



A Citizen Voice for the  
Aging Experience

# ENGAGING NH NEWS

GUEST OPINION:

## The Words We Use Can Define Our Perspective on Age

by Martha Bauman

“I have no intention of getting old,” announced a friend. We were having dinner outside at a downtown café. The six of us were, at that time, ages 65 to 78. I recall that the man who made the statement had recently celebrated his 70th birthday. He was in excellent health ... a runner, slender, strong and careful to eat healthfully. He looked younger than his years.

“Are you planning to die young,” I asked. “If so, the time has come.”

But I misjudged him.

“No”, and he laughed, “I will get older. But I will not... will not, get old.”

Aha... now I understand. It’s the word, “old” that puts people in a bad mood. Finding the right words can be tricky.

“Older man” is a fine title to claim. Older men, especially if they are good looking, well-mannered and have a little money, are quite desirable. In prestigious magazines, they sell expensive scotch, and are sometimes seen in the company of hunting dogs and partridges.

They assure us that our investments are safe with them. They play tennis. They used to be seen (or pictured) wearing white dinner jackets, but now are more likely pictured at the helm of a 30-foot sailboat. Some have beautiful young wives. They are taken seriously wherever they go.

*It’s the word, “old” that puts people in a bad mood.*

I am quite fond of a few older men, though none of them sell scotch or hunt partridges. Two even sing in church choirs; some have older wives, bless their hearts. One still plays tennis; one never did and others gave it up, even before they became older men. Imagine! Most are substantially involved in their communities.

Each defines himself as “retired” or as an “older man.”

It is embarrassing to be old, apparently, unless one is very old, preferably over 90. At that point, age can become a source of pride: One is proud to have lived so long, done so much, gained such wisdom.

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EngAGING NH  
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[engagingnh@yahoo.com](mailto:engagingnh@yahoo.com)  
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The word “old” has a bad reputation, at least for most things, including people. Old clothes are to be discarded, or perhaps taken to a thrift shop. There, someone might discover that your old suit or dress is “retro” and therefore back in style.

But if you are over age 60, retro isn’t cool, unless you have savoir faire, in which case you might get by with the 35-year-old outfit. I greatly admire such people. Anything I wear from the 1970s just looks dowdy.

I notice a similar disconnect between the words “elder” and “elderly.” My friend, Art, once said, “I don’t mind being an elder, but don’t call me elderly.” The images that go with “elder” are positive, sometimes even noble. “Elder brother” brings images of kindness and wisdom.

“Elder statesman” conveys great respect. But being elected to state or federal office isn’t enough to earn the title. An old (older) elected official is usually just that. (Why doesn’t he step aside, younger voters ask.) Some do become elder statesmen. Former Massachusetts Congressman Tip O’Neil comes to mind. Senator McCain: The jury is still out, I think. In New Hampshire, many would think of Walter Peterson. Some become elder statesmen only in retrospect. The term carries gravitas.

I don’t recall ever seeing the term “elder stateswoman,” though I would be happy to so describe recently retired Maine Senator

Olympia Snow. Sisters, there a few hurdles yet ahead.

Old ... Older ... Elder ... Elderly. What’s behind such nonsense? Partly vanity, of course, but there is also substance. We are seeking to define ourselves in ways that fit a new reality.

In this nation, as in other Western nations, a profound shift has occurred in the structure of families and communities. The oldest man in the family is unlikely to be the keeper of the wisdom needed for survival. We, the old ones, may be cherished, but we are no longer in charge. As the years go by, we are increasingly dependent upon the young, our biological children or our community, whether village, church or government.

And there are so many of us. But if we are part of the problem, we are also part of the solution. I recently attended a meeting of perhaps 20 people, several of whom, a generation or two ago, would have been called “old.” It was ironic, I thought, to hear a man in his 70s ask, “How can we best fulfill our responsibility to older

people?”

Thanks to better medical care, aging is usually a process of several years, not a sudden collapse into frailty. To describe myself as “an older person” reflects that reality. It’s a new life stage, one that many find enjoyable and productive.

*Martha Bauman enjoys observing and studying the issues of aging, both in her own life and in the life of the community. She welcomes your comments about senior issues. This was originally published in the Keene Sentinel, 10/6/13.*

## NH Updates

### NH LOSES TWO LONG TIME ELDER ADVOCATES

*Jim Pilliod M.D.*

James P. Pilliod, M.D., 83, of Belmont passed away on Sunday, March 9, 2014. A pediatrician, James “Doc” Pilliod served the Lakes Region for 31 years (1964-1996). Upon retiring from the Laconia Clinic, he continued with public service, becoming a N.H.

## WHO ARE WE?

*EngAGING NH is an all-volunteer not-for-profit organization registered with the State of NH. We work to support and promote activities, policies, planning and values that respect and include ALL older adults.*

state representative for the next 16 years (1996-2012) and coining the phrase “The Doc in the House”. Mental Health and privacy legislation were two of his concerns and he served on the NH Health and Human Services/Elderly Affairs Committee.

He served on the Genesis Behavioral Health Board and was an advocate for mental health during his time in the state Legislature; he clearly understood the impact of mental illness on family and community and was a voice for a population that often had none. He served on numerous committees and boards including but not limited to: Board of Mental Health Centers; Lakes Region Child Care Services; N.H. delegate, American Medical Association; and president, NH Medical Society.

For many summers, “Doc” traveled by boat to the lake's summer camps, serving as camp doctor. An active member of the Winnepesaukee Yacht Club, his love for the lake ultimately included being the sponsor of the statewide speed limit bill.

#### *Larry Emerton*

Lawrence A. Emerton Sr. will be remembered as a caring person who was always ready to lend a helping hand for his community and the state. He died at age 85, after a brief illness.

“He was very active in politics and knew what to say and when to say it,” said Mac Morgrage, who served with Emerton on the Historical Society’s Executive Board. “He was a very caring person who didn’t let anything go by him that

## **Wanted: Volunteer Photographer**

### **Vaughan Awards Ceremony**

**Monday, May 5, 2014**

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deserved his interest. He was always caring toward others and always ready to laugh at whatever tickled him.”

He held many high positions in the Lions Club and he did a lot to help his community. In the NH State Legislature, he was one of the first representatives to recognize the special needs and advocate for family caregivers.

State Rep. John Burt also remembers Emerton, who served in the Legislature for about 24 years. Burt helped Emerton introduce a Municipal and County Committee bill in 2011.

“His main goal was to help people,” said Burt. “He was always very cordial, and when I was a freshman he would always encourage me to help others.”

Burt said when he was running for his first term, he knocked on about 1,000 doors to win and was fascinated by the senior representative’s success.

“I came in third and Larry was number one. I asked him how he does it, and he said a lot of it is because of his wife. He said, ‘I haven’t put up a sign in years and I keep winning’” Burt said.

## **From Our Readers**

*sclark@newstote.com*

### **AS LIVING STANDARDS FALL FOR SENIORS, SOME SEE SIGNS OF ‘SILVER REVOLUTION’**

Before Boston police detained Ann A. Stewart last August, she had a clean record. But she vows not to wait long, certainly not another 89 years, to become a repeat offender.

Ms. Stewart, 89, a retired hospital employee, was arrested while chanting slogans with a few co-conspirators from inside an imitation jail cell to protest the doubling of the local paratransit fare to \$4. Protest organizers erected the fake prison in the middle of the city’s busy Stuart Street to symbolize the fare increase’s effect on disabled riders on fixed incomes, and to block traffic. Ms. Stewart’s arresting officer — “a very nice young man,” she recalled — did not place her in handcuffs and let her keep her cane.

Ms. Stewart, who does not use paratransit herself, treasures the memory of her approximately two hours in custody. “It means a lot to me,” she said. “I’m very strong in my belief about certain things a senior should be able to do.”

Not long after the August protest (which was part of a longer campaign), the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority rolled back the paratransit fare by one

dollar — evidence, in Ms. Stewart’s opinion, that older adults must aggressively fight for their rights.

Ann A. Stewart: “I’m very strong in my belief about certain things a senior should be able to do.”

In Europe, older protesters often make noise. In 2012, throngs of Greek pensioners marched in Athens to oppose austerity measures. Last October, a raucous crowd estimated at 10,000 rallied in front of the Irish Parliament to denounce medical benefit cuts for people over 65.

For now, the senior rights movement in America remains relatively muted. Perhaps as Tom Hayden, the 1960s activist, suggested, the “price of some success is that the voluntary activist groups can feel less needed.” Could older Americans just be complacent? Maybe demonstrating in the streets is best left to the young? Or perhaps, as one experienced activist argued, unfavorable media coverage of events like Occupy Wall Street gives protesting a bad name.

Whatever the reasons, several social scientists say deteriorating conditions for retirees and older Americans in general — intensifying fear about retirement security, age discrimination, increasing poverty among the elderly and new threats to cut programs for seniors — could be the impetus for what some are calling a “silver revolution.”

“Now would be the time for senior rights movements to mobilize once again,” Andrea Louise

## **FYI . . .**

This newsletter is intended as a forum for you to share personal experiences, information and points of view.

In our media driven world of skillful marketing and political spin, we believe that diversity is critical to discernment and therefore the EngAGING NH Board of Directors welcomes all points of view, expressed with civility!

While the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Board members, our intent is to include material that assists you in forming your own opinions.

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**[engagingnh@yahoo.com](mailto:engagingnh@yahoo.com)**

Campbell, author of “How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Citizen Activism and the American Welfare State,” suggested in an email. Ms. Campbell pointed to recent proposals by politicians to trim Social Security benefits and convert Medicare into a voucher program as actions meriting a response.

“If there’s a direct threat to Social Security or Medicare, that’s when you do see people mobilizing,” said Jill B. Quadagno, a professor of sociology at Florida State Uni-

versity who studies social gerontology. Ms. Quadagno recounted that in 1964, roughly 14,000 protesters, predominantly retirees, marched outside the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, N.J. The National Council of Senior Citizens, backed by the A.F.L.-C.I.O., staged the show of force to prod politicians to support President Lyndon B. Johnson’s proposal for Medicare, which was enacted the next year. Later that decade and in the 1970s, advocates for older adults battled to expand Social Security, winning, among other policy changes, automatic cost-of-living adjustments.

In 1970, Maggie Kuhn founded the Gray Panthers to combat age discrimination and establish an intergenerational coalition for social justice. Her longtime employer, the United Presbyterian Church, had forced Ms. Kuhn to retire at 65. In 1986, after sustained pressure from the Gray Panthers and other advocates, President Ronald W. Reagan, then 75, joined with the 73-year-old speaker of the House, Thomas P. O’Neill Jr., to abolish the mandatory retirement age. Ms. Kuhn, who traded barbs with Johnny Carson on “The Tonight Show,” became a pop culture figure; at the height of the Gray Panthers’ power in the early 1980s, the organization had roughly 60,000 financial contributors.

The Gray Panthers’ influence ebbed in the mid-1980s and eroded further after Ms. Kuhn’s death in 1995, which “drained the social movement of its energy,” Vincent Roscigno, a professor of sociology at Ohio State University, said in

an email. Writing in Z Magazine, Eric Laursen analyzed the Gray

fessor of social work at Syracuse University who studies aging,

ing to people, and they disen-  
gage,” said Ms. Brown.

**How to Contact Your  
State Committee on Aging Representatives**

County	Name	Email
Belknap	Pat Consentino	sel.consentino@tiltonnh.org
Carroll	Kate Cauble	kemc226@aol.com
Cheshire	Bob Ritchie	fictionfitz@gmail.com
Coos	Mark M. E. Frank	maxfra@aol.com
Grafton	Rich Crocker	richcrocker@metrocast.net
	Chuck Engborg	eengborg@roadrunner.com
Hillsborough	Sherri Harden	hardensherri@gmail.com
	Joan Schulze	joanschulze@myfairpoint.net
Merrimack	Herb Johnson	clairhonda@msn.com
Rockingham	Sheila King	bbwic@metrocast.net
Strafford	Candace Cole-McCrea	snowyowl@metrocast.net
Sullivan	Larry Flint	wrecman@myfairpoint.net
<i>State Reps &amp; Senators</i>		
Cheshire	Rep. Susan Emerson	semerson435@aol.com
District 12	Senator Peggy Gilmour	peggy.gilmour@leg.state.nh.us

“I wish Maggie were here,” said Mr. Kingson. But even without a charismatic general, he predicted the senior rights movement would charge forward. “We’re not France. When they tried to raise the retirement age, people went to the barricades,” he said. “But if we are pushed far enough as a people, there will be a reaction. Many people are right on edge, maintaining their standard of living as retirees. I think they are scared.”

Data supports Mr. Kingson’s premise. The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College reported in 2013 that more than half of working-age households faced a deteriorating standard of living in retirement. A Pew Research Center survey published in 2012 found that the percentage of people ages 55 to 64 who doubt that they will have enough to live on during re-

tirement rose to 39 percent in 2012 from 26 percent in 2009. And the number of seniors experiencing hunger rose 200 percent between 2001 and 2011, according to a report by the Meals on Wheels Research Foundation.

Pervasive biases against older employees should radicalize seniors across the political spectrum, said Mr. Roscigno, an expert on workplace discrimination. “We live in a society consumed and obsessed by freshness and youth,” said Mr.

Panthers as “victims of their own success,” in that they achieved many of their early initiatives.

The well-funded, 37-million-member American Association of Retired Persons (later renamed AARP), founded in 1958, also emerged as a front-line advocate for senior citizens, but the organization performs its advocacy work through more traditional lobbying efforts, not street protests. While the AARP pushes “important ideas that are important for older people,” said Eric R. Kingson, a pro-

“they’re not the Gray Panthers.”

The Gray Panthers organization now has roughly 15,000 members and a diminished public profile. Sally Brown, the group’s current executive director, blames the flagging troop strength on a general lack of activism in America and a “corporatized” media that “demonized” social movements like Occupy Wall Street. “The activism then just gets squelched and doesn’t lead to the change that people see, so that’s disempower-

Roscigno. "This can and does culminate in discrimination in hiring, in firing and in general harassment."

When aging workers lose their jobs, he noted, they find it far more difficult than younger colleagues to find re-employment. The number of age discrimination cases filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission increased by more than 50 percent from 1999 to 2013.

Images of aging picketers carrying canes and protest signs are potent weapons in the advocacy arsenal, said Mr. Hayden. "We live very much now in a protest era that concentrates on the visual entirely, so, yes, the elderly in the front ranks holding the right placards does make a difference to political consultants," he said.

But getting arrested during a protest can take a toll on elderly activists. "It's always uncomfortable when you have steel on your soft tissues," said Alfred Klinger, an 87-year-old retired physician who was handcuffed during a protest in Chicago in 2011 over threatened cuts to social service programs.

Mr. Hayden, 74, who as one of the "Chicago Eight" was indicted on federal charges of incitement to riot after street protests at the Democratic National Convention in 1968, is admittedly skittish about attending demonstrations these days.

"The fact that I had heart surgery 12 years ago is a contributing factor," he acknowledged. "I don't really want to be pepper-sprayed if

I can avoid it. It wouldn't bother me if it was 1968."

Manning the barricades, Mr. Hayden said, might be a younger person's mission. But he added: "If you hear of any new movements for climate protection or women's rights or anything else led by 80-year-olds, let me know. Sign me up."

### ServiceLink Focus

*David Wallis, The New York Times, March 14, 2014*

#### LET'S GET INFORMED:

#### MAY IS MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH

##### *Imagine*

*Imagine there's no cancer,  
It's easy if you try,  
No pain or suffering,  
Or waiting just to die.*

*Imagine all the people,  
Living worry free,  
Without that ticking time bomb,  
That no one else can see.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer,  
But I'm not the only one,  
That hopes the world will be cancer-free,  
So we can live as one.*

© Michele Rosa

Did you know that skin cancer is preventable? It is a cancer of our lifestyle that affects people of all ages. Regardless of our skin type we all must make decisions around safety in the sun and incorporate sun protection into our daily life.

First, it is important to know that there are two types of skin cancer: Melanoma and non-Melanoma. The American Cancer Society defines non-melanoma skin cancer as a cluster of basal and squamous cells. Cancer that is defined as non-melanoma is due to the group of cancers that include all skin cancers except one, malignant melanoma. Malignant cancers develop from melanocytes, the pigment-producing cells of the skin.

Currently, there are more than 1 million people diagnosed each year in the United States. That is more than cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, colon, uterus, ovaries and pancreas combined. The good news is that there is a lot you can do to prevent the occurrence of skin cancer. Being in contact with ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the primary reason for individuals being diagnosed with cancer of the skin.

So how do we reduce the risk of skin cancer? Glad you asked, because it's these following suggestions that can significantly reduce your risk of melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers.

Seek Shade when the sun is the strongest. It's usually between the middle part of our day (10am-

### Raise Your Voice!

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[engagingnh@yahoo.com](mailto:engagingnh@yahoo.com)

4pm)

Do not burn. If you have had 5 or more sunburns in your lifetime your risk for skin cancer doubles

Avoid sun tanning and tanning parlors.

Cover up. Wear a hat, sunglasses and densely woven clothing. The more exposed your skin is to UV rays the greater the risk of cancer.

Use UVA/UVB sunscreen every day. That includes anytime you are outside for more than 30 minutes and even in the shade.

Check moles and birth marks on a monthly basis. While self-screening look for asymmetry, irregular edges, color, and if the diameter of the mole/birthmark has increased in size.

Being mindful of these six suggestions will allow you to take charge of your skin health. It is important that you are aware of the warning signs of melanoma since if it is detected early, it can be highly treatable. Sun Safety is important and with the warm weather on its way it's a good time to prepare for enjoying the outdoors!

*ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) are federally and state funded to serve as a local place for members of your community to get help exploring the many healthcare, social services, and community support options.*

*If you have questions about ServiceLink or want to find out how you can help others learn about sunscreen protection and or want to find out about services and re-*

## **WE WANT YOU TO KNOW . . . .**

EngAGING NH promotes citizen leadership and the active involvement of New Hampshire's older adults in the development of communities and public policies that support all individuals as we age. We are a COMPLETELY VOLUNTEER organization with no paid staff, and a limited budget.

We actively partner and work with other NH advocates.

### **Formal Partnerships**

- NH Voices for Health Care
- NH State Independent Living Council
- State Committee on Aging-Vaughan Awards
- Disabilities Rights Center
- NH Cares
- UNH Center for Aging and Community Living
- Oral Health Care Expansion, Children's Alliance of NH
- Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT)

### **Active Collaborations & Groups:**

- Older American's Action Partnership
- Elder Rights Coalition
- Aging and Mental Health
- Granite State Future
- Department of Health & Human Services

### **Other Groups we work with:**

- AARP
- NH Business and Industry Institute
- NH State Committee on Aging
- NAMI
- NH Alliance for Retired Americans
- DD Council
- UNH Institute on Disabilities
- NASW-NH
- Area Committees on Aging
- NH Association of Senior Centers
- NH Statewide Independent Living Council
- NH Business & Industry Association
- ServiceLink

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## News You Can Use

### LATEST SCAM

The New Hampshire Attorney General's Office is now warning people about an apparent scam involving surgical mesh.

Several New Hampshire residents -- mostly women -- received calls claiming they can join a class-action lawsuit for patients who had surgery using the mesh, authorities said.

But the caller wants bank account information and medical history details.

A Portsmouth hospital was the first to send out a warning last week.

The AG's office said if you get a call, simply hang up and call 1-888-468-4454 to report the call.

WMUR TV

### THE ENDOWMENT FOR HEALTH LAUNCHED ITS NEW ELDER HEALTH VIDEO SERIES

To see the first installment on Family Caregiving, go to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4Cvc\\_nszC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4Cvc_nszC8). The series, produced by the Endowment for Health, New Hampshire's largest health foundation. Ensuring the Health and Dignity of Elders is one of two new priority areas selected by the foundation during its strategic planning process. For

more information on all their priorities, please visit [www.endowmentforhealth.org](http://www.endowmentforhealth.org)

### HAVING A PROBLEM WITH MEDICAID MANAGED CARE?

The Disability Rights Center has set up a new web page to file appeals and grievances. For this important information, go to: <http://www.drcnh.org/MMCappealsgrievances.html>

## Health & Wellness

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL

April 26, 2014 is National Take Back Prescription Drug Day. For more information on this initiative visit:

[www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback).

The March NH Governor and Council meeting authorized to accept and expend funds from the Department of Justice in the amount of \$368,871 to implement the Controlled Drug Prescription Health and Safety Program.

It's important to properly dispose of Prescription Drugs for many reasons. Aside from the obvious ones of insuring that any drug is the right dose and within the current expiration dates, it's important that they are kept from contaminating our water supplies.

For that reason, never flush prescriptions down the toilet. Many pharmacies have take-back programs including Walgreens and CVS.

### WET WIPES CLAIMS

If you are using one of those new wet wipes instead of toilet paper and you chose a product that claims they are septic and sewer safe, you might want to think twice about flushing them.

Consumer Reports testing showed that not all products broke down quickly or disintegrated as claimed. But if you should have a clog resulting from these wipes, a plunger probably won't work; you'll need to call a plumber.

Source: ShopSmart.org, Apr.2014

### POOCH HAVE AN ACCIDENT?

Here's what to do:

1. Scrape the poop up with a firm piece of cardboard and blot pee with clean paper towels;
2. Blot the area with a clean dampened sponge to remove urine;
3. Cover with a folded towel under the rug if possible or on top of carpet and blot firmly until dampness is absorbed as much as possible; and
4. Use an enzyme-based pet-odor remover, following directions. (Caution: such products are not for wool fiber rugs).

Don't overuse cleaners and if you are unable to clean up the accident right away or if dyes bleed onto the towel, call in a professional.

Source: ShopSmart.org, Apr.2014

## MEDICARE REMINDER

If you are having trouble covering your Part D drug costs, there are assistance programs that can help. The federal program that helps with drug costs is called Extra Help.. Depending on your eligibility level, Extra Help may assist you with your Part D premium, deductible, and copayments.

To see a chart that lists the income and asset limits to qualify for Extra Help go to:

[http://www.medicarerights.org/files/Help-With-Drug-Costs/Extra-Help-Chart.pdf?utm\\_source=Medicare-Watch-email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=mcw&utm\\_content=mcw&utm\\_campaign=MCW+3.13.14](http://www.medicarerights.org/files/Help-With-Drug-Costs/Extra-Help-Chart.pdf?utm_source=Medicare-Watch-email&utm_medium=email&utm_term=mcw&utm_content=mcw&utm_campaign=MCW+3.13.14)

Additionally, many states offer a state pharmaceutical assistance program (SPAP) to help their residents pay for prescription drugs. Each program works differently. SPAPs may help pay for your Part D plan premium, deductible, copayments, and/or coverage gap. Use the information listed on the chart, link below, to contact your state's SPAP and see if you qualify.

To see a chart that lists the states that have SPAPs go to:

[http://www.medicareinteractive.org/page2.php?topic=counselor&page=script&slide\\_id=454&utm\\_source=Medicare-Watch-email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=mcw&utm\\_content=mcw&utm\\_campaign=MCW+3.13.14](http://www.medicareinteractive.org/page2.php?topic=counselor&page=script&slide_id=454&utm_source=Medicare-Watch-email&utm_medium=email&utm_term=mcw&utm_content=mcw&utm_campaign=MCW+3.13.14)

[Learn more about Extra Help on Medicare Interactive.](#)

[Learn more about SPAPs on Medicare Interactive.](#)

## NEW MS FINDINGS

The causes of multiple sclerosis (MS) have remained unclear despite decades of research. But new findings have linked this debilitating disease to a toxin produced by some strains of the bacteria that causes food poisoning.

Based on their findings in mice and MS patients, the investigators believe that the epsilon toxin produced by *Clostridium perfringens* bacteria can act as an environmental trigger, causing the disease to develop in people who are already genetically susceptible.

*C. perfringens*, which is found in raw meat and soil, is estimated to cause nearly a million cases of food poisoning annually from undercooked meat. But only a fraction of *C. perfringens* produce epsilon toxin: when the research team tested 37 food samples, they found *C. perfringens* in five samples (13.5%), but epsilon toxin in only one (2.7%). In the brains of mice, epsilon toxin targeted a specific set of cell types identical to those damaged in people with MS.

MS affects an estimated 250,000–300,000 Americans, and typically begins with symptoms including numbness in the arms and legs, dizziness and vision problems that can ultimately lead to paralysis and blindness. It is hoped that the identification of epsilon toxin as a trigger can help in the development of treatments to stop the dis-

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friends and col-  
leagues.**

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ease from progressing or even prevent it from starting.

*Source: Proceedings of the 2014 American Society for Microbiology Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research Meeting, Washington D.C.*

## FIGS, CELERY AND BREAST CANCER

It is rare for a natural molecule to garner the attention of medical researchers for two completely different cancer-fighting properties, but the compound psoralen has done just that.

Found in figs, celery and other fruits and vegetables, psoralen is already used to treat lymphoma—as well as skin conditions such as psoriasis—based on its ability to stop DNA from copying itself and triggering cell death when combined with UV light.

Now researchers at Duke University have found that UV light activation of psoralen also has the ability to kill breast cancer cells that overproduce the protein

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HER2. About one-third of breast tumors are HER2-positive, along with stomach, ovarian, and other types of cancer.

HER2-positive breast cancer is considered one of the most aggressive forms of the disease, because the HER2 protein encourages cancer cells' unchecked growth.

The most promising drugs for HER2-positive cancer, such as lapatinib and trastuzumab, can block the function of HER2 on the surface of cells, but they can't recognize HER2 deep within the cells. Over time, the tumors can become resistant to these drugs.

In contrast, psoralen activated with UV light can block all the HER2 in cells, eventually leading to their death.

*Source: PLoS ONE, 2014; 9:e88983.*

**BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATION LINKED TO INCREASED RISK OF FALLS IN THE ELDERLY**

The algebra of risk vs. reward may not pay off for people over the age of 70 who take antihypertensive drugs to lower their blood pressure. While these drugs reduce the risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke, this benefit is balanced out

by an increased risk of serious injury from falls.

Researchers from the Yale University School of Medicine followed nearly 5,000 older adults with high blood pressure for three years—85% of whom were taking an antihypertensive drug such as a diuretic or beta-blocker. During the follow-up period, 446 people suffered serious injuries from falls, such as a hip fracture or traumatic head injury, and the risk of fall-related injury was 30% to 40% higher for people who were taking an antihypertensive drug compared to people who weren't.

Among people who had a previous history of falling, the risk was more than doubled. It isn't clear why antihypertensives appear to increase the likelihood of having a fall, but it may be due to them making people less alert or more likely to experience dizziness upon standing up.

These findings suggest that doctors and their elderly patients should use caution when considering whether or not to prescribe or continue an antihypertensive.

*Source: JAMA Internal Medicine, 2014; doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.14764*

**DRUG RISKS**

Cholesterol treating drugs Liptruzet and Vytorin combine a

cholesterol lowering statin with a different kind of drug, Zetia (ezetimibe). These combination pills have not been shown to prevent heart disease or premature death better than a statin alone, and they are riskier and far more expensive.

Statin side effects are well documented but adding Zetia adds the risks of diarrhea, memory problems, muscle soreness, and in rare cases a condition that can lead to kidney failure.

Talk to your doctor about lifestyle changes that can reduce or eliminate your need to take a drug, but if you do need a medication to reduce cholesterol, consider a statin alone drug first.

**MEDICARE REMINDER**

If you were denied coverage for a prescription drug, you should ask your plan to reconsider its decision by filing an appeal. Your appeal process will be the same whether you have a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan or a Medicare Advantage plan that includes your Part D prescription drug coverage.

If your pharmacist tells you that your plan will not pay for your prescription drug, you should call your plan to find out the reason it is not covering your drug. Then, you should talk to your prescribing physician about your options.

If switching to another drug is not an option, you should file an exception request – a formal coverage request – with your plan. Call your plan to learn how to file an exception request. Make sure you

get a letter of support from your doctor and include that with your request.

Your plan should issue a decision within 72 hours. File an expedite request if you need your drug right away, and your plan should issue a decision within 24 hours. If your request is approved, your drug will be covered. If it is denied, you should follow the directions on the written denial you receive to appeal.

[Learn more about this process on Medicare Interactive.](#)

[Access an interactive roadmap for this process on Medicare Interactive.](#)

*Source: Medicare Rights Center*

## Tech Tips

### MICROSOFT ALERT FOR XP USERS

Microsoft has provided support for Windows XP for the past 12 years. But now the time has come for us, along with our hardware and software partners, to invest our resources toward supporting more recent technologies so that we can continue to deliver great new experiences.

As a result, after April 8, 2014, technical assistance for Windows XP will no longer be available, including automatic updates that help protect your PC. Microsoft will also stop providing [Microsoft Security Essentials](#) for download on Windows XP on this date. (If you already have Microsoft Security Essentials in-

stalled, you will continue to receive antimalware signature updates for a limited time, but this does not mean that your PC will be secure because Microsoft will no longer be providing security updates to help protect your PC.)

If you continue to use Windows XP after support ends, your computer will still work but it might become more vulnerable to security risks and viruses. Also, as more software and hardware manufacturers continue to optimize for more recent versions of Windows, you can expect to encounter greater numbers of apps and devices that do not work with Windows XP. For more information visit:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/end-support-help>.

Tech Sources other than Microsoft advise that if your computer is old enough to run XP, it may not have the technical sophistication to run Windows 7 which is still an excellent choice for operating systems. Windows 8 is significantly different from XP and maybe harder to learn.

### UPDATE YOUR INTERNET BROWSER!

It's Spring! Along with clock changes and changing your smoke detector's battery, here's a new 'Spring Thing' to add to your 'to do' list: Make certain your internet browser is using the most current version available.

Some internet browsers update automatically. Please refer to your browser's technical support pages

### ENH welcomes all points of view and invites your submissions.

To send articles or to add your name to our newsletter mailing list, contact:

[engagingnh@yahoo.com](mailto:engagingnh@yahoo.com)

to see if updates are available for your particular browser.

### WHAT'S BITCOIN?

Bitcoin is a digital currency created anonymously, although recently a reporter claimed to have discovered the identity, about five years ago. A software system turns out the "money" that can be sued to pay to purchase items.

The idea is that this new currency will bypass governments and their regulations. Federal reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke recently said that virtual currencies "may hold long-term promise."

But bitcoin and other digital currencies such as Litecoins and Namecoins are risky. The value can fluctuate and there's no protection against theft or fraud..

There is also the issue of hacking. Last year, an estimated \$1.2M was reported stolen by hackers from a banking service and a Chinese exchange with \$4M 'vanished'.

### HIGH TECH ORGANIZERS

It was only a matter of time before the organizing craze went digital. Have a project such as remodeling your kitchen and want to organize tasks as well as keep a record?

### CAN YOU HELP?

**You may make a donation to ENH through our fiscal agent, Disabilities Rights Center, Inc. which is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation.**

**Make your check out to Disabilities Rights Center, Inc. and note "En-AGING NH" on the memo line. DRC's mailing address is 18 Lowe Avenue, Concord, NH 03301.**

**Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.**

Trello.com is an app that works on Android, Apple and Windows that allows you to create categories such as "to do", make notes and even add photos.

Have a "to do list" for a task such as grocery shopping, that others are assisting you with? Wunderlist.com works on Android, Apple and Windows.

### A BETTER WAY TO HELP

Families dealing with heavy caregiver burdens due to aging or advanced disease can always use a hand. But how do you easily communicate and coordinate the support of caring neighbors and friends? These websites can help you. Check out:

[www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com)

[www.caringbridge.com](http://www.caringbridge.com)

### PRE-PAID CARDS

Prepaid Cards is a form of debit card that allows you to deposit a specified amount of money into an account for your use or as a 'gift card'. It is one of the fastest growing payment methods in the US. They are very handy for purchases or for getting cash from an ATM.

But before you try one, shop around because fees and features vary. Look for full information on fees and insurance protection.

Plans may have high activation fees, monthly administration fees and charges for deposits and ATM transactions. Some don't have protection against loss from theft or fraud associated with other credit and debit cards.

The lack of protection has raised concerns with the Consumer Protection Bureau which is considering new rules to improve security.

### Laugh & Live Longer

#### NH LICENSE PLATE

DUCHNTR, next to a bumper sticker - *Hooked on Quack*

#### I HEAR YOU

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were playing golf one fine March day.

One remarked to the other, "Windy, isn't it?"

"No", the second man replied, "It's Thursday."

And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a beer."

### WATCH OUT!

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him,

"Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on 280. Please be careful!"

"Hell," said Herman, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

### Purposeful Living

Barbara Coish has successfully managed the Windham Congregate Lunch program for Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels for the past fourteen years, and her dedication has allowed the site to flourish and reflects a philanthropic spirit that represents what the nutrition program is all about.

The majority of Barbara's volunteerism starts every Tuesday and Thursday morning when she prepares the Windham senior center for the day, brewing a fresh pot of coffee, slicing up some of her homemade friendship bread, and setting up the day's activity, whether it is cards, bingo, dominoes or line-dancing.

Then, at noon, Barbara and a few other volunteers serve up a hot nutritious meal for twenty-five to thirty seniors at the site. After lunch, she helps clean up the kitchen, collects the



**Barbara Coish**

Contact Information For NH Members of the U.S. Congress				
Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Fax	E-Mail Contact Form
U.S. Representative Carol Shea-Porter	1530 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515	(202) 225-5456	(202) 225-5822	<a href="https://shea-porter.house.gov/contact/email-me">https://shea-porter.house.gov/contact/email-me</a>
U.S. Representative Ann Kuster	137 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	(202) 225-5206		<a href="https://kuster.house.gov/contact/email-me">https://kuster.house.gov/contact/email-me</a>
U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte	144 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC, 20510	(202) 224-3324	(202) 224-4952	<a href="http://www.ayotte.senate.gov/?p=contact">http://www.ayotte.senate.gov/?p=contact</a>
U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen	520 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	(202) 224-2841	(202) 228-3194	<a href="http://shaheen.senate.gov/contact/">http://shaheen.senate.gov/contact/</a>

meal donations, gets the deposit ready, calls in the meal order for the following week, and takes care of her weekly paperwork. Since Barbara has been a volunteer, she has served over 35,000 meals!

Barbara also volunteers much of her time as President of the Windham Seniors Inc. to help oversee the day-to-day functioning of the Windham Senior Center. She works with the recreation director, to plan programs and activities for the seniors. Barbara works hard to make the center a welcoming place for seniors. She always makes sure they have everything they need so they can relax and enjoy themselves. And if someone needs a ride to the center, Barbara will make the arrangements or she will pick them up herself. She feels strongly that no senior should ever have to sit at home all alone just because they are no longer able to drive.

At the age of seventy-four, Barbara has more drive and energy than most people half her age. When I asked her what pushes her to work so hard, she said that she learned

the importance of social interaction for seniors many years ago when she started bringing her mother and mother-in-law to the Windham senior center. It was soon after that she started volunteering for Meals on Wheels at the Windham senior center. Barbara says she believes that one person watching another volunteer encourages volunteerism. And as a way to thank the other volunteers at the center, once a year, Barbara hands out what she calls the Angel Award. With it she hopes to inspire others to volunteer and give back to the community.

The thing that impresses people the most about Barbara is how humble she is—her constant desire to praise others before herself signifies her true character. When asked for his thoughts on Barbara Coish, the Windham town administrator said, “She is a staunch advocate for the senior population in Windham, she’s like their ambassador. I wish there were more people like her.” I feel Barbara’s service to the senior community is truly unparalleled, and I can’t

think of a more deserving person for the Joseph D. Vaughan award.

## Board Notes

Now that Town Meetings are over, and it has been reported that participation was high, we thought it was time to put your energy into a new goal. The 2014 mid-term elections are around the corner. In fact you’ve probably already been hit with pop-ups on your computers or seen ads on TV! It may seem too much too soon and even be a turn off, but this is no time to sit back and withdraw.

There is such potential for us here in New Hampshire. We can put candidates on the spot, get them off their talking points, and engage them authentically in the issues that matter to us. It is important to get a message to them that will educate and move them beyond the scripts they’ve been handed.

For example, regardless of your age, gender, political position, economic status or health, there is a common theme that eventually affects all of us: How do we cope

with our ever growing need for care givers? This includes Nannies, child day care workers, personal care providers for disabled individuals and supports for the elderly. If you are part of the “sandwich generation”, you may be dealing with both ends of the spectrum at the same time. Your need to find dependable, quality and affordable care and even knowing where to turn for help navigating resources is at best a daunting task.

If you could sit down with each candidate, you might ask an opened question such as, “What policies would you propose to support family care givers?” That excellent question carries a sus-

tained message—Could we, as a nation, do a better job to educate, raise awareness and have meaningful impact on keeping families together? If the candidate has not considered this issue as part of this or her platform, it will introduce the idea, and you may have an opportunity to share your experiences to further educate the candidate and influence their position.

So we invite you to think about key issues that need addressing and formulate questions you would like to ask. Frame a couple of questions and use them repeatedly. In other words, borrow a Constant Repetition.

Share your questions with us. Over the summer, we’ll compile

the questions you send and work on some common themes and topics to standardize language that we all can be use this fall. And, this will be good practice for the upcoming presidential primaries.

At its annual meeting this year, the Endowment for Health offered this thought, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to get it done, do it together.

Let’s EngAGE NH! As you knock down that last icicle, shovel away that last bank of snow, and scrape frost from your windshield, give some thought to what you want our political leaders to know and what questions we need to ask.

**EngAGING NH**  
9 Eagle Drive  
Bedford, NH 03110

ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED