

ENGAGING NH NEWS



A Citizen Voice for the Aging Experience

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GUEST OPINION:

Blue Zoning Your Life: 7 Ways To Boost Your Longevity And Happiness

by Megan O. Steintrager

Want to live to 100? Steal a few tips from Dan Buettner, the author of longevity-focused books including “The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who’ve Lived the Longest”. There’s a major bonus, too: Buettner says most things that boost longevity also boost happiness.

Buettner has traveled the world researching communities where people tend to lead long, healthy lives. But you don’t have to live in one of Buettner’s Blue Zones (which include Okinawa, Japan; Loma Linda, California; and Costa Rica’s Nicoya Peninsula) to boost your longevity.

“The secrets of long-lived areas are portable and you can put them to work in America, and you can see measurable results,” Buettner said.

But there’s no need to wait for a community-wide initiative to start Blue Zoning your life — you can start making changes now. Here are seven things you can start doing *today* to boost your longevity.

1. Organize a happy hour.

Community and companionship are a big part of life in the Blue Zones.

“The opportunity to be lonely almost doesn’t exist,” said Buettner — and holding a happy hour is a great way to foster friendships. Red wine is part of the Sardinian longevity diet, but if you don’t drink alcohol, get together for tea or cof-

Most things that boost longevity also boost happiness

fee — the important thing is gathering, not what you’re imbibing.

2. Swap your activity monitor for a human.

Whether it’s the Sardinians herding sheep or the people of Loma Linda who do their own yard work well into old age, moving around is part of daily life in the Blue Zones. While there’s nothing wrong with using an activity monitor if it motivates you, Buettner pointed out that most people stop using monitors in less than a year.

“If you want to live a long time, you have to look at things that you do for most of your life,” he said. “I’d rather see you make the effort to make a friend to walk with.” And with friends, “you don’t have to put a battery in them.”

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3. Eat plants — and share them.

In all of the Blue Zones, healthy grains, fruits, vegetables and beans are the cheapest and most accessible foods, Buettner pointed out. People in the Blue Zones eat meat fewer than five times a month, which slashes your risk for diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

While you might not be able to remove all the fast food restaurants from your town, you can put the healthy foods front and center in your own home.

But it's not just what the Blue Zoners eat, it's how they eat: slowly, together and with gratitude. "Their social networks are such that they gather around these foods," said Buettner. He added that people in Blue Zones generally "stop, slow down and show gratitude before they sit down to a meal," which lowers stress and aids digestion. 4. Find ways to shed your stress.

Stress is a part of life, even in the Blue Zones. But people there tend to have "cultural ways to shed stress," said Buettner. He gave the example of Okinawans, who spend a few minutes a day in front of an ancestor shrine, relinquishing the worries of the day to an ancestor. Experiment to find the stress relievers that work best for you.

5. Cultivate a sense of purpose.

People in Blue Zones have a "vocabulary for purpose," said Buettner, and they have a reason to get up in the morning beyond just bringing home a paycheck. "They don't have this existential uncertainty."

In Blue Zones, having a sense of purpose continues throughout life and is closely tied to — you guessed it — family and community. "It is absolutely lethal to live a purposeless life," said Buettner. "When you are part of a family or part of an extended family, it is harder to do that."

6. Make a friend at work.

Most of us spend a lot of time at work, and having workplace friendships can be a big stress reliever. Don't have any work pals? Buettner suggested making it your focus for a week to get to know somebody better: "Invite them to lunch. Talk your immediate boss into hosting a happy hour."

7. Make healthy choices the default.

Perhaps the most surprising thing that all the Blue Zones have in common is "they don't try to live a long time," said Buettner. Their healthy habits are a natural part of their day-to-day lives.

<http://www.today.com/health/7-ways-boost-your-longevity-happiness-t105380>

NH Updates

A PASSING OF NOTE

Andy Martel, the little guy who prevailed

Two days ago, Joseph McQuaid, the President and Publisher of this newspaper, stopped me in the hall, noted my 20th anniversary at this newspaper, and thanked me for the work I've done here.

I started working here in the closing days of 1996, and within a few months I was thrown into one of the biggest stories of the decade in Manchester — the coupling and very messy divorce involving the city's two acute-care hospitals. I loved reporting that story.

It touched so many facets of life, both locally and nationally — the rise of corporate health care; the disputes inherent whenever the religious and secular join forces; and whether a little guy can take on the ruling elite.

Which brings me to a sadder milestone: the death last week of Andre "Andy" Martel.

An ordinary Franco-American,

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.

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@gmail.com

Martel captained a four-year battle that ended the Optima Health merger and restored Catholic Medical Center as an independent, Catholic hospital on the West Side.

“We were up against big money, big medicine, the establishment. We prevailed for one reason — Andy Martel,” said Michael Quinlan, the vice chairman of Martel’s Community Action Group to Save CMC.

The victory is important because when a little guy takes on the power structure, he usually loses. Hence, the adage: “you can’t fight City Hall.” But Martel and Save CMC succeeded.

What follows are some key lessons of that struggle. Anyone who wants to fight the establishment and change the status quo may want to take heed.

Work hard

“Andy worked it 24/7,” Quinlan said. Whenever elderly people would gather, he’d be there to give a speech. He organized a referendum campaign. He hit people up for money. He attended hearings and meetings. He returned telephone calls.

In a 1998 interview, Martel talked about getting 200 telephone messages in a single day. Quinlan said Martel would call him daily for four years.

Part of the reason was Martel had the time. A 1987 automobile accident forced Martel, a mid-level manager at Digital Equipment Corp., to go on disability.

“He was a tireless worker who really believed in his cause. He stayed focused and just wouldn’t stop,” said Tom Colantuono, a former state senator, executive councilor and U.S. attorney.

Never blink

“(Martel) was fearless,” said Scott Tranchemontagne, at the time a young public relations consultant who worked at the firm O’Neil Griffin, which had been hired by Optima. “He wasn’t afraid to attend any meeting, any public hearing and stand up for what he believed in.”

That involved calling then Mayor Raymond Wieczorek a liar in public, describing Optima Health as a leech, and orchestrating a walk-out from a committee before it even got started.

“He had the guts of a burglar,” Quinlan said. He remembers cautioning Martel against saying some harsh lines, and Martel would snap that he’d say whatever he wanted.

“He was like a freedom fighter, a rebel. He threw bricks, but he had to upset the applecart,” Quinlan said.

Martel’s inspiration was Charles Martel, the French king who re-

elled the Moors in 732, Colantuono said. Charles Martel’s nickname — the hammer.

Create ownership

Had the fight been about faceless hospitals, it probably would have gone nowhere. But Martel was fond of talking about how his grandparents — and many other West Side residents with French-Canadian roots — had contributed nickels and dimes to build CMC.

“He got people to think of the hospital as something they owned,” said Tranchemontagne, now president of the firm Montagne Communications. “He made it more about ‘this belongs to the people, not the corporate interests.’ That’s populism.

”Quinlan saw that during his day job as an in-home respiratory therapist. Patients would tell him to give their best to Martel, and pledge their backing, 100 percent.

“He came as close to a folk hero as you’re going to see in this area,” Quinlan said.

Play dumb

Martel was overweight, wore

Coke-bottle glasses and spoke in a French accent. He was up against professionals who boasted advanced degrees, wore designer clothes and visited the gym, often.

“Some people, quite frankly, looked at myself and Andy as inferior species,” Quinlan said. Even some natural would-be allies such as insurance companies and Manchester Bishop John McCormack would not meet with him.

“It worked in his favor. He came across as a guy on the street just looking out for his community,” Tranchemontagne said.

Quinlan said Martel was happy to have his foes underestimate him.

In the meantime, Martel was not intimidated to approach and make allies with heavyweights such as Dr. Alan Sager, a professor at the Boston University School of Public Health, and John Lynch, then a corporate executive and Optima board member who eventually came out against the consolidation.

Divide to conquer

If Optima Health was an attempt to unify two hospitals, Martel fought back with divisiveness.

So the issue became one of Elliot Hospital vs. CMC; of east side vs. West Side; of pro-choice vs. pro-life, of a neighborhood gem vs. a corporate behemoth.

“It was a fight against one-size-fits-all,” Quinlan said. Martel encouraged a bunker mentality among his followers, he said. That meant no white flags, no treaties, no compromise.

When community leaders favored a particular person as a mediator, Martel sabotaged her selection, fearing she would be too good at forging a compromise, Quinlan said.

When Wiczorek placed three CMC representatives on a committee following a 1997 non-binding referendum that overwhelmingly opposed consolidation, Martel orchestrated a walk-out.

“He did not want a compromise,” said Quinlan, who walked out alongside Martel, despite personal misgivings, “and he was right about that”.

*Mark Hayward < Union Leader,
12/31/16*

SAVE THESE DATES

March 27, 2017 Endowment for Health Annual Meeting, theme Care-giving;

March 30&31, 2017 Transport NH Session on Community Design. More information to follow

THE POWER OF THREE

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.

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

engagingnh@gmail.com

The NH House has over 400 members and approximately 400 lobbyists!! Given this environment, how is your voice heard? You might be surprised.

The name House of Representatives isn't an accident! It refers to a government designed to be representational. But Representatives tells us they rarely hear from their constituents and that as few as 3 phone calls on a given subject makes it a hot topic!

They do pay attention - when contacted. Personal contact in the form of a phone call is most effective. Form letters and emails have somewhat less impact. Tweets have the least impact.

It looks like there will be some 1000 bills introduced in the 2017 session. Some will be combined, some will go to study and some will just die.

Chances are one of or more of them will affect you. Now is the time to learn who your Representative is and make contact so that when something comes up that is important to you, your voice will be heard. There are a couple of easy ways: contact your City or Town Hall or go the NH General Court website

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/>

The website also allows you to track bills that are of interest to you.

SALT PUBLISHES VULNERABLE ADULTS RIGHTS

The Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT) announced the release of the 2016 Annual Report. SALT serves as a consultant for the NH Council on Developmental Disabilities and is involved in activities that help individuals know and understand their rights. The 2016 Annual Report contains a copy of the final version of

House Bill 1165 the legislation that revised Chapter 161-F Elderly and Adult Services as well as an annotations to clarify certain sections. This law, which became effective on July 4, 2016 is designed to protect “vulnerable adults” from abuse, exploitation and neglect. EngAGING NH partners with SALT, supported this legislation and assisted with the annotation process. Copies of the Report are available from the NH Council on Developmental Disabilities located at 2 1/2 Beacon Street Concord, 603-271-3236.

From Our Readers

THOUGHTS FOR A NEW YEAR

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world, too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it, if I choose to read, or play on the computer, until 4 AM, or sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50s, 60s & 70s, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach, in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves, with abandon, if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten.

And, eventually, I remember the important things.

Sure, over the years, my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break, when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength, and understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken, is pristine, and sterile, and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think.

I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong. I never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day (if I feel like it).

BS

DEEPENING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

When you think of community, you might think of schools, the library, the town hall, the churches, the businesses, the local hospital or various associations or organizations established with some purpose in mind such as the arts,

supporting families and children, or helping seniors to age in place. These are all part of our communities.

But, in addition, lying below and interwoven into all of these things, are relationships between and among people. And wherever these relationships are played out, you will find individuals freely and naturally offering to each other and the groups and purposes to which they belong—their “gifts.”

“Gifts” in this sense are not necessarily, or always, of a material nature. “Gifts” can be those things that a person feels good about and knows that in manifesting them somehow in his/her life, one's potential is being expressed.

Deep down, it this kind of self-expression that makes us happy. And everyone has a gift(s) that can benefit someone else. It is the woman who teaches line dancing at the senior center because she just likes it or the neighbor who helps out after a heavy snowfall because of the delight in operating the Kubota. It is the lady who picks up a child at day care because the parent will be unavoidably late.

These “gifts” are naturally and freely given and benefit everyone involved and are the kind of relationships that can help to make a community a warm and caring place.

Sometimes “gifts” can be given more intentionally such as in a specially organized volunteer program where the “gifts” of individuals can be offered to other persons in specific and directed ways.

Volunteering to deliver meals to the home of an isolated senior or working in the kitchen at the senior center might be examples of a more intentional kind of “gift” giving. Multiply these things thousands of times in thousands of ways and you have a good sense of what community can be.

It is through this sharing of “gifts” that communities can thrive. It is through the sharing of one’s own “gifts” that a person experiences a kind of passion, be it gentle and quiet or louder and more visible, that tells you that life is good. When there is enough of this “gift” giving going on, a community not only develops a distinct identity, but it also can become healthy and a good place to be.

People are living out what makes them feel a passion or happiness and someone else is benefitting from their “gift.” There is a community spirit cutting across all aspects of life in a myriad of ways. You can feel it. But you already know all of this, don’t you? So why bother mentioning it?

We are facing extraordinarily difficult times now for many people in our communities, including seniors. Rising to meet these challenges calls for renewed efforts to deepen our sense of community. If the human services safety net that exists now is strained too deeply and cannot be maintained, the level of natural and intentional “gift” giving which benefits seniors now may not be strong enough to prevent serious negative consequences. Tragically, this will probably mean increases in the instances of self-neglect by seniors and in-

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 State Independent Living Council
- State Committee on Aging-Vaughan Awards
- Disabilities Rights Center—NH
- NH Cares
- UNH Center for Aging and Community Living
- Oral Health Care Expansion, Children’s Alliance of NH
- Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT)
- Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council
- Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Active Collaborations & Groups:

- Elder Rights Coalition

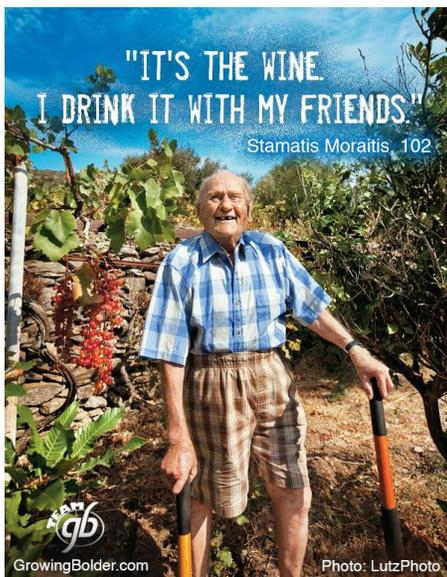
Other Groups we work with:

- AARP
- NH Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
- 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 Legal Assistance
- Department of Health & Human Services
- ServiceLink

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creased stress on family caregivers.

The only viable answer may be to find ways to deepen the nature and extent of the natural and intentional “gift” giving that exists in our communities. We will have to find new ways to tap into the “gifts” of individuals in our communities and to ask them to offer their “gifts” in new ways.

How will we organize our efforts to carry out this more deepened sense of asking people to offer their “gifts”? How can we organize our efforts to help individuals to more naturally offer their “gifts”? How will we unleash people’s motivation to act—either on their own or through more intentional efforts—to directly and indirectly support seniors and family caregivers?

The underlying spirit to accomplish this already exists, but how can it be deepened to meet these more challenging times? The answer lies within the people connected to that spirit. It is a time for action. Someone will need to stand up and ask other community

members to engage in a conversation about how more and different “gifts” can be mobilized to keep the community healthy and a good place to be for our seniors and family caregivers.

Fortunately, New Hampshire is a place where this has already begun in many different ways in many different communities. But the time is growing short. This is a role that government cannot easily do, but without its enlightened support and elimination of barriers, renewed efforts to deepen our sense of community to provide the “gifts” needed by seniors and family caregivers may go too slowly or stall. The result will be a tragedy in our communities.

Are you willing to be part of this conversation?

RC

THE KEENE SENIOR CENTER TURNS 60!

On February 5 the Keene Senior Center will celebrate its 60th Anniversary. A celebration is being planned for from 1-4 Save the date, join the festivities and if you wish, join in the planning. Here are some little known facts about the Center that make this occasion especially impressive:

- The Keene Senior Center was the first senior center established in the state of New Hampshire. But before there was a Senior Center there was the Golden Age Club, the dream back in 1948 of Charles S. Farrar, Director of the Keene Recreation Department, who hoped to provide pro-

grams and activities for residents over 65. The Golden Age clubs, all over the nation, gave that sense of “belonging,” and of contributing to the betterment of one’s surroundings.

- In 1956 the Keene Chamber of Commerce began discussing aging issues and five points connected: education, housing, recreation, employment and rehabilitation. At the request of Ernest E. Newcombe, representing the Keene Chamber of Commerce committee on gerontology, the first floor of the Washington School became a center for a social and recreational program for senior citizens. It was the first of four planned in
- The present senior center originated in 1957 as the Cheshire County Senior Citizens Council Inc. under the Keene Chamber of Commerce. The center was the first of its kind in the state and one of the pioneer centers in the country. In October 1958, seventy-two Golden Age Club members from Lowell, MA, visited the Keene Senior Center. The Lowell group was in the process of organizing a Senior Center. Many other groups from several states visited the Center over the years for ideas in forming their own centers.
- As membership grew more space was needed resulting in three moves in three years, 1960-1962, finally settling at the current building at 70 Court Street! In May 1977, of-

officials of the Keene Senior Citizens Center broke ground for the addition and renovation project. The Center has been a non-profit agency providing for the social and recreational needs of Cheshire County senior citizens for many years and continues to be a comfortable place for senior citizens to meet and make new friends, learn new skills and to remain active – both physically and mentally. There is a wide variety of programs offered to any senior citizen age 50 and older. Activities of the Keene Senior Center today fill 14 to 16 pages of the regular monthly newsletter, the “Senior Sentinel.”

- Becoming a Larger Part of the Community: The Senior Center also sponsors or participates in community wide activities and events throughout the year. Some recent events include: The Retirement Fair at the Keene Recreation Center, an Annual Spring Event held at the Keene Rec Center, The Clarence DeMar Marathon: Super Seniors (over age 70) participate, The Senior Swingers Annual Music Show held at Monadnock Regional High School, the Senior Center Men Who Cook event, our Annual Christmas Holiday Faire, A St. Patrick’s Day Dinner Fundraiser. This year the Center is exploring a subscription based membership service, “Cheshire Village at Home,” to help people stay independently in their own homes.

- What started essentially as an elderly day center for those over 50 years of age, over the last 60 years has developed into one of Keene’s most engaging and innovative organizations.

For more information contact Jacque Thiele, Assistant Director Keene Senior Center

Focus on Community

INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Bridge Meadows model in Portland Oregon offers a powerful new alternative to the isolation, trauma and adversity that too many foster youth, their adoptive families and low-income elders endure. It draws on the strengths of three generations towards a singular purpose- that all three generations may live full, meaningful and connected lives.

"The success of our intentional whole-family approach, the public cost-savings of our permanence-focused family and community support model, and our age- and environmentally- friendly accommodations represent a new paradigm for creative solutions to vexing societal challenges."

Bridge Meadows as a Solution"

Families agree to adopt or become the guardian of children from the Oregon foster care system within 1 year of moving to Bridge Meadows

25 former foster youth live at Bridge Meadows and 72% of them have achieved permanency

100% of Bridge Meadows families represent kinship adoptions/guardianships (care by someone related to the child by family ties or

through a prior relationship connection, e.g., aunt, grandparent, cousin, etc.)

100% of Bridge Meadows families are headed by single females

30 elders live at Bridge Meadows and provide over 10,000 hours of service to the community each year. Service may look like tutoring, serving as surrogate grandparents, babysitting, preparing meals, teaching a class, driving a neighbor to the doctor, etc.

www.bridgemeadows.org

GRANDPARENTS WHO CARE FOR GRANDCHILDREN LIVE LONGER

Grandparents who help out occasionally with childcare or provide support to others in their community tend to live longer than seniors who do not care for other people, according to a study from Berlin, Germany.

Having full-time custody of grandchildren can have a negative effect on health, but occasional helping can be beneficial for seniors, the researchers write in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*.

“Having no contact with grandchildren at all can negatively impact the health of grandparents,” said lead author Sonja Hilbrand, doctoral student in the department of psychology at the University of Basel in Switzerland.

“This link could be a mechanism deeply rooted in our evolutionary past when help with childcare was crucial for the survival of the human species,” Hilbrand told Reuters Health by email.

The findings are drawn from data on more than 500 people over age 70 in the Berlin Aging Study. The participants completed interviews and medical tests every two years between 1990 and 2009.

The researchers did not include any grandparents who were the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, only those who cared for grandchildren occasionally.

The study team compared this group with seniors who provided support for non-family members, such as friends or neighbors, and seniors who did not provide any care to other people.

Overall, after accounting for grandparents' age and general state of health, the risk of dying over a 20-year period was one-third lower for grandparents who cared for their grandchildren, compared with grandparents who did not provide any childcare.

Half of the grandparents who cared for grandchildren were still alive ten years after the initial interview. The same was true for participants who did not have grandchildren but supported their adult children in some way, such as helping with housework.

In contrast, about half of the participants who did not help others died within five years of the start of the study

Caregiving was linked with longer life even when the care recipient wasn't a relative. Half of all childless seniors who provided support to friends or neighbors lived for seven years after the study began, whereas non-helpers lived for four years on average.

“Caregiving may give caregivers a purpose of life because caregivers may feel useful for the others and for the society,” said Bruno Arpino, an associate professor at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain who was not involved in the study.

“Caregiving may be thought also as an activity that (keeps) caregivers physically and mentally active,” Arpino said by email, adding that

previous studies suggest that caregiving may improve cognitive functioning, mental and physical health.

Arpino noted, however, that caregiving is not the only activity that can improve health, and too many caring responsibilities can take away from other beneficial activities like working, being in social clubs, or volunteering.

“Children should take into (consideration) their parents' needs, willingness and desires and agree with them on the timing and amount of childcare,” Arpino suggested.

“It is very important that every individual decides for him/herself, what 'moderate amounts of help' means,” Hilbrand said, adding, “As long as you do not feel stressed about the intensity of help you provide you may be doing something good for others as well as for yourself.”

Madeline Kennedy, Reuters, 1/3/17

News You Can Use

PACEMAKER BATTERIES

How to dispose of nuclear waste is one of the great technical challenges of the 21st century. British physicists have now found a way to convert seemingly worthless—and dangerous—nuclear waste into man-made diamond batteries that can generate a small electric current for longer than the entire history of human civilization. The batteries could be used in situations where it is not easily feasible to charge or replace conventional batteries. Satellites and spacecraft provide obvious examples. But pacemakers could benefit from the invention as well. source: <http://www.theoptimist.com/daily/>

THE BEST INDOOR PLANTS TO CLEAR THE AIR, LITERALLY

Plants bring a new dimension of liveliness into the home, varying in their beauty, adding much-needed color, and interplaying beautifully with the surrounding décor. However, plants do more than vivify your home. The best indoor plants are also incredible agents for expelling chemical pollutants. The number of chemicals in our homes produced by household cleaners, paint, rubber, adhesives—you name it—is more ubiquitous than you may think. In point of fact, our places of residence are filled with chemicals that we usually don't give a second thought. The most common of these chemicals, [formaldehyde](#) is commonly found in household products and building supplies, [benzene](#) is in plastics and resins, and [trichloroethylene](#) can be seen in adhesives. Plants add balance to the manmade products in your home, but seven in particular clear chemical agents with amazing effectiveness **Real Story. Medicare Is Not Going Broke**

A recent blog post on the Center on Budget Policy Priorities (CBPP) addresses a common falsehood repeated by some lawmakers about the financial footing of Medicare. Unfortunately, some members of Congress continue to claim that Medicare won't be there for future generations because it's going bankrupt. According to CBPP, this falsehood has been debunked before—Medicare is not running out of money.

How to Contact Your State Committee on Aging Representatives

County	Name	Email
Belknap		
Carroll	Dr. Norma J Brettell	pastorbrettell@roadrunner.com
Cheshire		
Coos	Mark M. E. Frank	maxfra@aol.com
Grafton	John Acker	John.Acker3@va.gov
Hillsborough	Kathy Baldrige	kathy@lifetimeliquidations.com
	Joan Schulze	joanschulze@myfairpoint.net
	Russ Armstrong	equlzr@gmail.com
	Ken Berlin	KBerlin@savingplaces.org
Merrimack	Herb Johnson	clairhonda@msn.com
Rockingham		
Strafford	Candace Cole-McCrea	snowyowl@metrocast.net
	John Kennedy	jjkrha@yahoo.com
Sullivan	Larry Flint	wrecman@comcast.net
	Mary Catherine Rawls	Mary.catherine.rawls@hitchcock.org
<i>State Reps & Senators</i>		
Cheshire	Rep. Susan Emerson	semerson435@aol.com
	Sen. Molly Kelly	molly.kelly@leg.state.nh.us
Website:	http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/beas/aging/	

CBPP writes, “Medicare’s Hospital Insurance (HI) trust fund will remain solvent — that is, able to pay 100 percent of the costs of the hospital insurance coverage it provides — through 2028, the program’s trustees wrote in their latest report. Even after 2028, when the HI trust fund is projected for depletion, incoming payroll taxes and other revenue will still cover 87 percent of Medicare hospital insurance costs.”

To close the gap and extend the solvency of the Medicare program, CBPP identifies several solutions, including: raising revenues (increasing taxes), continuing to slow the growth in health care costs, or both. Another common myth repeated by some policy-makers is that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is causing Medicare to go broke. When in fact, the very opposite is true. According to CBPP, “health reform (along with

other factors) has significantly improved Medicare’s financial outlook, boosting revenues and making the program more efficient.”

Read more at:

<http://www.cbpp.org/blog/to-repeat-medicare-isnt-going-bankrupt>

THE BEST INDOOR PLANTS FOR CLEAN AIR

Aloe Vera: Aloe vera is a pretty magical little plant, and its medicinal properties are well known for treating minor cuts and burns. But there's another function to add to aloe vera's already impressive skills: air purifier. When it comes to clearing formaldehyde from your home, aloe vera is particularly adept.

Fern: Environmental scientist B.C. Wolverton's How to Grow Fresh Air names ferns as another great plant for removing formalde-

hyde from the home. On top of that, they are resilient plants that require little attention; indirect sunlight is best, and they can be watered just enough to keep the soil moist. Ferns also are nontoxic, making them some of the best indoor plants for pet owners.

Bromeliad: Looking for the best indoor plant for clean air that will also add a splash of color? Brome-

liads are a fantastic option. A study on volatile organic compounds showed that bromeliads were effective in removing six different chemicals, including acetone and benzene. Not only that, in that same study, the bromeliad managed to clear 80% of pollutants in a 12-hour period.

Dracaena: Dracaena is a tall, vivid plant—a great statement-making option for your home, characterized by the vibrant red stripes that mark the leaves' edges. When it comes to purifying, dracaena is particularly skilled at removing common toxins. It is also a low-maintenance plant, surviving in low light and needing water only when the soil starts to feel dry.

English Ivy: There are plenty of reasons to love English ivy, including that it is an easy plant to take care of—just provide a bright room and water when the soil gets dry. But English ivy also tops NASA's list as the most effective plant for removing benzene from the home, while also efficiently removing formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, and other pollutants.

Palm: Don't underestimate the purifying powers of the palm. This plant topped NASA's list for being the most effective at removing formaldehyde. The bamboo palm in particular is adept at giving your home a little bit of fresh air. Plus, it's a nontoxic option for pet owners.

Peace Lily: Peace lilies not only make for elegant additions to your home but are also some of the most effective indoor plants for clean air, even removing chemi-

cals like ammonia. They are also very hardy plants, so peace lilies are a great intro to plant care if you're still unsure about your green thumb.

Health & Wellness

WEB SITES TO SEE

Facing Age.

See this multimedia space for cross-generational encounters, where younger (18-22) and older (65+) strangers share assumptions about aging, at:

<http://www.faceage.org/>

Purposeful Aging.

The Milken Institute (Los Angeles) has many resources for those interested in positive and purposeful aging. Visit them at:

<http://aging.milkeninstitute.org/>

Leaving a Legacy.

For learning more about how to pass on values across generations visit:

<http://www.legacyletter.org/>

Harry (Rick) Moody, the Committee on Humanities and Arts of the Gerontological Society of America

HOW TO HELP YOUR AGING LOVED ONES AVOID FALLS AND ACCIDENTS AROUND THE HOUSE

Living Room and Bedrooms:

- Remove clutter and electric cords from pathways and hallways
- Keep a portable phone by their chair, couch or bedside

- Make sure they have access to lighting when coming into and leaving hallways and rooms
- Place nightlights to light hallways and thresholds between rooms
- Place a piece of reflective tape on thresholds
- Ask them to sit at the bedside or edge of a chair for one minute before rising
- Make sure they keep assistive devices within arm's reach. If assistance is needed for walking, a bell or wireless doorbell can be helpful to call for assistance
- Look into a personal alert system they can activate if they are not in reach of a phone

Stairs and Floors:

- Ensure they always wear shoes both inside and outside of the home and avoid walking with bare feet or socks
- Consider installing handrails on both walls of stairwell for more convenient support
- Keep all stairwells well lit
- Install non-slip treads if stairs are not carpeted

Raise Your Voice!
Please let us know what's on your mind and what's important to you.
 engagingnh@gmail.com

- Move furniture if necessary so that all paths are clear
- Coil electric cords or tape them along the wall to keep pathways clear
- Tape down edges of carpets or remove scatter rugs

Bathrooms:

- Ensure easily accessed lighting and nightlights
- Consider installing grab bars and non-skid mats in and out of tub
- Consider installing a raised toilet seat for ease of sitting and standing to provide additional support
- Consider a transfer or shower bench to ease fatigue during bathing or showering
- Make sure they avoid use of bath oils or salts

Kitchen:

- Ask them to keep all cupboards and drawers closed to prevent bumping injuries
- Keep their soap and paper towels by sink to prevent spread of infection
- Place their electrical and flammable items away from the stove and sink
- To prevent dizziness, show them how to use care when bending from the waist to pick up items that have fallen
- Place their commonly used items on counter where they can be easily assessed

Boston Magazine, 1/2/14

WINTER SURVIVAL TIPS

Winter can bring many healthcare challenges for older people, especially those with mobility issues or those who are homebound. Ellen McCabe, director of professional education for HopeHealth, a non-profit healthcare organization providing medical care, care management, and support services in eastern Massachusetts, knows the dangers associated with winter weather all too well.

“There are emotional risks, such as isolation from friends and community, and also physical risks, such as falls,” McCabe says. “Risks can be minimized if some basic guidelines are followed, making winter an enjoyable time of year for us all.”

Here are 10 tips for keeping aging loved ones safe and healthy during the winter months.

1. Stock emergency resources in their homes. “Emergency kits must be easily accessible and should include water, flashlight, batteries, radio, and blankets,” McCabe says. “Seniors should have at least a seven-day supply of prescription medications and a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water on hand.”
2. Watch the temperature. “For elders, there are significant risks of being too cold, which include dehydration,” she says. “People with cardiac issues tend to get colder faster. Make sure the home is properly insulated and windows are caulked to prevent drafts. Thermostats should be set to 68 degrees to prevent hypothermia and prevent pipes from freezing.”

3. Identify and eliminate fall risks (see more on this below). “This is a huge issue for seniors and most do not know they are at risk for falls, especially during the winter. Often they will take off their wet boots when they get home and walk around the house in stockings, which often leads to slipping,” McCabe says. “Create slip-proof paths and make sure they wear shoes or slippers that grip. Keep driveways and walkways clear of snow. Many schools offer programs where student volunteers can help shovel and salt. The Snow Crew is one local organization that provides such volunteers.”

4. Eliminate potential fire risks. “Fires often start from things like overheating electric blankets or space heaters. Candles are always a risk, as well as drying Christmas

CAN YOU HELP?

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

Make your check out to Disabilities Rights Center-NH, Inc. and note “EngAGING NH” on the memo line. DRC’s mailing address is 64 North Main Street, Suite 2, 3rd Floor, Concord, NH 03301-4913.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

trees,” she says. “Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are stocked with fresh batteries and are in good working order, and fire extinguishers are readily available near stoves and fireplaces.”

5. Encourage them to stay active and try safe exercises at home. “Many elderly feel lonely or inactive during this time of year but there are programs available to help. Many libraries deliver books and movies. Churches offer a visitation program of volunteers who provide companionship to housebound parishioners,” McCabe says. “Contact your local senior center for information on upcoming community activities. The Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs website lists of all senior centers in the state.”

6. Practice safety precautions in the car. “If your elderly loved one is still driving, be sure they have emergency snow supplies in their car, including heating packs, kitty litter or sand, emergency flares and snow scrapers/brushes, water and blankets, as well as a car phone charger,” McCabe says. “Make sure to keep the gas tank full. Ask your elder to let you know their destination, route and expected time of arrival before they leave the house.”

7. Keep a keen eye on their nutrition. “A balanced diet becomes even more crucial during the winter when we are less active, at risk of catching colds and lacking vitamin D. Be sure your loved one is getting balanced meals that incorporate vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables,” she says. “Keep extra

food on hand in the freezer as well as bottled or canned fruit juices and non-fat milk powder. Meals on Wheels delivers affordable hot, nutritious foods daily.”

8. Establish a plan for winter emergencies. “If power is lost, do you and your elder know where they will go and what they will need? Have an emergency bag packed with a change of clothing and all medical and care necessities,” McCabe says. “Have a carrier ready in case pets need to be transported with them. Go to www.redcross.org to find shelters open in your area.”

9. Provide your elder with a cell phone that is easy to use. “Make sure the cell phone is always charged and has emergency contact numbers pre-programmed,” she says. “Ensure your elder has practiced using the dialing feature. Just Google ‘senior-friendly cell phone’ to see the range of options available with big buttons, easy viewing, and long-lasting batteries.”

10. Dress smart for cold weather. “It’s a good idea for seniors to get out for some fresh air when possible,” McCabe says. “Layered loose-fitting clothing and waterproof gloves or mittens are best. Wearing a hat protects against heat loss, as close to half of body heat is lost through the head.”

STROBE LIGHTING AND ALZHEIMER'S

Strobe lighting has been shown to reduce levels of the toxic proteins seen in Alzheimer’s disease, in findings that raise the tantalizing possibility of future non-invasive treatments for the disease. The study, in mice, found that exposure to flickering light stimulated brain waves, called gamma oscillations, that are known to be disturbed in Alzheimer’s patients. Boosting this synchronous brain activity appeared to act as a cue for the brain’s immune cells, prompting them to absorb... The authors caution that a “big if” remains over whether the findings would be replicated in humans – and whether cognitive deficits as well

“If humans behave similarly to mice in response to this treatment, I would say the potential is just enormous, because it’s so non-invasive, and it’s so accessible,” said Li-Huei Tsai, director of the Picower Institute for Learning and Memory at MIT, and the paper’s senior author. The study, in the journal *Nature*, hinges on the observation that Alzheimer’s patients show a loss of synchronized brain activity, known as gamma oscillations, which is linked to attention and memory.

To restore the activity, the scien-

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www.engagingnh.org**

tists first used mice that had been genetically engineered such that the neurons that generate gamma activity in the brain were sensitive to light. The technique, known as optogenetics, allowed the scientists to artificially cause groups of neurons to fire in unison by pulsing light into the brains of the mice.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/dec/07/strobe-lighting-provides-a-flicker-of-hope-in-the-fight-against-alzheimers>

MEDICATIONS YOU MAY WANT TO AVOID

Here are six classes of medications considered especially problematic for older adults:

Benzodiazepines Prescribed — often over-prescribed — for anxiety and sleep disorders, this class of drugs includes diazepam (Valium), lorazepam (Ativan), alpraxolam (Xanax) and chlorthalidone (Liberium). The medications can cause confusion and greatly increase the risk of falling. **Non-**

Benzodiazepines Prescribed for insomnia, Zolpidem (Ambien), zaleplon (Sonata) and eszopiclone (Lunesta) are highly addictive and also can cause bizarre sleep behaviors, including sleepwalking.

Anticholinergics Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), acetaminophen with diphenhydramine (Tylenol PM) and some muscle relaxants that contain diphenhydramine (an antihistamine) can cause confusion, constipation, dry mouth, blurry vision or urine retention in older adults. Cumulative exposure to these drugs can lead to dementia.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs Ibuprofen (Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), aspirin and other drugs in this class are “tough on kidneys,” Lee says, and increase the possibility of stomach bleeds. They are not recommended for long-term use. For management of arthritis pain, Lee recommends acetaminophen (Tylenol), physical therapy, acupuncture, aquatic therapy or acupressure.

Antipsychotics This class of drugs is useful to treat significant psychosis or serious mental health conditions, but is too often prescribed for mild agitation, anxiety or depression. Lee suggests taking the lowest effective dose for the shortest term possible. “People get started on these and then they don’t top,” he says.

Old drugs Though barbiturates are rarely prescribed any longer, these sedatives are still available and are highly addictive both physically and psychologically.

<http://www.nextavenue.org/unexpected-drug-side-effects-familiar-drugs-older-adults>

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

The shorter days and colder weather of winter are here—and so is the increase in Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The American Academy of Family Physicians found that 4 to 6 percent of Americans suffer from SAD. Are you are feeling unmotivated and depressed for no apparent reason? Are you irritable? Do you suffer from lack of sleep or lapses in concentration? Chances are you might be prone to SAD. Here

Help Spread the Word!

If you like this newsletter, please share it with your family, neighbors, friends and colleagues.

Forward it on!

are 8 techniques to help you fight off symptoms, or at least ease the intensity, of SAD:

1. Dawn Simulators

Toss the loud, annoying alarm and wake up peacefully with clocks that mimic the changing light of the sun. Dawn simulators gradually wake you up with light that increases in intensity to simulate morning sunshine. The most effective ones use full-spectrum light, which is as close to natural light as possible.

2. Essential Oils

Essential oils are the purest essence of a plant: its oils. Essential oils promote restoration in the body and may influence moods. And they don’t just smell good; some research suggests that they may have antidepressant-like effects for some people.

3. Exercise

Exercise is a common prescription to ease depression. Moderate exercise like walking, running and yoga release endorphins and neu-

rotransmitters to the brain. These chemicals can improve your mood and keep your immune system healthy.

4. Go Outside

Get as much natural light as you can if you are fighting seasonal depression or wintertime seasonal affective disorder. If you get home after dark, change your schedule and bundle up for a walk during lunch; the vitamin D from the sun boosts your energy

5. Create a Schedule

People suffering from SAD typically gain weight and can't sleep during the winter months. Outline a schedule that enables you to wake up daily at the same time. Be consistent in your exposure to daylight and the times that you eat to help improve your mental outlook.

6. Take a Vacation

There are several benefits from taking vacation. Planning a trip creates day-by-day excitement and gives you something to look forward to. Choosing a warmer climate boosts your vitamin D intake and provides an escape from the cold, both of which are guaranteed to lift your mood. And the residual effects of a vacation are great; you'll notice that your lighter mood lingers even after you return home.

7. Meditate

Meditation is learning how to quiet your mind in the middle of chaos. It also helps you be intentional with how you react. Consistently practicing this form of focus balances seasonal depression by de-

creasing anxiety and enhancing overall well-being.

8. Speak with Your Doctor

SAD is a form of depression, and the therapeutic ways to combat SAD don't always work. If you can't shake feelings of anxiety and sadness, find a mental health professional to guide you to treatment that is best for you. Source Time Magazine

Tech Tips

LONG TERM CARE TOOLS

Lotsa Helping Hands is a care calendar website and the easiest way to organize meals and other help for friends & family in need.

<http://lotsahelpinghands.com/>

Five for You is a social network for building your own support team, akin to an extended family with friends. It's a place where you can easily coordinate giving and receiving support from your team.

https://fiveforyou.net/?utm_source=Email+Blast+to+Partners++Nov%2C+2015&utm

USE IT

Forget bingo and shuffleboard. Use of computers and cellphones is linked to higher levels of mental and physical well-being among those over age 80, according to new Stanford research.

And these elders — dubbed “the oldest old,” a generation typically ignored by the youth-obsessed tech industry — are motivated for

the same reasons as digital-savvy millennials: to stay connected.

“Using tech to connect with loved ones was related to higher life satisfaction, lower loneliness and general attainment of meaningful goals — being happy, independent,” said researcher Tamara Sims of the Stanford Center on Longevity.

Those who used technology to learn new information were in better physical health, her study also found.

Expansion of elder-focused tech education and support could help those born in an era of Greta Garbo, Model T cars and vacuum tube radio, said Sims.

Americans are living longer than previous generations, and many want to stay at home. With digital tools, they can stay socially engaged — and reach out for help, if they need it.

“I couldn't do without it,” said Sal Compagno, 80, of Berkeley, president of the national World War One Historical Association. “It saves me infinite trips to the library.”

Every morning, after his second cup of coffee, he answers emails about the war and his organization. Then he does research, which helps him stay abreast of any newly published academic studies. He also uses his PC to plan upcoming seminars — honoring the centennial of America's engagement in the war — seeking conference venues, speakers and nearby hotels.

Contact Information For NH Members of the U.S. Congress

Name	Mailing Address	Phone	Fax	E-Mail Contact Form
U.S. Representative Frank Guinta	326 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202) 225-5456	(202) 225-5822	https://guinta.house.gov/contact/email
U.S. Representative Ann Kuster	137 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	(202) 225-5206		https://kuster.house.gov/contact/email-me
U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte	144 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC, 20510	(202) 224-3324	(202) 224-4952	http://www.ayotte.senate.gov/?p=contact
U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen	520 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	(202) 224-2841	(202) 228-3194	http://shaheen.senate.gov/contact/

He searches the web to find images for his World War I lectures to civic groups and schools, and then puts his presentation on a thumb drive for travel.

Ham radio operator Rudy Bahr, 93, of Mountain View uses a computer program that, in an earthquake or other crisis, can communicate radio messages directly to emergency operation centers, hospitals and other critical facilities. Created by the volunteer-run Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System, it offers a direct connection that is more reliable than traditional email or cell services.

In an emergency, his damage reports would “show up on the big screen — telling how many casualties, how many roads are out, if there are any building fires,” said Bahr, a retired engineer. “It is quite an elaborate operation.”

Saratoga’s Tsing Bardin, 78, and her husband, 85, use FaceTime with their children and grandchildren in Italy and in New York. “It is free and you can see them as you speak,” she said.

Google Calendar is the tool used by 91-year-old Lois Hall, of Palo Alto, to book appointments for one-on-one tech tutoring of other elders at a Computer Learning Center, sponsored by Palo Alto’s senior center Avenidas. She also uses computers to create informational fliers.

She cherishes newsy or humorous emails from her son in San Jose and daughter in Cupertino. She also uses email to plan monthly dinners with friends.

She uses Netflix to watch new episodes of the Canadian drama “Heartland.” With the holidays approaching, she’ll use it for shopping.

“I find everything in the world on Amazon,” she effused. “I’ve loved computers forever.”

Sims didn’t expect to find much of a correlation between technology and well-being in adults older than 80 because these elders were considered to be the most unfamiliar with these technologies and the least likely to use them.

Conventional wisdom holds that as people age, they perceive time as more limited — and prioritize

meaningful interactions with their loved ones rather than learning new information or meeting new people.

“I was going into it a little bit skeptical,” according to Sims, whose research is published in the current issue of the Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences. She conducted the study with Andrew Reed, a former Stanford postdoctoral fellow, and Dawn Carr, an assistant professor of sociology at Florida State University.

The research team surveyed 445 people between the ages of 80 and 93, online and over the phone. Elders were asked about their motivation for using cellphones, personal computers, video streaming services and other digital tools.

Contrary to stereotypes, most of the adults over 80 said they used at least one technological device regularly, and doing so was related to higher levels of self-reported physical and mental well-being, reported Sims.

“The key here is that if you get them using these technologies, we could probably see some real ben-

efits to quality of life in very old age,” she said, in a prepared statement.

Interviewed elders said that tech tools could be improved to ease their use.

“I wish they would make it easier to comprehend the terms that comprise the Internet,” said Compagno, who avoids unnecessary “bugles and bangles” when using computers. “Computers keep improving, but with improvement comes more language — and you have to keep up with it.”

Bahr prefers the efficiency and simplicity of a conventional cell-phone over a smartphone, saying the multiple steps are an impediment to use. What’s challenging, he said, “are all the steps you have to go through to operate the latest technologies. You can look up all these steps and do it, then two days later, you forget.”

Another common frustration, said Hall, is navigation — for instance, learning how to move photos from iPads and iPhones to the computer. When she sets up tutoring sessions, she matches elders with specific questions to volunteers with that type of expertise.

She, too, was initially stumped — but with time, patience and training, improved.

“I struggled along and eventually found classes,” she said. “I’m fascinated by computers and wanted to figure it out.”

Lisa M. Krieger, The Mercury News

Dollars & Sense

INTERNET STOCK TRAINING

Online retailer Overstock.com has become the first publicly traded company to issue stock over the internet, distributing more than 126,000 company shares via technology based on the bitcoin blockchain. Through a subsidiary called tØ, the Salt Lake City-based Overstock has spent the past two years building the technology that facilitates this new way of trading financial securities.

The online retailer and its free-thinking CEO, Patrick Byrne, view the blockchain as a way of significantly streamlining not only stock exchanges like the NASDAQ, but all sorts of other capital markets. The blockchain is an online ledger controlled not by any one company or government agency, but by a global network of computers.

With bitcoin, this ledger tracks the exchange of money, but it can also track anything else that holds value, including stocks, bonds, and other financial securities. The idea is that this technology can more accurately and inexpensively oversee financial trades while eliminating many of the middlemen and loopholes that characterize today’s markets.

Byrne calls today’s stock offering a “Sputnik moment.” In other words, it’s a first, but it’s largely symbolic.

“It’s not a big Titan rocket. It’s not a moonshot,” he says. “But it demonstrates that we’re live.”

He hopes to license tØ’s technology to outside organizations, including not just businesses like Overstock, but stock exchanges, banks, and other financial institutions. Ironically, for legal reasons, today’s offering required the participation of about as many middlemen as the blockchain is meant to replace.

<https://www.wired.com/2016/12/overstock-com-issues-stock-via-bitcoin-blockchain/>

RENTERS' INSURANCE

Renting is becoming more popular these days for several reasons, one of which is the desire to downsize.

Some landlords require proof of Renter Insurance as part of the lease agreement. Even if this is not a condition, legally defined responsibilities will reduce any disputes that might arise.

While the building is covered by the landlord’s policy, possessions are not. Renter Insurance will cover personal possessions, but with conditions. For example there may be a clause that limits current but depreciated value based on condition.

Policies may also contain a cap on stolen items, but insurers may also offer extended coverage for high valued items such as jewelry. If this type of extended coverage is warranted and the building is in a flood zone, additional flood insurance may be appropriate.

Most policies also cover personal liability which is most often thought of as coverage when someone gets hurt on the property. But plans may also cover addi-

tional situations such as loss of use of part or all of the rental property.

All insurance plans are conditional, choosing should be based on individual needs and circumstances.

Laugh & Live Longer

CONFUSED

After an enthusiastic recommendation from my wife, I began listening to the audiobook version of Frank McCourt's *Teacher Man*.

"I love it, but his writing style is so disjointed," I complained. "He refers to characters I don't know and introduces them a half hour later."

My wife was as confused as I was, but I soldiered on, disoriented by the jumpy story line. It wasn't until the end of the book that my dilemma was explained—I had set the iPod to Shuffle.

A LESSON

After working his farm every day, an old farmer rarely had time to



enjoy the large pond in the back

that he had fixed up years earlier, with picnic tables, horseshoe courts, and benches.

So one evening, he decided to go down and see how things were holding up. Much to his surprise, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he came closer he saw it was a group of young women skinny dipping in his pond.

He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end. One of the women shouted to him,

"We're not coming out until you leave."

The old farmer replied, "I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim or make you get out of the pond naked. I only came down to feed the alligator."

Moral: Old age and treachery will always triumph over youth and skill.

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES, UPDATED

Church: While the priest was presenting a children's sermon before the whole congregation. He asked the children if they knew what the Resurrection was.

NOTE: Now, asking questions during children's sermons is crucial, but at the same time, asking children questions in front of a congregation can also be very dangerous.

In response to the question, a little boy raised his hand.

The priest called on him and the boy said,

Purposeful Living

"I know that if you have a resurrection that lasts more than four hours you are supposed to call the doctor."

Perhaps the oldest active Red Cross volunteer in NH, Jeanne Parsons has deployed on a number of national Disaster Response Operations, and has had a positive effect on many, many people, young and old, in difficult circumstances. She has also volunteered at Cheshire Medical Center for 20 years.

For Jeanne, age has never been an obstacle to helping others, and most of the people she has worked with had no idea that she was as old as she is, until they celebrated her 90th birthday last year.

Someone who worked with Jeanne at South Meadow School in Peterborough when it was turned into a shelter during the Ice Storm tells us:

"I had no idea what we needed to do to get breakfast prepared the morning I was there. The Red Cross has certain courses to prepare people for mass feeding in a shelter. I hadn't taken any of the courses, but Jeanne had and she was awesome. She quietly but quickly went about getting everything ready and teaching me at the same time what I needed to do. Other people might have been overwhelmed by how much there was to do, but not Jeanne... She is one amazing person!!"

She was once again amazing when she and other volunteers flew into

Oklahoma late at night and had to drive a long distance to open a shelter the next morning. None of them got any sleep for over 24 hours but the shelter was opened and people were served.”

Jeanne joined the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, in November 2007 just after returning from 11 days responding to the southern California fires with the American Red Cross, having served 12 years with their disaster response team.

From 2008-2012 Jeanne was a regular presence helping in the Red Cross office. At almost 91 years of age, she continues to enthusiastically take disaster trainings through the Greater Monadnock Medical Reserve Corps.

Jeanne has taken 26 trainings in the last 15 months which adds up to 83 training hours. She is a valuable volunteer for Cheshire County and is trained in various topics such as: surviving the active shooter, disability awareness, compassion fatigue, and suicide prevention just to name a few.

In the course of her tenure with RSVP, she has contributed over 1,888 lifetime hours.

When asked why she volunteers,



Jeanne Parsons

she simply says: “I have found it very rewarding to know I am able to help others.”

Board Notes

IT'S NOT ABOUT RESOLUTIONS

If you were expecting the Board Notes for January 2017 to be yet another cheerleader approach to resolutions, forget it.

Let's face the assertion that most resolutions fail within 10 days and get real. What would be more realistic and practical than future gazing on the unlikely?

The answer just might be restoration!

What good Yankee would build a house without insuring a solid foundation based on the tried and true? Yet, when it comes to resolutions, do we forget to check the foundations that have served us?

We have a strong history of lending a helping hand, of supporting our neighbors and our communities, but it's from a mind set of “Teach a man to fish...”, a hand-up rather than a hand out. We have long held an expectation of trust, independence, generosity and fairness. We value ethical behavior and local control. That's the NH foundation.

In today's rapidly changing world with complex challenges, polarization, insane behaviors like road rage, and fear, we need some grounding.

Ever heard of the term Social Capital?

It's a form of economic and cultural capital in which social networks are central, transactions are

marked by reciprocity, trust, and cooperation, and market agents produce goods and services not mainly for themselves, but for a common good.

While according to Robert Putnam, Harvard professor and author of *Bowling Alone*, while NH ranks in the bottom on charitable donations, our state has one of the highest rankings of volunteerisms and Social Capital in the country! These two facts serve to underscore that our values remain important and their vitality needs to be restored.

The good news is that some NH communities are already working on how to restore and build on these values through a focus on Social Capital. For example the UNH Carsey Institute has reported on the impact of walk-ability on community.

But there are many ways that we can restore and strengthen what has served us while moving forward to address the issues we face. Just remember the other thing NH is rich in,...innovation.