding," she noted. "I usually see the same people at these events and we have become friends over the years. This 'skating family' is an amazing, supportive group of people who mean a lot to me. All of the judges are always fed and their lodging is taken care of. I am also reimbursed for gas."

Taylor fell in love with skating and judging, however things have changed since she first began. Figures (figure skating) were popular and skaters could

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## Southborough resident goes from skating mom to judge

“I usually see the same people at these events and we have become friends over the years. This ‘skating family’ is an amazing, supportive group of people who mean a lot to me.”

*Shirley Taylor*

**Taylor**  
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not compete in levels unless they passed certain levels of figure tests. There are eight levels of testing to reach the senior level, which entitles skaters to compete for the national title in the United States and then the Olympics.

“These figure tests went out of circulation in early 2000,” Taylor explained. “It has been replaced with what is called, ‘Moves in the Field.’ The free skating is still what everyone looks forward to in each competition. The rating system has also been changed from when I started. It used to be a six-point score which has now been replaced with the International Judging System (IJS).”

Some of Taylor’s best friends are judges that reside across the United States. She is so busy judging that she has to use a color key on her day planner to keep track of where she is supposed to be on any given day of the week.

When she is judging, there

are always three judges evaluating each skater. They usually come to the same conclusion and although the mark cannot be changed once it is disclosed, there have been a couple of occasions where a coach will express a discrepancy.

“I spent three years as a trial judge which was very difficult for me having never skated. It did help me to learn why my daughter might have had challenges with a certain level. It was a hard process but I did find it very rewarding,” said Taylor.

Taylor loves being with skaters, their families, near the ice and with other judges. When not judging, she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and daughter.

“This is such a wonderful experience for me,” she shared. “The skating community lives in a vacuum in a sense. The whole outside world is turned off and everyone in the rink is present. I simply love it...cold and all.”




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# From professor to painter: Creating a new career into your 70s

BY JANICE ELIZABETH BERTÉ  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For over 25 years, Professor Winifred “Wini” Breines stood in front of a large group of young adults to teach sociology and women’s studies at Boston’s Northeastern University. She enjoyed teaching, but as she came closer to retirement, she felt a strong urge to tap into her creative side, and turned to painting.

Breines always had her hand in the arts - she made handmade birthday cards for family and friends. So it was only natural that when she retired, at 66, she decided to try her hand at watercolor painting. Without any prior experience, she learned the fine art of painting with watercolors by attending classes at the Brookline Art Center, and reading numerous books and maga-



Two of Winifred Breines watercolor paintings



zine articles on the subject.

“I felt possessed with the desire to visually represent, in beautiful watercolor, fruits and vegetables in bowls and plates on kitchen tables,” Breines said. “There is something about lighted round fruits of vibrant colors, such as oranges and tomatoes, combined with blues, usually found in ceramics, fabric and kitchen tables. And for me it

represents a promise of the pleasures of food, kitchens, community and peacefulness.”

All of her work is done inside spending hours per day using a transparent palette and technique with color, light and shadow created by the sun outside.

While Breines created a plethora of paintings over the past nine years, her confidence

grew and so did the popularity of her work. Her pieces are now displayed from Boston to California, and she won second place in the 2017 National Cape Cod Art Association Show for water media.

As people became more interested in her artwork, she admitted, “I initially had a hard time letting go of my pieces at first,” but she knew that they would bring happiness to the new owners.

Now, at 75, Breines has artwork displayed at Boston City Hall at the offices of the City Council, the Cape Cod Art Association in Barnstable, and the National Watercolor Society exhibit in San Pedro, Calif.

For more information about Breines’ work and upcoming shows, visit [www.winifred-breines.com](http://www.winifred-breines.com) or [www.canvas-finearts.com](http://www.canvas-finearts.com).

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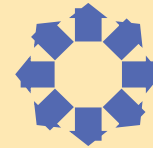


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## pursue your passion

# Achieving mission to merge music and visual art

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

GRAFTON/SCITUATE — Lennie Peterson began striving to blend his passions for music and visual art when he grew up in Grafton and has continued through his relocation to Scituate. He's now sharing his experience of working multiple decades as a musician, visual artist and arts educator via public speaking engagements.

Perhaps those skills were inherited from his father Clifford, a musician, and late mother Shirley, an artist.

"I attribute equal interest in music and visual art to my bloodline and upbringing," Peterson noted. "My earliest memory of art appreciation is looking forward to the newspaper com-



Lennie Peterson

ics every day as a kid."

Peterson constantly created drawings as a preschooler, took piano lessons at age 6 and trombone at 10. While playing with the Grafton High School (GHS) jazz band, he also performed with his own ensemble at local churches.

"I split my time between mu-

### THE BIG PICTURE

by Lennie Peterson



"The Big Picture" by Lennie Peterson



PHOTO/JOLENE M. PERRY

sic and art," he acknowledged. "My main interest was drawing. A great GHS art teacher, Donald Dodd, latched onto that and took me under his wing."

Dividing attention between art forms was simplified for Peterson thanks to a second mentor. He also studied with private music teacher George Robinson in Westborough.

"Besides my parents, they most influenced shaping what I'm doing now," Peterson said.

After graduating from GHS in 1975, Peterson attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he earned a bachelor's degree in composition and performance in 1979. After performing with a Grafton-based band, he returned to Berklee in 1986 as a teacher and ultimately assistant

professor.

"My students would come to local clubs where I was playing and hang out," he relayed. "Berklee was great for me as a student and teacher. It's an all-encompassing music education."

Since 1995, he's been performing with the South-Shore-based band Clutch Grabwell and moved to Scituate in 2000. A recording session at Scituate resident-musician Rob Loyot's studio led to Peterson joining the band Entrain. That band performs worldbeat and dance music at clubs, arts theaters and festivals throughout New England and beyond.


"Entrain appeals to all ages, especially at festivals," Peterson said. "The minute we start playing, people brighten up and it


Peterson page 11

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**positive**







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# Achieving mission to merge music and visual art

**Peterson**

Continued from page 10

crosses all boundaries.”

He stopped teaching at Berklee in 1997 to pursue freelance work, focusing first on his favorite childhood art form. Peterson’s nationally-syndicated comic strip “The Big Picture” appeared daily in over 100 newspapers from 1999 to 2005, and got published as a book collection. Now, “The Big Picture” is available online at GoComics.com.

Among notable venues where Peterson has performed music internationally, he cites two as particularly memorable.

“The Sydney Opera House was my first big show and sold out for five consecutive nights,” he said. “It was also incredible to play at New York City’s Carnegie Hall in the footsteps of so many legends.”

Every Sunday, he performs at Catholic churches in Hanover and Norwell. In 2016, he and a



PHOTO/SAMANTHA LAROCQUE

**Lennie Peterson shares his experience of working multiple decades as a musician, visual artist and arts educator via public speaking engagements.**

guitarist accepted a priest’s invitation to join the parishes’ Life Teen group at World Youth Day, a 10-day international teens’ pilgrimage with Pope Francis to Krakow, Poland.

“Imagine a Christian music festival taking over an entire city with 1.5 million teenagers,” Peterson said. “We played daily, from little chapels to cathedrals, and the main event where the pope appeared.”

From 2011 to 2013, Peterson exhibited 10 large portraits of music composers at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Similarly, he merges the art forms when presenting his public speaking engagements.

“My life mission now is to blend visual art with music,” he said. “For me, it’s magic when they both come together.”

For more information about Peterson, visit [lenniepeterson.com](http://lenniepeterson.com) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/lennie.peterson](https://www.facebook.com/lennie.peterson).



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## travel and entertainment

# Sicily- a place of great beauty, history, food and wine

By VICTOR BLOCK  
TRAVEL WRITER

**Y**ou can steal my money but not my food.” “If you want things to go exactly as planned, don’t come here.”

Those words spoken by my Overseas Adventure Travel tour guide in Sicily, who actually loves his homeland, tell a lot about it.

Yes, food is held in a place of near reverence. Plans don’t always work out, and the locals have learned to go with the flow.

Residents of the triangular-shaped Italian island exhibit a friendliness and self-deprecating humor that make them one reason to visit. Others include archaeological and architectural treasures, intriguing history and Mother Nature’s magnificent handiworks.

One surprise is how much diversity exists in such a small space. Packed into an area about the size of Massachusetts, Sicily offers variety equal to that found in entire continents.

Invaders and settlers from many places and civilizations have dropped by, leaving behind tangible evidence of their stay along with influences on the culture and lifestyle.

For visitors, the first impression relates to the assortment of architectural riches. By about 750 B.C. the island was home to three Phoenician and a dozen



Sicily is known for their outdoor markets.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Greek colonies. Later much of it fell into Roman hands. Others who held sway over Sicily included the Germanic Vandals, Berbers and Arabs, Normans and the Byzantine Empire. Reminders of their stays abound.

While the capital of Palermo lacks the magnificence of major cities around the world, beneath its jumble of nondescript buildings hides a wealth of architectural gems, interesting museums and other attractions.

The Teatro Massimo (Great-

est Theatre), which opened in 1897, is a reminder that hundreds of small opera houses once were sprinkled throughout the city. The ornate building is the third largest opera house in Europe, after those in Paris and Vienna. If it looks familiar to visitors that’s because of its role in the Godfather Part III movie.

Drama of another kind plays out in three sprawling outdoor fruit, vegetable and fish markets, which are leftover vestiges of 9th century Arab souks. Crowds of

people mill around the stands, as many looking as buying. Vendors alternate entreaties to passers-by to stop and shop with good-natured jibes they shout about their competitors.

Food plays a major role in a visit to Sicily, because it plays a big part in the lives of Sicilians. Mealtimes are as much a celebration of the cuisine as a time for eating.

Given its fertile land and sunny climate, Sicily served as

Travel page 13

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# Sicily- a place of great beauty, history, food and wine

## Travel

Continued from page 12

the granary for the Roman Empire. The long history of producing a variety of noted cuisines, influenced by those of Greece, Africa and the Arab world among others, has earned it the nickname of "God's kitchen." In this gastronomically rich setting, every region has its specialties which are touted by those who cook, and consume them as *il migliore* ("the best").

That sense of pride also extends to wine, not surprising given Sicily's 2500 year past as a center of viniculture. Italy ranks first in the world in the volume of wine produced, and Sicily does its part to contribute to that standing.

Despite its small size, Sicily's varied landscapes provide a dramatic setting. Deep valleys rise up to rocky mountaintops. Fields and rolling hills are blanketed by the silver-green leaves of olive



Above: The Villa Romana del Casale

Right: A vineyard and Greek temple

trees, low-lying grape vines and golden wheat.

The natural beauty of Sicily vies for attention with its treasure-trove of man-made architectural gems that span many centuries. The story of the island's long history is told by its archaeological riches.

For more information about Sicily, log onto [italiantourism.com/sicilia.html](http://italiantourism.com/sicilia.html). For information about Overseas Adventure Travel tours to Sicily and elsewhere call 800- 955-1925 or log onto [oattravel.com](http://oattravel.com).



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# Weigold named as Collier award recipient

*Shrewsbury resident honored for outstanding campus police work*

By MELANIE PETRUCCI  
SENIOR COMMUNITY REPORTER

SHREWSBURY — Shrewsbury resident Kevin Weigold, a police officer with the Worcester State University Police Department (WSUPD), recently was awarded the Sean Collier Award for Innovations in Community Oriented Policing by the Massachusetts Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (MA-CLEA). The honor was presented at a ceremony held Dec. 15 at the Doubletree Hotel in Leominster.

The award is named after Collier, the MIT police officer who was killed in the line of duty while confronting the Boston Marathon bombing suspects in the days following the attack.

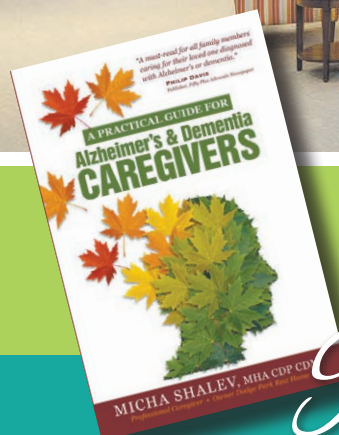
Awardees must display a strong commitment to their campus community, a passion for

Weigold page 15



Officer Kevin Weigold (second from right) with (l to r) his children, Shaun, Tabitha Kievit, and Kevin Jr., his wife Karen, and Worcester State University Police Department Chief Jason Kapurch

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# Weigold named as Collier award recipient

**Weigold**

Continued from page 14

crime prevention, and contributions to the development of community policing programs, community relationship building and strong partnerships.

Weigold has worked with the WSUPD for over 18 years. Originally from Brockton, Weigold, and his wife Karen, have made Shrewsbury their home and raised three children there; two - Shaun and Kevin, Jr. - are Shrewsbury firefighters. Daughter Tabitha is a nurse in Rhode Island.

Previously, Weigold worked for 22 years with the ground crew of Delta Airlines and a few years off and on as a part-time special officer with the Shrewsbury Police Department. He took early retirement and went to work at Worcester State University before joining their police department.

Current WSUPD Chief Jason Kapurch, then an officer, knew of Weigold's background



**In his spare time Weigold restores antique cars.**

and suggested that he join the university's police force. Weigold, who was 42 at the time, was rather reluctant. However, after some encouragement, he enrolled in the State Police Academy. Undeterred by being the oldest in his class, he finished seventh among 38 officer candidates. He has served as an officer ever since.

"After working with Delta Airlines with high stress I just

wasn't interested in advancement, I just wanted to do my job," Weigold shared. He is happy to watch the younger officers further their careers which speaks to his giving nature.

He was very surprised and honored to be selected out of several hundred campus officers throughout the state.

"We had no idea," Karen Weigold said.

Weigold found about the honor when he was called into the chief's office Dec. 4.

"You've done so much for this department," Kapurch told him. "It's not just what you've done in the last year but what you've done in the last 18 years."

Weigold's exceptional professionalism includes spearheading the holiday event, Stuff a Cruiser, which collects presents for children in need; representing WSUPD in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics; and his support of autism awareness through the National Light It Up Blue event at UMass. He also recently participated in a 5k run honoring fallen Officer Ronald Tarentino Jr.

When not helping people or working, Weigold can be found spending time with his seven grandchildren or in his garage building cars. He is currently working on a '32 Ford Coupe and a '48 Ford Angler that he drove in the Spirit of Shrewsbury Parade.



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# Creating whimsical paintings of people, places and pets

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

PAXTON — Artists such as Jen Niles of Paxton are often inspired by a muse. The self-taught artist has been drawing all her life, and for many years concentrated on creating pen and ink illustrations including commissioned house portraits. Craving a change in 2001, she began experimenting with acrylics and found the muse to help develop what has become her signature art style

“I had no real training in painting and got inspired by what my two cats were doing — lying around and being cute,” she relayed. “My style is very whimsical, bold and fun; I’m not going for museum realism.”

Rather than pursuing an art education, Niles satisfied her parents by earning a business degree at Northeastern University and worked a career in the trade-

Niles page 17

Right:  
Jen Niles at the  
Beacon Hill Art  
Walk in Boston

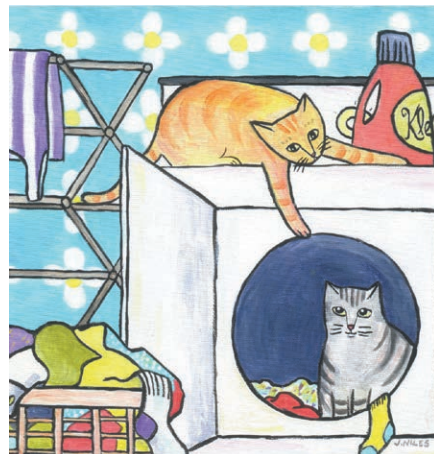
Below left:  
“Trying to Read”

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“Boat Ride”



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# Creating whimsical paintings of people, places and pets

Niles

Continued from page 16

show industry. A self-described late bloomer, she met and married her husband at age 38 and gave birth to their child at 43.

"All the work that I've been doing art-wise has been done while simultaneously parenting and/or homeschooling our wonderful son," she noted.

Her career as an artist began in 2001 when she displayed artwork at a small gallery in Worcester owned by Donna Vayo. There, Niles sold three acrylic paintings on wooden panels.

"It was shocking and thrilling that someone would want to buy my art," she exclaimed. "I realized that I needed to start painting more to fill the blank space on the gallery wall."

Now a self-employed artist, her mission is to help others celebrate the pets and places they love. To accomplish that mission, she teaches painting classes and has integrated her innate art skills into community projects.

"My painting classes are not like what you'd expect from a formal art teacher," she explained. "My approach is, 'I can do this and want to show you how easy it is for you to create a fun painting, too.'"

With a strong following of animal lovers, Niles offers Paint Your Pet classes as private in-home parties and fundraisers. Some of these classes are held in conjunction with

the Worcester Animal Rescue League, which receives a portion of the registration fee. She also conducts painting programs at libraries for children, and at the Spring Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Worcester.

Niles continued displaying artwork at venues such as Worcester's stART on the Street festival in 2004 and several of the organization's subsequent events through 2010. Since 2006, she has participated regularly in Boston's Beacon Hill Art Walk, held annually the first Sunday in June.

"The Beacon Hill Art Walk is my favorite show," she declared. "They only accept original art. The organizers are professional and very nice. It's a fun, delightful show."

As her work and name becomes known in the community, she's approached by organizations with grants needing an artist. Niles assisted Edward Street Child Services create murals with preschoolers at five Worcester daycare centers, culminating at the city's annual Day of Play at Elm Park in June 2016. During the spring of 2017, she helped young patrons of the Paxton Public Library paint pickets to identify plants in a butterfly garden. Later in 2017, she painted cutouts of animal images reading books that are displayed on walls at the Rutland Public Library children's room.

"I'm always happy to bring

art to kids' lives," she noted.

Her prints, cards and gift items are available for sale at locally-owned businesses including Serendipity in Hudson, Petersham Art Center, Magic Fingers in Westborough, Noa

in West Concord and Framed in Tatnuck in Worcester.

"I've always wanted to be an artist," she said. "Now, I'm realizing my lifelong dream."

For more information, visit [JenNilesArt.com](http://JenNilesArt.com).

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## caregiving tips

# Key assumptions in caring for the Alzheimer's patient

By MICHA SHALEV  
MHA CDP CDCM

**D**ementia is a difficult diagnosis. The progressive decline of brain function and memory retention are frustrating and challenging experiences for the senior afflicted, as well as for their loved ones.



## Caregiving Tips

You, as close family members (spouse, children, and caregiver) are key people in the life of the resident with memory impairment and/or Alzheimer's disease. They may no longer be able to communicate their needs

The progressive decline of brain function and memory retention are frustrating and challenging experiences for the senior afflicted, as well as for their loved ones.

or make decisions in their own best interests. To provide quality care for the person with Alzheimer's, you must understand the disease and how it affects behavior, mood and personality. You will need specific skills to handle unpredictable behaviors when they occur. It is especially important to remember certain basic principles and assumptions about the Alzheimer's resident:

(1) The resident may behave in an unpredictable, even childish way. Yet, he will retain adult feelings and should be treated as

an adult.

(2) The resident has lost his ability to remember - you can't force him to remember.

(3) The resident often appears difficult because he is frustrated, frightened or embarrassed. He simply may not understand what you are saying.

(4) This is a disease which gets worse over time; therefore, the resident will become more dependent on you - often, even while resisting your help.

(5) The resident's world may appear increasingly confusing and unsafe. Your key to providing good nursing care is creating a secure, predictable environment.

(6) Focus on remaining skills. Even the most impaired person responds to warmth, respect and dignified treatment.

(7) Finally, understand how important you are to the Alzheimer's resident. Your skills, attitude and behavior determine the quality of life for the memory-impaired resident in your facility.

To care for a loved one at home or in the community, and to offset all the above concerns or issues, the best approach to handle is a person-centered approach. A person-centered approach is a way of organizing and providing services that places "the person" at the centre of planning and deci-

sion-making; that is respectful of individual beliefs and values; and that doesn't make assumptions about people before understanding their life context and what is important to them.

A person-centred approach is respectful of all persons - meaning that "person-centred care" has a focus on the quality of the care that patients/service-users/families/care partners and so on receive, and of course, that is the focus for evaluating the effectiveness of care services.

However, a person-centred approach considers the effectiveness of person-centred care alongside the importance of it happening in a person-centred culture, that is, a culture that respects the needs of those who are providing the care and their value as persons.

For too long the focus has been on service users without the commitment focus on staff - focusing on one at the expense of the other is fundamentally flawed.

As dementia advances, people do become more vulnerable. However, we sometimes confuse this increasing vulnerability with a "lessening" of personhood, in other words, becoming a lesser person in the eyes of others.

We then adjust our meanings of key caring principles (such as compassion), rather than adjusting the application of those principles in the way that we work and engage with people. It is this adjustment that needs the great skill in working effectively with people living with dementia and their families/care partners and the needs of care workers who are knowledgeable and skilled in dementia care.

Micha Shalev MHA CDP CDCM CADDCT is the owner of The Oasis at Dodge Park, Dodge Park Rest Home and The Adult Day Club at Dodge Park located at 101 and 102 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. He can be reached at 508-853-8180 or m.shalev@dodgepark.com or view more information online at www.dodgepark.com



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## money matters

# Reverse mortgages - good or bad?

BY ALAIN VALLES, CRMP  
PRESIDENT,  
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Reverse mortgages have been around since 1987 and have helped hundreds of thousands of older homeowners to live in their homes and have access to cash. Reverse



## Reverse Mortgage

gram.

Yet there continues to be confusion and misinformation on how a reverse mortgage works. Even worse are

mortgages are the most heavily regulated loan program in the country with periodic government changes to strengthen the program.

well-meaning but uninformed friends and family members who have discouraged older homeowners from even considering a reverse mortgage resulting in a lower quality of life. Unfortunately, not knowing the facts has led many seniors to making less than optimum home financing and retirement decisions.

Every person is entitled to receive factual and accurate information about reverse mortgages to help make the right decision about their unique retirement plans, homeownership goals, and options to having sufficient tax-free cash for life's unexpected challenges. There is nothing harder to overcome than the regret of a missed opportunity to have a better life.

But deciding if it makes sense to get a reverse mortgage can feel overwhelming. And not having the right information leads one to make a decision solely on emotions instead

of facts. Below are four tips to learning if a reverse mortgage is right for you.

### Tip 1. Identify your financial & housing goals

Ask yourself: "If I had a magic wand, what is my ideal scenario if I obtained a reverse mortgage?" Quite often there is an immediate need for more cash each month to pay off a mortgage, get rid of credit card debt, or make home improvements.

Other seniors are in financial balance today but are worried about having enough cash down the road, often fearful that they will outlive their investments, or face an unexpected health crisis.

Find a quiet moment to reflect how you want the next 10, 20, 25 years and beyond to look like. Though it may feel a bit uncomfortable, if you're married or have a significant other, you

should both discuss your future wishes and concerns and how they will be funded.

### Tip 2. Get the facts

Many websites and TV infomercials are just methods to capture your name to be sold as a lead. A good start is to receive the 36-page official reverse mortgage consumer booklet approved by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) government called "Use Your Home to Stay at Home." This is an excellent starting point to learn more about reverse mortgages. Feel free to contact me to receive a copy with no cost or obligation at 781-724-6221.

### Tip 3. Talk with your trusted advisors

You are encouraged to invite  
Reverse mortgage page 20

# SUPER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

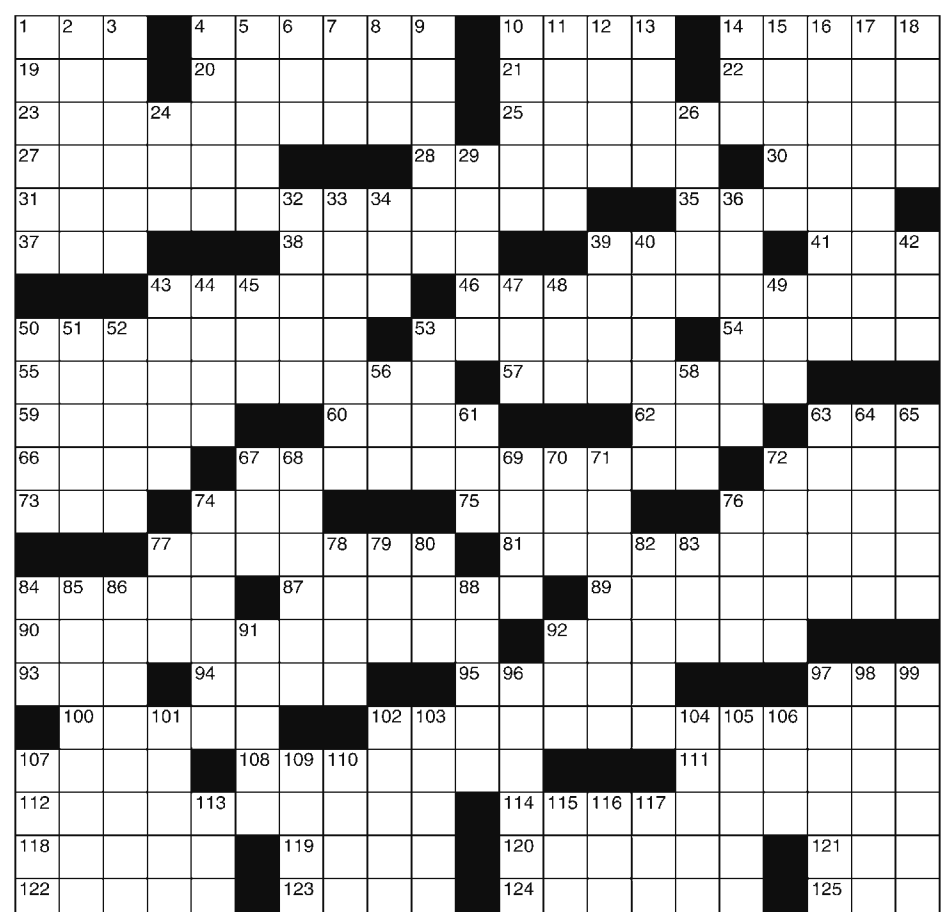
"Letter Addenda"  
(answers on page 20)

## ACROSS

- 1 Faux — (social slip)
- 4 Tangos, e.g.
- 10 Singer Anka
- 14 May greeting card salutation
- 19 "C'— la vie" ("That's life")
- 20 Tristan's love
- 21 Up to the job
- 22 Bayer brand
- 23 Anorak, for Alaska?
- 25 Set no spending limits?
- 27 Injury-sorting process
- 28 Tell a story
- 30 Drum set?
- 31 Brit Jones played by Renée Zellweger?
- 35 "Barbarella" star Jane
- 37 Suffix similar to -ette
- 38 Baseball's Tony La —
- 39 Frat letters
- 41 Tenth mo.
- 43 Actress Tomei
- 46 Decide to order ravioli?
- 50 Old comics girl
- 53 Soap format
- 54 Baseball's Pee Wee
- 55 Place for actor Baldwin's lawn?
- 57 Party food provider
- 59 González in 2000 headlines
- 60 Lovers' god
- 62 "No" vote
- 63 That miss
- 66 Agents, in brief
- 67 Tyke sitting on a fireplace floor?
- 72 Tibia locale
- 73 Fresno-to-L.A. dir.
- 74 Iniquity
- 75 "... for — know"
- 76 Empathetic comment
- 77 Suffer
- 81 Furnish supplies to Oregon's capital?
- 84 Box in a den
- 87 — borealis
- 89 Friendly teasing
- 90 Jet kept in reserve?

## DOWN

- 92 Hobbled along
- 93 — Cat
- 94 Go higher
- 95 Set — (decide when to wed)
- 97 Egg: Prefix
- 100 Pickling liquid
- 102 Yeast used to treat illness?
- 107 Dad's sister
- 108 — Bessette-Kennedy
- 111 Dress
- 112 Activity held between work hours?
- 114 Apt word spelled out by the letters added to 10 answers in this puzzle
- 118 "Uncle Miltie"
- 119 Taken with
- 120 Faraway humiliation
- 121 — Jones
- 122 Williams of "Happy Days"
- 123 Gotten a glimpse of
- 124 Grog drinker
- 125 Lennon lover
- 40 With 56-Down, pre-talkies time
- 42 — Bo
- 43 — a wet hen
- 44 One-named R&B singer
- 45 Arena arbiter
- 47 Oval part
- 48 Korean car
- 49 — Lingus
- 50 Leering types
- 51 Chronicles
- 52 Baloney
- 53 Bluebonnet
- 56 See 40-Down
- 58 Cheering cry
- 61 — Na Na
- 63 Slate source
- 64 Employing person
- 65 Hostile party
- 67 Assembly aid
- 68 Using uppercase
- 69 Lanchester of old films
- 70 Flying stat
- 71 Abbott & Costello musical
- 72 Parboil
- 74 Titan's planet
- 76 Atoll unit
- 77 Comics cry
- 78 Ordinance
- 79 "... cup — cone?"
- 80 Took the gold
- 82 Llama cousin
- 83 Laotian
- 84 Conan's network
- 85 Eighth U.S. president
- 86 Disdainful people
- 88 Good to go
- 91 Portion
- 92 Fond du —
- 96 Iraqi currency units
- 97 City in Spain
- 98 Lillian — (gift retailer)
- 99 Ring combo
- 101 Author — Calvino
- 102 Three-card street scam
- 103 John of rock
- 104 Milk: Prefix
- 105 Bygone anesthetic
- 106 \$\$\$ dispenser
- 107 "Chiquitita" quartet
- 109 Alamo rival
- 110 Russo of film
- 113 Boy toy?
- 115 Brewed quaff
- 116 Oversharing initialism
- 117 Co. owned by Verizon





# Arts League of Lowell calls city’s cultural district its home

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

LOWELL – After the founding members of the Arts League of Lowell (ALL) had an organizational meeting in the fall of 2003, and then incorporated and filed for nonprofit status in 2004, the 501(c) (3) corporation relocated to several venues within its first few years. Since the spring of 2013, however, ALL has successfully settled into a long-term home in the renovated 1881 Gates Block Building at 307 Market St. in the downtown Canalway Cultural District.

According to its website, “In a city whose motto is ‘Art is the handmaid of human good,’ ALL has become the catalyst for the creation of a community of all artists. Through ALL, longtime residents and Lowell’s new cultural immigrants can come together to share ideas and resources, and to promote each other’s work.”

Continuing to serve as the ALL board president since its inception is Steve Syverson, a two- and three-dimensional sculptor, and owner of the art supplies and custom framing store Van Gogh’s Gear. He’s



The Arts League of Lowell on the first floor of the renovated Gates Block Building, 307 Market St.

among the founding members who experienced ALL’s nomadic years.

“We bounced around,” he acknowledged. “We were at the mercy of our landlords. The deal was always that we could use the space for free as long as they didn’t have a tenant willing to pay rent.”

Now located in the four-story building at 307 Market St., ALL occupies the first floor with a 2,200-square-foot gallery and a classroom alongside Syverson’s 1,100-square-foot store. The building that had formerly housed Van Gough’s Gear on Middle Street was sold and became unavailable.

“We found the space where ALL is today and agreed that we’d move the gallery there if I could also move my store there,” Syverson explained. “That way we could share the rent on the first floor. It’s the only way that ALL could afford to have the gallery.”

The building was renovated by Lowell developer Nicholas Sarris. There are now 34 artists’ studios in the building’s three floors above ALL.

“Probably about a third of the people upstairs are members of ALL,” Syverson noted. “It’s all one big happy family.”

ALL currently has nearly 250 members, most of whom are visual artists of varied media including painters and photographers. Among other disciplines represented are ceramics, clay, digital arts, fiber arts, glass, jewelry, literature, media arts,

mixed media, music, sculpture and wood. ALL welcomes new members who are active artists or interested in supporting the arts.

Annual membership is \$45, and \$35 for registered students and seniors age 65 and over. Members are able to sublet wall space in the cooperative gallery to display their work for \$10 per linear foot, ranging from two- to five-feet wide for \$20 to \$50 a month. It’s not necessary to live in Lowell to be a member.

“Over the course of our organization’s lifetime we’ve had in excess of 800 members,” Syverson said. “We’ve had members living in France and Ghana.”

Syverson now also lives in downtown Lowell where other art galleries and studios are located within walking distance. He appreciates the interaction between the community’s long-established and younger artists.

“Downtown Lowell is an interesting and pleasurable place,” he said. “The city government made a conscious effort to create an art-friendly community. There’s a synergy among all the artists. Everybody wants to see everybody else succeed, so they’re always supportive with a lot of comradery.”

For more information about ALL, visit [artsleagueoflowell.com](http://artsleagueoflowell.com) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/ArtsLeagueofLowell](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsLeagueofLowell).

## Reverse mortgages - good or bad?

Reverse mortgage  
Continued from page 19

your family and advisors to be a part of the learning process. However, regardless if the advisor is a financial planner, an attorney, or your adult child, very few people understand the pros and cons of obtaining a reverse mortgage. I always recommend having a group meeting where I will explain everything in detail.

### Tip 4. Make a decision

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](mailto:av@dfcmortgage.com). Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).

Hoping things will magically get better usually results in more financial pain. Waiting might lead to regret. Sometimes deciding to sell and downside or rent is a better choice. The key is to be proactive and seek accurate information to make the best decision for you.

Please take advantage of my decades of educating people about the good and bad about reverse mortgages and give me a call or email.

## Answers to Super Crossword

(puzzle on page 19)

PAS	DANCES	PAUL	TOMOM
EST	ISEULT	ABLE	ALEVE
STATEPARKA	DONTBUDGET		
TRIAGE	NARRATE	EARS	
LONDONBRIDGET	FONDA		
ESS	RUSSA	PSIS	OCT
MARISA	MAKEIT	PASTA	
ETTAKETT	SERIAL	REESE	
YARDOFALEC	CATERER		
ELIAN	EROS	NAY	SHE
REPS	KIDATHEARTH	SHIN	
SSE	SIN	ALLI	ICARE
EATCROW	STOCKSALEM		
TVSET	AURORA	RAILLERY	
BACKUPPLANE	LIMPED		
SNO	RISE	ADATE	OVO
BRINE	MEDICAL	LEAVEN	
AUNT	CAROLYN	ATTIRE	
BREAKEVENT	ATTACHMENT		
BERLE	INTO	REMOTE	DOW
ANSON	SEEN	SAILOR	ONO



# Movies and the elderly

By MARIANNE DELOREY, Ph.D.

“Don’t try to be young. Just open your mind. Use that decade! Use them all!” – Betty White, on aging.

In 1985, a comic first appeared that proposed one way



to judge a film. The Bechdel Test is a simple measure about a movie’s inclusion of female characters. The test asks: 1) Does the movie have

## Housing Options

at least two women in it? 2) Do they talk to each other? and 3) Does their conversation touch on anything other than a man?

Because the Oscars are coming up, this article focuses on creating a similar way to rate how elder-friendly a movie is. Because of the length and breadth of her career, I am calling this the Betty White Movie scale.

Betty White, who just turned 96, has been in show business for over 75 years and has worked in radio, television, film and on Broadway. In recent years, a Facebook petition even demanded she host Saturday Night Live, which she did in 2013.

Hollywood is a youth-focused industry. Portrayals of aging are frequently absent from movies, and those movies that do include an elderly character paint them with negative stereotypes. Worse, sometimes when a character must age, they use makeup to age the character instead of using actors of appropriate ages.

There are many good ways movies can incorporate elders, and yet the beauty of the Bechdel Test is its simplicity. So, I limited this test to the

Betty White, who just turned 96, has been in show business for over 75 years and has worked in radio, television, film and on Broadway. In recent years, a Facebook petition even demanded she host Saturday Night Live, which she did in 2013.

three most important questions:

1. Are there any named characters with spoken lines who are likely over the age of 60?

2. Are the older characters instrumental to the plot?

3. Are the older characters generally developed without over reliance on stereotypes? (not all are frail, forgetful, dependent, passive, grouchy, set in ways, pining for youth)

Some notable movies truly focus on aging – either on a specific person as they age (“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” “The Age of Adaline”), an older person (“Grumpy Old Men,” “Driving Miss Daisy,” “On Golden Pond”), or on groups of older people (“Cocoon”). These movies, of course, all score highly on the Betty White scale. The average movie, however, should be including more depictions of aging. Our entertainment should reflect reality and that includes that older people live among us, have meaningful interactions with us, and are all unique individuals.

As of the writing of this article, it is yet unclear what movies will be nominated for the upcoming Oscars. However, “Star Wars, The Last Jedi” is likely to be nominated considering the history of the series. As such, I reviewed this movie with an eye toward how older characters were portrayed. (Spoiler Alert: stop reading now if

richness of older characters is best depicted when they are not done growing and developing themselves, I am particularly impressed by Luke’s character. In this movie, Luke shows such growth that by the end of the movie, he becomes one with the Force. I’d give this movie a 3 out of 3 on our scale.

Given that in 2018, the Academy Awards will be 90, let’s hope they honor their own longevity by including diversity of age as a factor when evaluating movies. And if they don’t, let’s start demanding better of Hollywood. If we start asking for better portrayals of older characters, Hollywood will oblige. Let’s ask for more movies that score highly on the Betty White Scale.

you have not seen this movie). As is typical, Luke, Leia and Yoda are all viewed as wise people who shape the training of the young. Luke and Leia are strong in their own right and instrumental to the plot of the movie even aside from their role as teachers. As the

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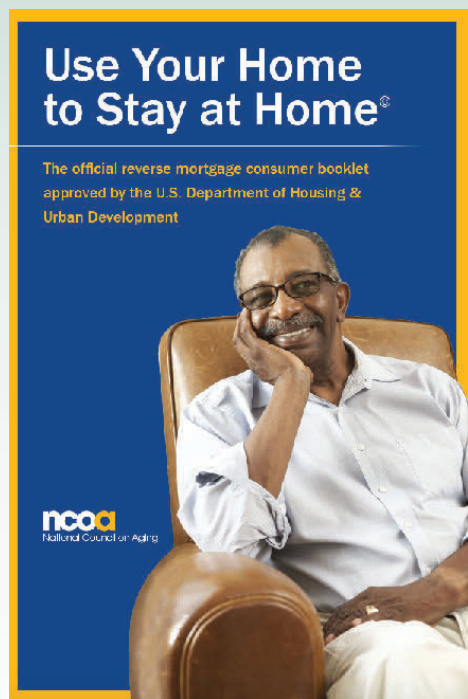


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## A teapot grandmother

By JANICE LINDSAY

Two events occurred around the same time, one momentous to me and one apparently of no consequence to anybody. Were they connected? Who knows what forces operate beneath life's surface?



### Inklings

First, the momentous event: I became a grandmother. I had waited a long time to be a Grammy. I had come to believe that it would never happen. Then – surprise! – Gracie. She lives on the other side of the country, so at first I saw only her photo. I could tell from the photo – and I say this without bias of any kind – that she was the most beautiful, brilliant baby ever born to human-kind.

With the arrival of Gracie, my view of the future shifted and expanded. I had always known, in a theoretical way, that the world will, some day, continue without me, though I've never been quite sure how everyone will manage. But now that I was Grammy, the future opened wider and became more personal. An actual little girl will carry a part of me forward, into decades that I will never see.

Now for the second event, the apparently inconsequential one: I bought a teapot.

I had been drinking tea for years. Normally, I would plunk a teabag in a mug, pour boiling water on it, let the bag float for a while, dunk it a few times, maybe squeeze it, and drink the tea.

Then suddenly, there arose in my mind, unbidden and unexpected, the desire to buy a ceramic teapot. I simply told myself that it was about time for me to make tea like a grown-up, in a covered pot, the way tea was intended to be made, to steep in its own fragrant mist.

It was not easy to find the proper teapot: not too little, not

too big, that would look good in my kitchen. I visited local stores, but nobody had what I wanted.

I finally tried the thrift shop that sells donated, used items to benefit our local hospital. Eureka! I found a dozen teapots, displayed at various spots throughout the shop. I examined the merits of each pot. I chose a squat, white teapot decorated in a water-color-style paintings of fruits and vegetables in pastel greens, yellows, and reds that would match my kitchen décor.

During the search, my conscious mind suddenly realized what my unconscious mind had been trying to tell me: Real grandmothers use teapots. I needed a

teapot as a direct result of becoming a little girl's Grammy.

I so well remember my own grandmother's teapot, a capacious, deep burgundy ceramic pot with gold trim, a wide



strong handle, and a gracefully curving spout. Grandma's teapot lived on her over-sized cast-iron range. It formed the center of her cozy kitchen, always present when children or grandchildren sat at her kitchen table, sharing their triumphs and their sorrows, finding a ready non-judgmental sympathy and a comforting, or celebratory, cup of tea.

For reasons of geography and because we have only one child – not seven, like my grandparents – I can never be the grandmother my grandmother was. But I remember her whenever I make a pot of tea, carrying her memory into my future. Maybe some day I'll share a pot of tea with Gracie and with – a second wonderful surprise – her delightful younger sister Violet. We'll talk, and I'll tell them about their grandmothers.

My new, used pot undoubtedly has its own history, which I will never know. But at least it is a sign that I have officially arrived. I have a teapot. I am a real grandmother.

Contact [jlindsay@tidewater.net](mailto:jlindsay@tidewater.net)



*Grant that our brother may sleep here in peace until you awaken him to glory...* - Prayers of Final Committal



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