

Senior Lifestyles



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Artful Aging Helps Us Live Brilliantly at Quail Park

By Sue Rowell

I've been involved in the arts, in various forms, my entire life. I've performed with the Seattle Junior Symphony and the U.W. Marching Band, I've sung at Carnegie Hall and Notre Dame, I'm a published author, and I've been dancing through life. I like to think that I'm aging artfully. But you can describe 'artfully aging' in many other ways, not just being involved in the arts. In fact, artful could be described as clever, skillful, cunning, or creative.

At Quail Park of Lynnwood, residents age artfully by participating in events that they enjoy such as seated Yoga and Zumba classes, one-on-one training with our Certified Personal Coach, water aerobic classes, live musical events, trips to local casinos and theaters, educa-

tional speakers, card games, book club, church services, and so much more! "It's fun!" is how one person described artful aging at Quail Park.

I also think of health when I think of aging artfully. If we're not in good health, it affects us in a myriad of ways that hinder our ability to age well. Pain can cause us to be sad and grumpy. An inability to perform the tasks we did when we were younger can cause stress and fear. Lack of socialization can cause poor nutrition and depression.

In a senior living community, such as Quail Park, there are opportunities to alleviate those health issues that hinder artful aging. Medical staff is available to help with pain management and everyday tasks, great neighbors are there to social-



ize with and talk to about life. I can actually hear a couple of residents outside of my door right now talking about upcoming medical appointments, family dynamics, and what they're planning on eating for lunch today. Pizza cooked in our in-house pizza oven sounds great!

If you're looking for new ways to artfully age, visit Quail Park of Lynnwood and check out how we do it! We'd be happy to share some ideas and would love to have you join us for an activity, an event, and/or a meal in our dining room. Hope to see you soon!

Menopause myths debunked by new science

(BPT) - Menopause is a natural transition every woman goes through. Yet, it remains misunderstood and often misidentified.

A groundbreaking study of more than 32,000 women may revolutionize this. The study, conducted by Phenology— a pioneering women's health brand that provides non-hormonal menopause solutions – offers insights that debunk some of the most prevalent myths surrounding menopause. Knowing the facts can empower women to advocate for effective care from healthcare professionals.

Myth 1: Menopause usually happens after age 50.

According to the study, the average age of menopause onset was 53, but women as young as 35 were in the early stage of perimenopause.

Ultimately, there's no standard

timeframe for the menopausal transition, which can last between 7 and 14 years. In the Phenology study, 50-year-old women were in the 25-75th percentile range across four different menopause stages: early perimenopause, late perimenopause, early postmenopause and late postmenopause. This means that at the age of 50, some women are just starting their journey in early perimenopause while others have already entered late postmenopause.

Myth 2: Postmenopause means it's over.

Postmenopause is the last stage of menopause; but counterintuitively, it's marked by an increase in symptom number and frequency. Phenology found that women experience an average of 11 symptoms during postmenopause, compared



to 8 during perimenopause. Late postmenopause had the highest incidence of hot flashes (73%), night sweats (68%), brain fog (77%), and insomnia (70%). Sexual issues also intensified in this phase, with 62% of women reporting low libido and 52% noting vaginal dryness, which can lead to painful intercourse.

The label “post” in this case is somewhat deceiving, and doesn't capture women's actual experience.

Myth 3: Hot flashes are the main symptom worth treating.

Menopause is more than just hot flashes, with women experiencing an average of 9 symptoms simultaneously over the course of the transition. They range from physical – hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia and brain fog – to emotional – anxiety, mood swings, irritability and depression – to sexual, like low libido and vaginal dryness. These are frustrating at best, life-disrupting at worst, and plenty deserving of treatment.

Early perimenopause especially is marked by emotional symptoms that could be mistaken for mental health. Phenology's study found that 72% of women in this stage reported mood swings, 70% felt anxiety, 67% experienced ir-

ritability and 60% indicated a depressed mood. Understanding that these emotional changes might be caused by hormonal shifts can help women get proper care.

Myth 4: Menopause is the same for everyone.

While all women will go through the menopausal transition, Phenology's study found that the experience is remarkably different for each individual. Across 32,000 women, Phenology identified over 15,000 completely unique symptom combinations. Chances are, a woman and her friends will each experience different symptoms – making it near impossible to get accurate advice from peers.

With only 31% of OB-GYNs receiving formal menopause training, getting proper care from a doctor isn't always easy, either. Private companies like Phenology are stepping in to fill this gap, leveraging technology to deliver the personalized, non-hormonal relief that 82% of women prefer. They've partnered with Vitamin Shoppe to make non-prescription solutions accessible. Women can now get personalized supplement advice at Vitamin Shoppe, paving the way for a transformed menopause experience.

Community Breakfast and Bingo Bash!

Everyone is welcome to the Community Breakfast at the Snohomish Senior Center the first Saturday of each month from 8:30-10:30 a.m. Menu includes pancakes or French toast, scrambled eggs, sausage links, biscuits and gravy, coffee or tea and juice... all for only a \$7 suggested donation!

Bingo Bash is also the first Saturday of each month. Doors open at 4 p.m.; Early Bird at 5:15 p.m.; first game at 5:30 p.m. The cafe will be open!

The Center is located at 506 Fourth St. in Snohomish.

Seniors can get in free to high school events

The Board of Directors and Snohomish School District recognizes the value of our community's senior citizens. In appreciation of your many years of generously supporting our students and schools, senior citizens in the Snohomish School District boundaries are invited to attend district home athletic events (regular season only) and drama productions free of charge.

For athletic events - Present your Golden Kla Ha Ya Club membership card at the gate. Athletic event schedules are available at www.wescoathletics.com.

For drama productions - Call the school to reserve your seat. Bring your membership card to pick up your ticket at will call. Your complimentary ticket will not be available at the box office without this prior arrangement. Snohomish High School - 360-563-4008; Glacier Peak High School - 360-563-7504

You can download the registration form at <https://www.sno.wednet.edu/klahaya>. Complete the form and mail or bring it to the Superintendent's Office (1601 Avenue D in Snohomish). You will be contacted when your membership card is available to pick up. Valid identification and age verification are required. You must pick up your card in person. Membership cards will not be mailed. Questions? Call the superintendent's office at 360-563-7280.

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		8		6			4	5
	2		4				7	
9								6
			1				5	
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	6				9			
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	5				3		6	
7	4			8		5		

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Sudoku solution on page 10

How to recognize loneliness and what to do about it

(BPT) – Loneliness is a public health epidemic.

It's a condition that doesn't show up on medical tests, yet it can be just as deadly as daily smoking. The growing crisis has an outsized impact on older Americans. According to a recent study from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered socially isolated.

Social isolation and loneliness take a toll on physical and mental health, leading to chronic disease and higher healthcare costs. Older adults are at especially high risk of social isolation and loneliness due to changes in social connections that can naturally come with aging, as well as hearing, vision, and memory loss, disability, trouble getting around, and/or the loss of family and friends.

"A startling number of seniors are lonely and isolated, and it's taking a real toll on their mental and physical health," said Robin Caruso, Chief Togetherness Officer at Elevance Health. "We need to pay attention to this growing crisis so that we can help preserve health and well-being in old age."

Health Impacts of Loneliness

Risk factors for loneliness include living alone, the death of friends and family, mobility issues, discrimination, and poverty – especially among seniors. And the health effects of loneliness can be quite serious.

Older adults grappling with loneliness are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and cognitive decline. They're also more likely to be admitted to a nursing home.

Loneliness can also lead to cardiovascular problems, including

heart disease and stroke. According to a two-decades-long study, social isolation is a better predictor of whether someone will develop high blood pressure in old age than well-known physical risk factors like diabetes. Social isolation also increases the risk of dementia by about 50%, which was comparable to the effects of physical inactivity, low education level, and depression.

"Loneliness is a vicious cycle," said Caruso. "Many of its causes and effects overlap, which can compound the problem over time."

Spotting the Signs of Loneliness

As we move into the holiday season, family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances have the opportunity to check in on the older adults in their lives and help offer solutions to social isolation.

Signs to spot loneliness in seniors include:

- Changes in appetite, including eating less
- Anger, which could manifest in being more argumentative or becoming disengaged in conversation
- Withdrawal from social events
- Less regimented personal hygiene
- Bringing up people in their past who are not currently involved in their lives
- Changes in their living situation, including friends or long-time neighbors moving away
- New or worsening mobility issues
- Differences in how often they are calling or emailing
- Friends passing away

"Our bodies and minds are inextricably linked," said Caruso. "Spotting signs of loneliness can help family and friends to rally around their loved ones and provide support for those who are suffering."

Strategies to Combat Loneliness



Whether you are suffering from loneliness yourself or supporting a loved one, there are many resources and tools to help cope.

Elevance Health has a clinical initiative that addresses the social challenges that older adults face

daily. Its goal is to improve physical, psychological, and social well-being by encouraging participants to re-engage in healthcare, connect with community-based organizations, and increase physical

See LONELINESS on page 8

Children should spend time with grandparents

(StatePoint) Play is important for everyone, no matter their age.

“Play time with adults of different ages is not just a chance for families to bond, these interactions with positive role models can help children develop a range of important social, language and problem-solving skills,” says Dr. Amanda Gummer, child psychologist and an expert contributor to TheGeniusof-Play.org.

Adults benefit from play time too. As one grows older, the free unstructured fun enjoyed in childhood is often replaced with structured activities like sports, card games and solving crosswords. Time spent with youngsters can keep adults young and give them a chance to relive more carefree days.

According to The Genius of Play, a national initiative whose mission

is to raise awareness about the importance of play and help parents make play a critical part of raising their kids, here are three reasons why intergenerational play is good for young children:

- Unstructured play tends to be collaborative, encouraging cooperation and honesty.
- Spending time with older adults helps children understand how aging works, and later accept their own aging.
- Grandparents are storytellers and their wisdom and experience can open children’s horizons further, as well as ignite imagination and creativity.

When it comes to adults, intergenerational play is beneficial in the following ways:

- Children bring innocence, joy and laughter to any situation, help-



(c) [VadimGuzhva]/ [iStock / Getty Images Plus] via Getty Images

ing adults reduce stress.

- Active, busy play time can keep an older adult vital and healthy. Indeed, those that play with children burn more calories, experience

fewer falls and become less reliant on walking aids, according to studies.

See *GRANDPARENTS* next page

Loneliness

Continued from page 7

activity.

Called Member Connect, offered through Elevance Health-affiliated Medicare Advantage plans, the program engages an Elevance Health community health worker and an Elevance Health employee volunteer, or phone pal, that together build connections with individuals. By establishing these personal connections, the approach aims to empower people to make behavior changes that reduce isolation and loneliness.

Since its inception in 2017, the Member Connect program team has facilitated over 216,833 phone calls. Telephone surveys found that 87% of program participants had more meaningful connections with people since joining the program, and more importantly, 79% of participants agreed that they had an increase in activities that bring

them joy and purpose.

“When dealing with loneliness and isolation ‘going it alone’ is not a viable solution,” said Caruso. “Sometimes it just takes a phone call from someone who cares to serve as a catalyst to make meaningful lifestyle changes.”

Some additional strategies that older adults can use to cope with loneliness include:

- Creating a regular schedule
- Adopting a pet
- Volunteering
- Picking up a new hobby
- Getting outdoors
- Addressing transportation needs
- Consulting with a mental health professional
- Staying on top of hearing issues
- Considering a senior-specific living environment

“By empowering older adults to acknowledge and find ways to treat loneliness and isolation, we can all be a part of the solution to the loneliness epidemic,” said Caruso.

Six ways a simple eye exam could save your life

(NAPSI)—It may come as a surprise to some, but an ophthalmologist can help you keep an eye on your overall health. In fact, an ophthalmologist—a physician who specializes in medical and surgical eye care—may be the first to detect if you're at risk for a heart attack, stroke or other life-threatening conditions. That's because subtle, early damage to tiny blood vessels in the eyes can provide important clues about what is happening in the small blood vessels of the brain and heart.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends all adults receive a comprehensive eye exam by age 40, and every year or two after age 65.

Surprising medical conditions that can be detected in a routine

eye exam:

1. Cancer. This includes not only eye-related skin cancers on the eyelid or the surface of the eye, but also cancers in other parts of the body. Leukemia, lymphoma, and breast cancer can all be detected in the eye.

2. Diabetes. Diabetes is a leading cause of vision loss in the United States, but signs of diabetes can also appear in the eye before vision is affected. When a person with diabetes has high blood sugar levels, it can affect the blood vessels in the eye. That's how an ophthalmologist might diagnose diabetes before other symptoms appear.

3. Heart disease. During a routine eye exam, ophthalmologists use a special imaging tool to examine the retina, the light-sensitive tissue

at the back of the eye. If the blood supply to the retina is reduced or blocked, this could be an early symptom of heart disease.

4. High blood pressure. One in three American adults has high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease if left untreated. Unusually shaped blood vessels or bleeding in the back of the eye can signal high blood pressure.

5. High cholesterol. Another common health condition that can lead to serious health issues is high cholesterol. A yellow or blue ring around the cornea can be a symptom, as can deposits in the blood vessels of the retina.

6. Stroke. An ophthalmologist can also spot plaque deposits in the arteries of the eye. If these pieces of plaque reach the brain, they can cause a stroke. Several eye symp-

toms are linked to stroke, such as loss of side vision, sudden blind spots, blurry vision, double vision, or sensitivity to light. People experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Can't Afford an Eye Exam? EyeCare America® Can Help.

Individuals age 65 or older who are concerned about their risk of eye disease and/or the cost of an eye exam, may be eligible for a medical eye exam, often at no out-of-pocket cost, through the American Academy of Ophthalmology's EyeCare America® program. This public service program matches volunteer ophthalmologists with eligible patients in need of eye care across the United States. To see if you or a loved one qualifies, visit www.aao.org/eyecare-america to determine your eligibility.

Grandparents

Continued from previous page

• Play time is good for an aging adult's mental and emotional health. Games can help seniors maintain cognitive skills and retain memory, and the quality time with children can prevent feelings of loneliness and boost positivity.

Whether you're young, old or somewhere in between, these three tips from The Genius of Play can help you make the most of the time together:

• Share your favorite games with your grandchildren. From hide-and-seek to hula-hoops, introducing them to the games you played years ago is a great way to connect and make new memories.

• Give children an opportunity to express themselves by letting them share their ideas for what they want to play with you. They'll be more enthusiastic about participating

if they get to call the shots sometimes. In today's tech-savvy world, grandchildren might want to play with a toy that uses augmented reality or teaches coding skills. This can be a great way to engage with them on their level and learn more about their favorite activities. Plus, you'll be learning something new!

• Let your grandchildren win and lose the game sometimes. This is a great chance to boost self-esteem while learning about good sportsmanship.

There's no doubt about it, intergenerational play is beneficial to everyone along for the fun. Be sure to carve out play time for your family, particularly when visiting with older relatives.

For more play ideas, expert advice and resources for families, visit TheGeniusOfPlay.org.

Tips for staying active after age 65

(BPT) - It's common to hear people say they feel overwhelmed by the idea of being physically active, and that they have no idea where to start. That sense of pressure can be discouraging and cause many people to postpone making positive changes in their behavior.

The unfortunate truth is that physical inactivity takes a significant toll on older adults in America. Rates of inactivity increased 6% to more than 31% nationwide among adults age 65 and older who were in average health between 2018 and 2021. That number has continued to climb in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to America's Health Rankings Senior Report.

Physical inactivity contributes to many chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes - all of which can reduce a person's mobility, independence and quality of life.

The good news is getting active doesn't have to be difficult, time-consuming or expensive. In fact, almost everyone can take steps to work more activity into their daily lives, even from the comfort of home. The benefits are clear - even as little as five minutes of activity every day can make a difference. Physical activity can help improve your brain health, manage weight,

reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve your ability to do everyday activities.

Regular exercise can also help you feel better and build relationships. In fact, recent research from AARP Services Inc., UnitedHealthcare and OptumLabs showed moderate or high physical activity helps reduce severe loneliness and social isolation by 15% to 30%, and also helps increase feelings of resilience and purpose and improve people's perception of aging.

Here are five tips to help you become more physically active and put yourself on the road to better health and quality of life:

- Start small. Remember the old adage, "Rome wasn't built in a day"? That goes for starting a new exercise regimen, as well as for building strength and stamina. It's OK to start with just a few minutes at first, and then build gradually - from five, 10 or 15 minutes of movement to eventually 30 or more.

- Make a plan. Most new routines require some level of preparation. Decide what activity you would like to do - whether it's walking, following an exercise video at home or taking a fitness class - and plan a regular routine, so it's easier to follow through.

- Get comfortable. Choose clothing that's easy to move in and is appropriate for the environment. If an activity requires lots of extra gear, equipment or skills, consider choosing something you can do with what you have. The important thing is to get moving!

- Find a buddy. Exercising with a friend can be fun and rewarding. It's a great way to socialize and build friendships and can also be a strong motivator or cause for celebration when you meet your shared goals.

- Check out resources that may be available to you. Many Medicare Advantage health plans offer benefits like free gym memberships. Talk to your health plan to see what's available to you.



For more information about UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage plans, visit www.UHC Medicare-HealthPlans.com.

This information is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for the advice of a doctor. Consult your doctor prior to beginning an exercise program or making changes to your lifestyle or health care routine.

Sudoku SOLUTION for page 6

3	1	8	9	6	7	2	4	5
5	2	6	4	3	8	1	7	9
9	7	4	2	1	5	8	3	6
2	3	7	1	4	6	9	5	8
4	8	9	3	5	2	6	1	7
1	6	5	8	7	9	3	2	4
6	9	1	5	2	4	7	8	3
8	5	2	7	9	3	4	6	1
7	4	3	6	8	1	5	9	2

Protect yourself from text cyberattacks

(StatePoint) Every day, cybercriminals create new methods of obtaining private financial information from unsuspecting individuals, most commonly employing tactics like emailing strangers and convincing them to either share personal information or take an action that compromises their systems and devices. Known as “phishing,” these cybercrime attempts can also come by way of short message service (SMS) or text messaging, and when they do, it’s called “smishing.”



Scammers use smishing to prompt victims to click on internet links or send classified or personal information through texts and other messaging apps, making individuals vulnerable to identity theft and even extortion. However, understanding their methods can help you protect yourself. Here’s what to know:

Attacks Are Getting More Sophisticated

Cybercriminals often use a tactic called spoofing, where they impersonate a known sender or transmit messages from a legitimate number. Even if you know the sender, it’s still important to verify the message’s legitimacy before responding, opening an attachment, or clicking on a link that could potentially compromise your device.

Cybercriminals also share stolen credentials and personal information more readily now and work in gangs, ultimately amplifying the threat. Through social engineering of your publicly available information — often gleaned from social media — and private data procured illicitly, scammers are able to craft text messages specifically designed to lower your defenses. This means, communication may look like it’s being sent from a known

person or number, possibly making reference to shared knowledge. Fraudsters may apply a sense of urgency or other scare tactic that prompts you to react quickly instead of taking the time to scrutinize a request.

Additionally, the ever-growing capabilities of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have made it easier for scammers to develop smishing attempts that closely mirror conversation, making it simpler and more affordable to distribute cyberattacks successfully to a large audience.

“Whereas previous smishing and phishing messages often didn’t make sense, as generative AI advances, these messages contain fewer grammatical or spelling mistakes. As a result, users are less able to distinguish them from legitimate communications,” says Raina Kanakis, a security specialist with PNC’s Global Security Fusion Center.

Simple Precautions Can Mitigate Risk

One way to verify senders’ identities is by cross-checking short codes — the five- or six-digit number used by companies to deliver text messages to your phone.

See SCAMS on page 15

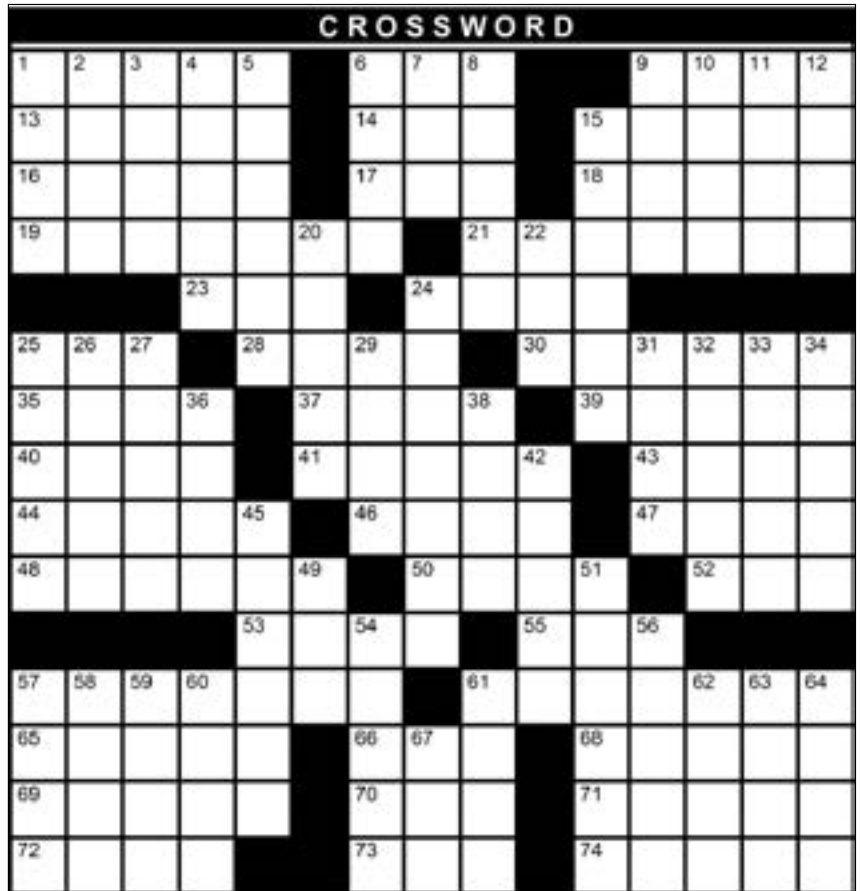
Crossword Theme: TV Families

ACROSS

1. *Stars of "The Waltons" and "Roseanne," e.g.
6. Equinox mo.
9. Don't do this to the messenger
13. Whitman's dooryard bloomer
14. *Logo of "All in the Family" network
15. Beyond normal limits
16. *Where to hear Frasier Crane
17. Workout segment
18. Nary a soul
19. *TV's largest family
21. *Flintstones' best friends
23. Before now
24. Catch some Z's
25. Car nut
28. "Brave New World" drug
30. "Can't stop! I'm _____ a _____!"
35. Big Bang's original matter
37. Sheep's milk cheese
39. "So You Think You Can _____"
40. Knowing about
41. *Sansa, Arya, or Robb
43. Narcotics agent
44. Nymph of lakes and springs
46. Most populous continent
47. Major bike maker
48. "_____ the Clowns," past tense
50. "Me and _____ and the Dying Girl"
52. "Da" to a Russian
53. Source of protein
55. More, in Madrid
57. *"Blackish" family
61. *"Fuller House" family
65. "So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, _____"
66. Skeleton in a lock
68. Part of gastro-intestinal system
69. Modulator-demodulator, for short
70. Proper place for a napkin
71. Inspiration for poets and mu-

sicians

72. Born and _____
 73. Before of yore
 74. Sign up again
- ## DOWN
1. Simpleton
 2. Hokkaido native
 3. Smeltery refuse
 4. a.k.a. boreal forest
 5. Scrawny ones
 6. Army _____ hall
 7. Pirate's affirmative
 8. Old but in
 9. Door opener
 10. Adored one
 11. Half-moon shaped object
 12. Tommy and Spike, e.g.
 15. Straighten a paperclip, e.g.
 20. Abode toppers
 22. Israeli submachine gun
 24. Computer program input
 25. *Lucious and Cookie
 26. Arm bones
 27. "_____ on the ground floor"
 29. Of higher order
 31. Deliver a tirade
 32. Opposite of binary
 33. Rocks at mountain base
 34. *Family in "The Middle"
 36. Castle's line of defense
 38. "Mi chiamano Mimi," e.g.
 42. Deserved consequence
 45. Chinese tapas
 49. What's old is new again, prefix
 51. Jousting match participant
 54. Bracelet-wearing part
 56. Sleep sound
 57. Doorframe part



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58. Airy emanation
59. Sweep under the rug
60. Financial aid criterion
61. Done on a Smith Corona
62. Joie de vivre

63. One way to memorize
64. *"Game of Thrones" bastard
67. Inner, middle or outer, on one's head

Puzzle Solution on Page 14

Briefs

Not Your Grandma's Bingo

Monroe Community Senior Center will host a special Bingo Night Saturday, January 20 at 5 p.m. featuring Gina Touché.

\$20 includes admission and loaded nachos. Beer, wine and margaritas will be available for purchase. \$5 bingo packets will be sold at the door. Win cash and prizes! \$50/50 raffle.

This is a 20+ event.

Reserve your spot at www.mcsc.org or call 360-794-6359. The center is located at 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe.

Living with Change

The Living With Change group offers comfort and support, helping each other through our painful journeys of losing a loved one – whether a family member or other loss, whether recent, anticipated, or in the past. Dealing with sorrow is a difficult experience, and sharing our stories eases our grief.

New attendees are warmly welcomed with sympathy and understanding. Everyone is free to participate or just listen.

Meet the second and fourth Wednesdays from 1:00-2:30pm. at the Snohomish Senior Center, 506

Fourth Street in Snohomish. 360-568-0934. way in Monroe.

Massage

Get a wonderful hand, foot and head/neck massage at the Monroe Community Senior Center. Massages are scheduled the second and fourth Thursdays of the month from 9 a.m. to Noon.

Massage therapy is a form of manual therapy that involves moving soft tissues in the body to reduce stress, ease muscle tension and promote relaxation and overall well-being.

15 minute sessions are \$20 for members and \$25 for guests.

Call 360-794-6359. The center is located at 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe.

Caregiver Support Group

You are not alone! All are welcome to join this FREE support group for caregivers facilitated by Elaine McClain. Her many years of caring for her ill husband has given her a wealth of knowledge and listening ear to offer others who care for loved ones. Just drop in the first and third Fridays of the month at 11 a.m. at the Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Park-

MedShed calls for equipment donors

The MedShed of Snohomish is in need of durable medical equipment that is in good condition, especially wheelchairs, rolling or front wheel walkers, canes, raised toilet seats, pull-ups of all sizes (unopened), shower chairs and bedside commodes.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. MedShed is located at 210 Ave. B, in the parking lot of the Snohomish Evangelical Church. 360-213-1600.

Essential Oils for the Holidays

During the holidays, we relish the smells of Grandma's pies, the forestry smell of Christmas trees, a garland of popcorn... Come to this class and learn some essential oil blend recipes to help create that holiday feeling. Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 1 p.m. at the Monroe Community Senior Center. \$10 members, \$15 guest. Please RSVP by calling 360-794-6359.

The center is located at 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe.

Drive-thru Christmas Dinner

Christmas Dinner will be ham and all the fixins! This drive-thru pick-up dinner will be Friday, Dec. 15 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and is \$10 per person, all ages welcome. To reserve your dinners, call 360-794-6359.

Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe.

Rock Club

Join in the pursuit of this hobby and the study, exploration and appreciation of the solid earth sciences including geology, fossils, minerals and gems. Bring rocks to share and help with identification.

The second Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. Free to center members, \$2 for guests.

Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe. 360-794-6359.

Guitar lessons

Learn to play the guitar or get a refresher lesson Thursdays at 10 a.m. Call for an appointment, 360-794-6359. Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe.

More BRIEFS on page 14

Briefs

Grown up Board Game Cafe

Who says board games are just for kids? Try out the library's collection of games and socialize with fellow tabletop enthusiasts. Snacks and drinks included! For adults of all ages.

Feb. 10 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Sultan Library.

Hospice 101

Join an expert from Hospice of the Northwest to learn the basics of hospice care: the types of support it provides to patients and families, eligibility requirements, how it's paid for, and how to get started. There are many myths and misconceptions about hospice, so the truth may surprise you!

Register now for this free Feb. 28 event at the Lake Stevens Library, 2211 Grade Road. 425-334-1900. This event will fill fast.

Silver Screeners Cinema Club

Silver Screeners Cinema Club is a free senior outreach program pre-

sented by Scarecrow Video, convening the elder community with movies. In addition to providing access to its vast film library, Scarecrow's movie experts lead post-film discussions with Silver Screeners program audiences.

The Dec. 7 film will be Desk Set (1957). 10 a.m. to Noon at the Mukilteo Library, 4675 Harbour Pt. Blvd.

Coffee, tea and popcorn will be provided. Feel free to bring other snacks, a cushion, or a blanket to make your movie experience most comfortable!

Acupuncture

Traditional Chinese Medicine explains acupuncture as a technique for balancing the flow of energy or life force, known as chi or qi (chee) believed to flow through pathway (meridians) in your body.

Acupuncture sessions are offered at Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first Friday and third Monday of the month. Cost is \$20 members, guests are \$25 for a 30 minute ses-

sion.

Call today to make your appointment, 360-794-6359.

Quilting with the Queen Bee Quilters

Join the Queen Bee Quilters as they sew quilts and other items for the Senior Center and other local charities. If you don't know how to quilt, they will guide you. Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. at the Monroe Community Senior Center, 276 Sky River Parkway in Monroe. 360-794-6359.

Solstice Garland Making

Celebrate the Winter Solstice by making a traditional, edible Yule

garland to lace on trees outside for winter birds. Cost is \$5. Dec. 21 from Noon to 3 p.m. at the Mill Creek Senior Center, 4111 133rd St. SE, Mill Creek. seniorcenternorthshore@gmail.com

Learn to Line Dance

In this easy, upbeat class, you'll move to a wide variety of music including Rock & Roll, Hip Hop, Salsa, Cha Cha, Country Western, and more. Exercise never felt like such fun! This class is for people of all experience and ability levels.

Tuesday and Thursday Dec. 5-21 from 11:10 a.m. to Noon. Lynwood Senior Center, 19000 44th Ave. W. Cost is \$36 members, \$48 non-members. To register call 425-670-5050, code # 51268

Crossword Puzzle Solution for page 12

C	A	S	T	S		M	A	R		K	I	L	L		
L	I	L	A	C		E	Y	E		U	N	D	U	E	
O	N	A	I	R		S	E	T		N	O	O	N	E	
D	U	G	G	A	R	S		R	U	B	B	L	E	S	
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Y	L	E	M			F	E	T	A		D	A	N	C	E
O	N	T	O			S	T	A	R	K		N	A	R	C
N	A	I	A	D		A	S	I	A		T	R	E	K	
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J	O	H	N	S	O	N		T	A	N	N	E	R	S	
A	D	I	E	U			K	E	Y		C	O	L	O	N
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B	R	E	D				E	R	E		R	E	N	E	W

Flower arranging

Every week you'll take home an artfully designed flower arrangement!

Learn about flower and color combinations and how to create varied arrangements. You'll also learn how to work with unexpected materials.

Lynnwood Trader Joe's supplies the flowers so each week is a surprise!

Bring a tool to cut flower stems and a vase, jar or plastic bag to take home your arrangement.

Wednesdays Dec. 6-20 at Lynnwood Senior Center, 19100 44th



Ave. W from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. \$12 members, \$18 non-members. To register, 425-670-5050.

Take a trip to Cape Cod or Greece, Italy & France

Visit Cape Cod and the Islands: Boston City Tour, Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, Newport, Rhode Island, Nantucket Island and more! This trip will be July 20-26, 2024 for 7 days and 6 nights.

Cost is \$3325 per person based on double occupancy. Airfare is included.

Then come fall 2024, take a triip to the Greek Isles, Italy and France!

This trip will include Greece, Rome, Acropolis, Colosseum, Pantheon, St. Peters Basilica, Sistine Chapel and so much more!

It will be October 16-31, 2024 for 15 days and 14 nights!

Cost is \$4599 per person based on double occupancy.

Book today by calling the Monroe Community Senior Center at



360-794-6351 or email prgrams@mcsc.org for more information.

Scams

Continued from page 11

Each of these unique codes is used for certain purposes — to transmit card activity alerts, for instance.

Many companies, such as PNC Bank, have established resources to enable customers to verify the legitimacy of text messages appearing to come from them. By referencing PNC's Short Codes page for example, you can verify whether a text message originated from a legitimate short code, helping you detect and avoid possible impersonation fraud.

Use these additional strategies to help thwart smishing attempts:

1. If you are not expecting the message, proceed with caution.
2. Do not immediately respond.
3. Do not click on any links within a text message. Navigate to the URL

using a different means to validate it.

4. If the message appears to come from a familiar company, contact them on a different channel to confirm legitimacy.

5. Getting a text and subsequent call does not increase legitimacy. Hang up and call the company or financial institution directly using a known telephone number.

6. Screenshot and send any suspicious messages appearing to come from a company to them to verify and alert.

7. To report smishing to all mobile telecom carriers, screenshot and send the message to 7726. For added protection, use the "Report Junk" feature on your mobile carrier's system.

8. Visit the FCC website for more information on how to avoid smishing scams.

Caregiver Program

Are you caring for an elderly parent, neighbor or friend? Are you checking in with them for their health, safety and wellbeing?

You may be eligible for Supplemental Services provided by the Family Caregiver

Support Program. Call 425-513-1900 or 800-422-2024 for Intake and Screening process. Supplemental Services include home delivered meals, massage and house cleaning at no cost.

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Boost brain health with exercise

(BPT) - Physical fitness is important as you age, improving strength, flexibility and balance. Research shows that your morning stretch, daily walk or weekly fitness class is doing more than just helping your body feel its best; it's supporting your brain health, too.

Staying physically active can help older adults maintain – and even improve – mental function, while lowering the risk of developing chronic illness. According to the Alzheimer's Society, regular exercise can reduce a person's risk of developing dementia by approximately 30%, and for Alzheimer's specifically, that risk can be reduced by 45%.

In addition to risk reduction, exercise can be beneficial for seniors who are currently experiencing cognitive issues. Physical activity is a common part of treatment

plans for people with dementia or Alzheimer's disease and can help dementia patients manage and potentially reduce symptoms.

One exercise program with something for every ability is SilverSneakers, a fitness program available at no cost to Medicare Advantage members in participating health plans to stay physically active, socially engaged and mentally sharp. The program has been serving people aged 65 and older for more than 30 years.

Even if you start a workout routine later in life, the benefits to your brain and body are abundant. Talk with your doctor about beginning physical fitness.

Exercising with friends or joining a fitness class designed for older adults can help you feel comfortable while trying something new.

Sims Corbett is a SilverSneakers

instructor who is passionate about senior fitness. One of her favorite things about her job is helping older adults discover a passion for exercise and physical activity, even if they've never set foot in a gym before.

"Members have access to thousands of gyms, in-person and virtual classes, and platforms designed to foster social interaction and mental well-being, which becomes even more important with age. As an instructor, I see how regular exercise can benefit everyone, at every age," said Corbett.

SilverSneakers offers our members access to more than 22,000 participating locations with 100+ weekly live virtual classes and 45,000 virtual programs focusing on balance, fall prevention, strength, flexibility, cardiovascular health and much more.

Corbett recommends choosing activities you will enjoy. "Fitness should be fun. I encourage seniors to take a moment to think about what they have enjoyed doing in the past and what has piqued their interest over the years. Did you take dance classes growing up? Love to swim? Have you always been curious about yoga? We're all more likely to continue doing something that we enjoy."

When you start, you might decide to exercise with a partner or in a group, which can add a fun social element.

Activities like walking, biking, gardening, vacuuming or playing with the dog are all good options for moving the body.

For more information and to check eligibility, visit [getsilversneakers.com](https://www.getsilversneakers.com).

