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**NEXT MONTH:  
Volunteerism**



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## Facing foreclosure? Help is available

By Marcia Z. Siegal

Nothing can rip away your sense of peace and security more than the prospect of losing your home to foreclosure because you are behind on city property taxes or mortgage payments. And this growing problem is hitting close to home in Philadelphia. According to Philadelphia City Council, foreclosure petitions filed for unpaid property taxes have risen 1,200 percent in the past eight years. Philadelphia mortgage foreclosures also are on the rise from 4,000 per year. But help is available for those who need it.

The Save Your Home Philly Hotline is a free city service that serves as a central point of contact for city homeowners at risk of foreclosure for any reason. Homeowners at any stage of the foreclosure process may call the hotline – 215-334-HOME (4663) – for help with saving their homes. You must live in your home in order to qualify for this assistance.

The hotline is a project of Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA), which partners with the city-funded housing counseling network, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) and SeniorLaw Center (SLC) to provide legal assis-

tance to homeowners.

Hotline staff will collect basic information about your situation during the intake call and can schedule an appointment for you to meet with a city-funded housing counselor. The counselor will help you to evaluate the reasons the foreclosure is occurring and to develop solutions. Counseling services are free. Eligible low-income homeowners also may be able to access free legal services. Philadelphia Legal Assistance supervises the hotline.

### Housing counseling

"I encourage homeowners who are having trouble to get counseling as soon as payment problems surface – the earlier the better," said Rian Frank, a housing counselor at the Unemployment Information Center, 112 N. Broad St., #11, one of many housing counseling sites throughout the city.

Many homeowners in danger of foreclosure feel desperate about losing their home and can be susceptible to scammers, Frank said, which makes a foreclosure prevention program like the Save Your Home Philly Hotline so vital.

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## Living with Disabilities

### Former therapist sees life from 'the other side'

By Barbara Sherf

Grace Moses, 63, has had epilepsy since she was 13. "It was awful as a teenager trying to balance out the meds, having seizures in front of friends, and just not knowing when one was coming," said the Wyndmoor resident. "Eventually, I was able to control the seizures and for many years have had seizures irregularly."

That was until five years ago, when she had five seizures in one day. Moses, who received her master's degree in occupational therapy from Philadelphia University and had been working as a hand therapist at the Upper Extremity Institute for five years, then began to experience life "on the other side" – as a patient.

"People talk about how hard it is to get on [social security] disability, but I got it the first time around," Moses said. "It was very clear that my brain was not working properly and would not be working properly." I have trouble putting things together as a whole, finding words, and difficulty with memory. I'm told

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Barbara Sherf

Grace Moses, shown with her dog, Wally, has developed creative strategies for facing life with epilepsy.

# PCA

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## Health Brief

### Are vitamins and supplements worth it?

Half of all American adults – including 70 percent of those 65 or older – take a vitamin or mineral supplement regularly, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Eating a variety of healthy foods is the best way to get the nutrients you need, according to the National Institute on Aging (NIA). However, some people don't get enough vitamins and minerals from their daily diet, and their doctors may

recommend a dietary supplement to provide those nutrients. Supplements can come in the form of pills, capsules, powders, extracts or liquids. They might contain vitamins, minerals, fiber, amino acids, herbs or other plants, or enzymes.

According to the NIA, people 50 and older may need more of some vitamins and minerals than younger adults do. Your doctor or dietitian can tell you whether you need to change your diet or take a vitamin or mineral supplement. Some of the vitamins and minerals essential for good health include:

- Calcium works with vitamin D to keep bones strong at all ages. Bone loss can lead to fractures in both older women and older men.
- Vitamin D is produced in sufficient quantities by most people's bodies if they are in the sun for 15 to 30 minutes at least twice a week. But, if you are older, you may not be able to get enough vitamin D that way.
- Vitamin B6 is needed to form red blood cells and to drive metabolism and immune functions. People whose kidneys don't work properly or who have autoimmune disorders or alcohol dependence may be more likely to have trouble getting enough vitamin B6.
- Vitamin B12 helps keep your red blood cells and nerves healthy. Some older adults have trouble absorbing the vitamin B12 naturally found in food.



**Dietary supplements come in a variety of forms. Talk with your doctor before taking a supplement.**

Herbal supplements come from plants such as ginkgo biloba and ginseng. While researchers are looking at using herbal supplements to prevent or treat some health problems, it's too soon to know if they are both safe and useful, according to the NIA.

"Pills are not a shortcut to better health and the prevention of chronic diseases," cautions Larry Appel, M.D., director of the Johns Hopkins Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research. In a report on [hopkinsmedicine.org](http://hopkinsmedicine.org), researchers noted that multivitamins don't reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, cognitive decline or an early death.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regularly test what is in dietary supplements, and companies are not required to share information on the safety of a dietary supplement with the FDA before they sell it. Just because you see a supplement on a store shelf does not mean it is safe, that it does what the label says it will, or that it contains what the label says it contains, the NIA notes.

It is recommended that you talk with your doctor before taking any supplements. Some supplements can change how medicines you may be taking will work. If your doctor recommends a dietary supplement for you, make sure you're getting the brand recommended by the doctor and that you take it as directed. 🌿



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## [ National Nutrition Month | March ]

# PCA's food programs: Helping to defeat malnutrition among older adults

By Alicia M. Colombo

When you think of food-related health concerns, hunger and obesity likely come to mind. But a growing epidemic of malnutrition among older Americans is actually a bigger threat because of the deeper health consequences it creates. Malnutrition means poor nutrition or food intake insufficient to meet recommended nutrition required for health. It can be caused by an imbalanced diet, medical conditions that impair the body's absorption of essential nutrients, or eating low-nutrient foods.

Of the millions of older Americans admitted to the hospital every year, one-third are malnourished. National Nutrition Month in March, which focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits, is a timely opportunity to draw attention to the food programs available to seniors. All Americans can take this opportunity to think more closely about their nutritional intake, but older adults should pay special attention, since they are at higher risk for health issues related to poor nutrition.

## A national effort

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) recently joined the Defeat Malnutrition Today Coalition, a national group of more than 65 organizations and other stakeholders working to defeat malnutrition in older adults. Specifically, the coalition seeks to garner wider recognition of malnutrition as a key indicator and vital sign of older adult health risk and to work to intervene before malnutrition becomes detrimental to seniors' health.

"Solving senior malnutrition means strengthening federal and local programs that already exist," said Louis Colbert, PCA's vice president of operations. "These meal programs can be used to help the elderly remain in the community and out of the hospital."

PCA has several meal programs that serve thousands of seniors each year in settings ranging from senior community centers to their homes. These programs, which include meals served at senior centers, home-delivered meals, and free food vouchers to purchase fresh produce, help prevent malnutri-



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tion by managing the two sides of the issue: hunger and malnourishment.

"By ensuring that seniors in the community are receiving a complete, healthy meal consistently, senior center and home-delivered meal programs help tackle the common barrier of getting enough food on a regular basis," said Amy Goldstein, PCA's nutrition manager. "Seniors who are eating these meals are getting a balance of nutrients that will fuel their body and promote health. In Philadelphia, it can be hard for members of the community to easily access and prepare meals that are both affordable and nutritious, but through these programs, not only can seniors access these meals on a consistent basis, but the meals are approved by a dietitian to assure that their nutritional needs are met."

## Neighborhood lunch spots

Older adults will find a warm welcome Monday through Friday at any of the 28 PCA-funded senior community centers and satellite meal sites located throughout the city. As older adults gather at their local senior center for daily activity, socialization and education, they can also enjoy a healthy meal. These meals are appropriate for seniors with a variety of health conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. In addition to daily hot and cold options, the lunches also include festive or holiday variations to mark special occasions. Meals include an entrée, side dishes, milk, and fruits and/or vegetables, and provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance of vitamins and minerals to help meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

"No matter the day, seniors enjoy lunches that not only are tasty but also promote their health and well-being," said Goldstein. Two thousand Philadelphia seniors enjoy a tasty, nutritious meal each weekday at a senior center or satellite meal site, for a total of more than 450,000 meals each year.

Roxborough resident Judy Kindon is one of those seniors. Kindon has been a faithful member of Journey's Way senior center for more than eight years. "I didn't even know they served meals when I first went there to attend a workshop about home improvements," she said. But when Kindon smelled



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## PCA's meals programs provide daily nutrition for seniors.

the enticing aromas and saw people eating meals, she was intrigued. "I thought that would be good for me because I wasn't much of a cook," she said.

She's always appreciated the daily meals and the sociability of meeting friends. But after suffering a mild heart attack and the subsequent death of her older brother two years ago, Kindon began to think more seriously about her nutritional needs. "I realized that I was eating a lot of junk food," said Kindon, 73. "I thought about all the sugary drinks that I was consuming. My heart attack made me think of my health. I knew that I needed to eat better." She now concentrates on the center meals as a starting point for her daily nutrition and has added more fruits and vegetables to her diet at home. "If not for the center meals, I'd eat a lot of sandwiches and I'd probably eat canned soup, which has a lot of sodium," she said. "I definitely eat much better now that I have this nutritious meal each day to count on."

Senior center meals are free to seniors 60 or older and to younger seniors with a spouse who is 60-plus. There is a suggested donation for these meals. Anyone 59 or younger may purchase meals at a center. For a list of senior centers in your neighborhood, go to [pca-cares.org/services-for-seniors/senior-centers](http://pca-cares.org/services-for-seniors/senior-centers)

or call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

## Meals delivered to you

Seniors who cannot attend a senior center and are unable to shop or cook for themselves can receive delicious, healthy meals delivered right to their home. PCA's home-delivered meal program serves 4,600 seniors each year. One home-delivered meals recipient who is unable to prepare meals for herself described how vital the program is to her: "I just put a meal in my microwave each day and eat. I would definitely recommend this program to others. I would tell them I have found it to be important to my quality of life – very, very, very important."

Older adults can receive meals through the home-delivered meal program on an ongoing basis or through PCA's In-Home Support Program to provide for a temporary period of incapacity. Home-delivered meals are nutritionally balanced to support older adults with a variety of health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Kosher options are available. All meals include an entrée, side dishes that include fruit and/or vegetables, and milk

To find out if you or an older adult in your life qualify to receive home-delivered meals from PCA, contact PCA's Helpline at 215-765-9040 or the in-home support provider in your area of the city: KleinLife (Northeast), Center in the Park (Northwest), North City Congress (North/Central), Lutheran Children and Family Services at West Philadelphia Senior Community Center (West), or Catholic Health Care Services at St. Charles Senior Community Center (South).

## Produce direct from the farmer

Food deserts — areas that are scarce in fresh, healthful foods — are sprinkled throughout the city, which largely inhibits local seniors from consuming the proper amount of fresh produce. During the summer, PCA distributes Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers to more than 36,000 income-eligible older Philadelphians through its network of senior centers and its community outreach program. These vouchers allow each recipient to access \$20 worth of the freshest fruits and vegetables, direct from Pennsylvania farmers' market stands.

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# Know about these weird things that happen to your feet as you get older

By Barbara Sherf

We all have experienced changes in our bodies as time marches on. So it's no surprise that your feet undergo changes with age.

Fortunately, taking a few moments to tend to your sole health can minimize age-related issues, according to Chestnut Hill Hospital's vice president and chief medical officer, John Scanlon, D.P.M.

"The feet are your foundation and absolutely play into your quality of life as we age," Scanlon said. "If you develop foot issues, it affects you physically, emotionally and spiritually."

Scanlon, who at 61 still plays a pick-up basketball game once a week to keep in shape, has had ankle problems as an athlete. While some issues are genetic, he believes being proactive can do a lot to improve your foot health in your senior years.

"Good foot health is essential to a good quality of life," said Scanlon. "Exercise is the key. There is no magic formula. You've got to get off your derriere and start moving, as long as your doctor gives you clearance."



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The podiatrist said it is easier to embark on an exercise routine when you are not suffering from foot pain. "It saddens and pains me when I see people come in with problems that are so preventable, and yet they don't follow [a doctor's] advice and are repeat visitors," Scanlon said.

Understanding some of the podiatric changes that seniors experience can help you to take proper care of your tootsies and maintain good foot health throughout your lifespan.

## Fat vanishes

Mother Nature provides you with built-in insoles on the bottom of your feet in the form of collagen and elastin cushions stuffed with tissue. But in a cruel twist of fate, collagen production decreases as we age. Starting in middle age, the fat pads on the balls of our feet compress and get displaced over time. This is increased in people with high-arched feet and those who often wear high-heeled shoes, as they tend to have greater pressure on the balls of the feet.

"I advise patients to refrain from walking around barefoot if you suffer from pain on the balls of your feet," Scanlon said. "A sturdy shoe with good arch support is your friend. If you are a runner, you might consider switching to an elliptical machine, stationary bike, rowing machine or swimming as a form of exercise."

## Arthritis appears

Did you know there are more than 30 joints in your feet? And the sad fact is, all of them can degenerate with age. Arthritis, which is inflammation of one or more joints,

most commonly strikes the big toe or the mid-foot joints on the top of the foot.

"That's why you might feel stiffness in the morning that improves once you get moving," Scanlon said. "However, the pain typically worsens again at night." He stressed the importance of wearing good, supportive shoes and appropriate shoe inserts, if recommended by your doctor. He also recommended daily calf stretching exercises and non-ballistic exercises, such as using an elliptical machine or bicycle, that do not cause significant stress on your feet.

## Toes curl up

Years of stuffing your feet into high heels elevates your risk of developing hammertoes, which are permanent bends in your smaller digits.

"In some cases, this is genetically driven, but in most cases it is related to wearing high heels or ill-fitting shoes," Scanlon said. "In severe cases, there is a surgical intervention that usually involves the removal of bone from the toe."

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Foot problems are often preventable if you seek — and follow — a doctor's advice.

## Aging feet

• continued from page 6

The doctor recommends limiting the amount of time that heels are worn. "If you have a special event where you feel you must wear heels, wear support shoes up until the time of the event," he said. "Then let your feet recover the next day with lotions, massage, soaking and wearing proper shoes throughout the day."

## Circulation worsens

With the aging process comes an increase in conditions such as diabetes and peripheral vascular disease. These conditions can cause an increase in the formation of wounds that take longer to heal and have an increased risk of infection. Combined with nerve damage caused by these conditions, an infection can easily result in an ulcer that won't heal.

"People who smoke, are obese or have diabetes need to inspect their feet every day for anything that doesn't look normal, such as an opening in the skin or irritation," Scanlon advised. "If you notice any problems, you should see a health care provider. But you should also routinely see a podiatrist and be proactive rather than reactive."

## Skin dries out

Good hydration of the skin on your feet is critical year-round for everyone, whether or not you have a circulation problem. "Fight back against dryness by making sure you're

staying hydrated," Scanlon said. "Many of my patients don't realize the importance of moisturizing twice a day. You need to understand that applying moisturizer every other day is not enough. Twice a day minimum, and give yourself a little massage while you are at it." He recommends Lubriderm or Eucerin lotion as good options to put on your feet. In general, you do not need expensive lotions or creams.

## Ligaments lengthen

Ligaments, which connect bone to bone, can stretch over time, leaving your arches aching and your feet flatter. This throws off your balance and can leave you prone to recurring ankle sprains.

"Doing yoga, tai chi and other stretching exercises are crucial to keeping your arches from aching and preventing sprained ankles by keeping your ankle joints more flexible," Scanlon said.

Even if you haven't had an injury, it is important for all seniors to take steps to remain limber. "Wearing a brace while working out or playing sports might help keep you stable, as can ankle-strengthening exercises like ankle circles and toe raises," Scanlon said.

\* \* \*

John Scanlon, D.P.M., practices at Chestnut Hill Podiatry within Chestnut Hill Hospital. For an appointment, call 215-247-0879.

Author, speaker and writer Barbara Sherf tells the stories of businesses and individuals.



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## Living with Disabilities

# Staying engaged in the community, despite dementia

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

When Betty Ann Fellner's surgeon okayed her to start physical therapy after a 2011 hip replacement, she felt relieved at clearing a major health hurdle. But her physical therapist uncovered a shocking new problem.

"The therapist told my husband, David, that I was obviously intelligent, but I couldn't follow directions," Fellner said. "She said something was wrong."

Eventually, a neurological exam showed that Fellner, 79, had frontotemporal dementia (FTD). The progressive loss of nerve cells in the brain's frontal and temporal lobes with this illness causes diminished muscle function, difficulty with language, and, ultimately, deteriorating behavior.

"In a way, the diagnosis was a relief," Fellner said. "I'd known for a while that something was off. I'd been an excellent speller, but one day I had to ask David how to spell cheese."

Fellner's neurologist, Anjan Chatterjee, M.D., advised her not to drive. "I thought I

could still drive short distances, but one day I found myself drifting toward oncoming traffic," she said. "FTD affects your concentration. Something must have caught my attention, and I forgot where I was."

When the symptoms of FTD surfaced, Fellner had long since retired. But her lifelong love of the arts and her volunteer efforts since retiring have kept her active and engaged as she navigates the health challenges in her life. Fellner's career included four years as program director at the Gershman Y at Broad and Pine streets. "I loved organizing cultural events," she said, "and the American Poetry Review was on the top floor of the building at that time. It was wonderful." Fellner also taught history for many years at Philadelphia's Akiba Academy, a Jewish day school located in Merion at the time.

When Fellner retired, she still had energy to spare. She volunteered in the education department of the Philadelphia Orchestra – not a surprising choice, given her background. Born in Roanoke, Virginia, she grew

up in Baltimore in a home filled with music. "My mother, grandfather, uncle and sister had beautiful singing voices," Fellner said. "Whenever my sister and I went anywhere, we would sing as we walked. I sang harmony." While working for the orchestra, she helped to design a program for preschoolers called "Sound All Around." She also contributed to a children's book by the same name.

Events in Philadelphia inspired Fellner to strive for a broader reach in the arts. In the late 1980s and '90s, the city had a groundswell of movements that brought together communities and the arts. Jane Golden, the founder and executive director of Mural Arts Philadelphia, had sat down with graffiti artists and hatched the city's phenomenal mural program. Taiwan native Lily Yeh had launched the Village of Arts and Humanities that bloomed in an unlikely setting in North Philadelphia. Fellner saw that the alchemy of the arts and community could indeed yield gold. "At first, I wanted to volunteer for one of those organizations, then I thought, Why not do something similar in Mount Airy?" said Fellner, who lives in that area.

In 1994, the old Sedgwick Theatre building, which Fellner envisioned as a possible home for community arts activities, went on the market. "It was beautiful, but in awful shape," she said of the 1928 art deco theatre, which was one of Philadelphia's last movie palaces. It was being used as a warehouse. The banks didn't want to finance the purchase, so the Fellners sold their home and moved into an apartment in the Sedgwick building to come up with the cash. The lobby of the theatre became the Sedgwick Cultural Center. "We spent \$300,000 to renovate the lobby and the men's and women's bathrooms, and that was just the first stage," Fellner said.

Community members, friends and well-known artists gave concerts, told stories, read poetry and hung art in the Sedgwick's gallery spaces. The theatre also hosted jazz workshops for teens. "One of the most dynamic events was an annual two-month-long exhibition of Navajo rugs and a Navajo trading post," Fellner said, adding, "My work with the Sedgwick wasn't all a bed of roses. I had some failures, things that didn't work out. And it takes a huge amount of energy to keep



Courtesy of Betty Ann Fellner

**Betty Ann Fellner remains active by volunteering, despite a diagnosis of frontotemporal dementia.**

up a full calendar of arts events, but we were building community."

Fellner went on with the Sedgwick Cultural Center until 2005, when the center disbanded. The space was rented out for events and celebrations until 2009, when Quintessence Theatre Co. became the Sedgwick's tenant. Quintessence has garnered kudos for productions ranging from "The Merchant of Venice" to "Alice in Wonderland." "I knew the final outcome would be good, but I never guessed how good," Fellner said of the theater's journey.

The plays bring great satisfaction to Fellner as her life changes. "Not driving limits me," she said. "David and my friends have become my chauffeurs. I hate putting so much work on him. And now my hands shake, so I can't do calligraphy, which I loved."

Undeterred, she continues to tutor second graders at the Henry Houston Elementary School. "It's near my home, so I can walk there," she said. Even then, she said, she must be careful: "The doctor told me to look straight ahead when I'm walking so that I won't get distracted and fall." She also continues to sing with the Anna Crusis Women's Choir, as well as a choir that focuses on Jewish music.

"You can live from 2 to 20 years with FTD," Fellner said. "I've already made six. I'll tutor the children and sing for as long as I can."

*Native Philadelphian Constance Garcia-Barrio writes about many topics, including black history.*

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- 50-85 years old
- Normal cognition and no history of neurological disease
- Not currently on antidepressants or want to change current medication



TO LEARN MORE, please contact the Center for Neuromodulation in Depression and Stress at **215-573-0083** or by email at [CNDSlab@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:CNDSlab@mail.med.upenn.edu).



# Ancient Chinese practice of qi gong can help you harness positive energy

By Barbara Sherf

If you could use a positive flow of energy in your life, the ancient Chinese practice of qi gong (pronounced "chee-gung") might be for you. "Qi" stands for the life force energy that powers your heartbeat and gives strength. "Gong" is the practice of increasing one's life force energy for a better quality of life.

This Chinese practice of aligning breath, movement and awareness for exercise, healing and martial arts training can be traced back more than 4,000 years. It was not until China opened up to the West with the visit of President Richard Nixon in 1972 and the subsequent exchanges between China and the West that Americans became aware of qi gong.

"It's certainly about the physical with breathing, posture and gentle movement, but it is also the mental intent of moving the energy through the body," says Philadelphia native Michael McCormack, who puts a lot of miles on his 2013 Honda CRV traveling to seven senior centers teaching the healing movements of qi gong.

"When the Chinese developed this, they realized the physical body needed to be worked in harmony with the mind," says McCormack, 60. "You are stretching and gaining strength, but you are also using your brain, thinking about how your energy is being moved through the body."

At a recent qi gong class at Center on the Hill in Chestnut Hill, his students, mostly in their 60s and 70s, swayed to the gentle music in the background, mirroring his moves.

McCormack says the practice is easy and anyone can do it.

"It's a very gentle art," he says. "I urge [students] to do whatever they feel comfortable with, even if it's sitting in a chair or using a chair to help with balance. I tell them to listen to the body. It's so important for seniors because it helps with balance, and we so often hear of an elder falling and breaking a hip. But it's also good for the mind, too."

## A healing practice

McCormack also works with dementia patients and has seen positive results. "We might put on Frank Sinatra and enjoy beautiful movements and engage them in conversation," he says. "As an instructor, you have to



Paola Noguerras

**Michael McCormack executes a technique during his qi gong class at Center on the Hill.**

adapt to the audience.

As for the health benefits, McCormack has seen firsthand the results of practicing qi gong.

He began studying the martial arts in 1974 while attending Archbishop Ryan High School in Northeast Philadelphia and holds the rank of fourth dan (level) black belt. In his early 20s, he developed ulcerative colitis and started practicing tai chi for the healing effects of the "moving meditation." "I saw my condition gradually improve, but realized I needed more," McCormack said. He then started studying qi gong and experienced a drastic improvement in his health that he attributes to the practice of moving energy or qi through the body.

"I was feeling pretty good, but it wouldn't get me over the top, and that's when I started looking into qi gong – in the 80s," he says, noting that he studied at the QiGong Research Society, based in New Jersey, but took most of his classes in Philadelphia for six years. He and his medical specialist saw his condition get progressively better.

"It wasn't a placebo effect. I tried other things, and qi gong just worked for me," he says. "My doctor told me to keep doing what I'm doing."

Also a musician who plays guitar, mandolin, harmonica and Irish drums, McCormack has taught the healing arts of qi gong and tai

• continued on page 16

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## [ Women's History Month | March ]

# 'The Feminine Mystique' is priceless, even after 55 years

By Sally Friedman

They called it "the problem that has no name." And Betty Friedan nailed it in her incredible and undeniably controversial book, titled "The Feminine Mystique." That unnamed problem, which Friedan recognized was that one size does not fit all. Marriage and motherhood could not be that "one size" for all women.

On a recent purge of my home office bookshelf, I came across my tattered paperback copy of Friedan's book, written in 1963. The original price was 75 cents. Yet the book was priceless. I'm not embarrassed to say that I hugged it.

I was part of that mid-20th-century malaise. I just didn't quite realize it then. I had come of age in the stifling 1950s, when the basic goal of a young woman's life was simple: nab a good man, marry him and seek your fulfillment through him as a wife and a mother. The chase, at least, was sometimes fun. But the "settling down" – an interesting term indeed – would be a shock.

I married the second man who asked me. The first one danced well, but that was his only talent. But this Victor was a grown-up – funny, smart, and enormously kind. He was already a lawyer, while I was studying for my geology final as a graduating senior in college.

Three of my closest friends were already married, and frankly, I was a bit panicky about ever catching that brass ring – or more specifically, that engagement ring that meant all was right with the world.

I was one of the very lucky ones. My husband, eight years my senior, was forward-thinking and wise. I was still a kid.

While we followed the "formula" of that era and had three babies in our first five years of marriage, it was he who sensed that as much as those little girls meant to me, I might just need more in my life than carpooling and other mothering duties.

And there was Betty Friedan, whispering in my ear the message that the world was bigger than a baked potato on the dinner plate and no "ring around the collar" in the laundry basket.

I can remember telling my friend Ruth, just before Friedan's book came out, that there must be something wrong with me. I'd gotten the man – and a good one at that. I'd gotten the cute house in the suburbs, a little white cottage with green shutters, and I had those beautiful babies. What else could I want?

Vic helped me find out. He knew that, at some point, I needed to taste independence, self-awareness, and maybe even a career.

He helped me to see that I could juggle my other interests, along with writing – and still be able to help our daughters through happy good mornings and safe goodnights by being with them.

By the time they were all in what they called "big school," their needs slowly changed, and so did mine. I could handle family – and work. And that was because my husband was, as it turned out, willing to help me in a changing world in which men learned new skills. Friedan realized all that before I ever did.

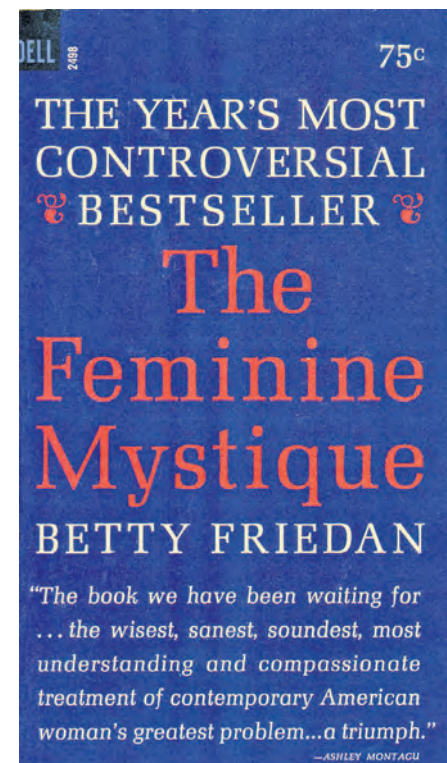
I think the best gift I ever gave my daughters was to find out who I was, break the mold a bit, and find work that gave my life meaning.

I am now celebrating my 50th year as a personal essay and feature writer. I am richly fulfilled – and I don't mean monetarily. Writers are at the low end of the income scale. But writing is just about the most gratifying thing in my life, after family.

Friedan changed lots of lives, some quite dramatically. Mine was one of them. Her words resonated with me very deeply. That old book is filled with underlined sections, including this poignant passage, "The expectations of feminine fulfillment that are fed to women by magazines, television, movies and books that popularize psychological half-truths, and by parents, teachers and counselors who accept the feminine mystique, operate as a kind of youth serum, keeping most women in the state of sexual larvae, preventing them from achieving the maturity of which they are capable."

For women who were beginning to wonder, "Is that all there is?" as Peggy Lee famously asked, Friedan had an answer: No. Absolutely not.

I must explain to those who may not remember that, back then, such thoughts were downright rebellious. The messages we got



from our culture suggested that there was nothing more glorious than marriage and kids, and maybe in knowing five ways to stretch a meatloaf, how to make the den attractive with throw pillows and how to spruce up for your husband when he returned from that tough world out there.

The problem, as Friedan told us, was buying into the notion that cooking, cleaning, sewing, puttering and proudly writing "housewife" in the occupation box was perfectly right for all women. Friedan and my husband helped me get beyond that ridiculous notion.

I'm forever grateful to Betty Friedan for helping me to stretch my own horizons, so I could in turn stretch those of my daughters – and on and on.

A couple of years ago, my granddaughter, the indomitable Hannah, traveled to South Africa with her mother, my daughter Jill. Each of them was on a service project, doing their bit to save the world.

Yes, I'm a tad jealous that they grew up with that sense of endless possibility. But oh, am I joyful for them, too.

I never got to meet Betty Friedan. She died in 2007. But like so many women of my generation, I owe her homage. And during March, National Women's History Month, I offer it to her – along with my profound gratitude.

Sally Friedman has written for the New York Times and other publications.



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# March 2018

**Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month • National Nutrition Month • Women's History Month**

## SUNDAY

**4** Broadway Philadelphia Presents: **'Something Rotten!'** Musical comedy about brothers in 1590s trying to write a hit play to compete with Shakespeare. 6:30 p.m. Academy of Music. 215-893-1999. \$ (Though March 4 at various times)

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS 11

*(Spring Forward)*

**Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade.** Marching bands, floats, music & dance groups, youth groups & Irish associations. Route begins at Broad St., travels around City Hall to Market Street and ends at Penn's Landing. 12 to 3 p.m. philadelphiastpatparade.com

## MONDAY

**5** **Art for Stress Relief.** Workshop to ease stress. 9:30 a.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 215-698-7300.  
**Financial Scams Targeting Seniors & How to Protect Yourself.** Attorney discusses common scams, culprits & signs of fraud. 11 a.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

**12** **Mah Jong Lessons.** Learn to play with skilled instructor. 1-3:30 p.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 215-698-7300. \$ (Through April 30)

**19** **Kol Sasson: A Capella Performance.** Student group sings traditional Jewish music, along with American & Israeli pop. 12:30 p.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 215-698-7300.

**26** **Line Dancing.** All levels: 1:30 p.m. Beginners: 3 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 221. \$ (Mondays)

## TUESDAY

**6** **Trip: 2018 Philadelphia Flower Show.** Admission & transportation included. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Departs/returns: Center in the Park. 215-848-7722. \$

**13** **Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Stages & How to Care for Your Loved One.** Workshop to discuss disease progression & coping strategies. 1 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.  
**St. Patty's Day Dance Party.** DJ & music, food & raffle. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969. \$

**20** **FIRST DAY OF SPRING**  
**AARP TEK: Beyond the Basics.** Mobile phone workshop. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 866-740-6947.  
**Tablet & Smartphone Technology Workshop.** Learn about Facebook, & safety issues. 10:30 a.m. Journey's Way. 215-487-1750. (Tues starting March 6)

**27** **Let's Play Pokeno.** Card game with elements of poker, keno & bingo. All players welcome. Includes prizes. 1 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$

## WEDNESDAY

**7** **Sewing Class.** Learn to taper & hem slacks. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969. \$ (Wednesdays through March 28)

**14** **Just Say, 'Yes' to Nutrition.** Educator Ciara Morales discusses eating well & making better choices. Includes taste testing & giveaways. 11 a.m. Journey's Way. 215-487-1750. (Wednesdays, March 7-28)

**21** **Blood Pressure Screening.** 9:30 a.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.  
**Elderly Law Counseling Project.** Temple law students answer legal questions for adults 60+. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. On Lok Center. 215-599-3016.  
**'Il Trovatore.'** Amici Opera Company. 6 p.m. Franco & Luigi's. 215-224-0257. \$

**28** **'The Education of Regina Coyne.'** Law professional shares personal stories from her 30-year legal career. 11 a.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-686-5331.

## THURSDAY

**1** **Meditation with Lama Coulter.** Guided sessions explore traditional methods to clear your mind. 10:30 a.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$ (March 1, 15, 29)

**8** **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
**Caregivers Support.** 1 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.  
**Speaker Series on the Hill: 'America's Needless Wars.'** Author Dr. David R. Contosta discusses his book. 12 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$

**15** **Kidney Stones: Symptoms, Causes & Treatment.** Options & preventive techniques. Light refreshments. 11 a.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.  
**Memory Café.** A social environment for people with memory problems & caregivers featuring a Zumba class. 1:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

**22** **Poetry Hour.** Readings by amateur & published poets. 11 a.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.  
**Learning to Look.** Art educator Suzanna Fitzpatrick discusses landscapes. 1:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. \$

**29** **Take a Walk in the Park Day.** Exercise & relaxation in Vernon Park. All day. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722.  
**Using Your Apple Device for Communication & Scheduling.** Learn the basics on your smartphone. 2:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$ (March 22)

## FRIDAY

**2** **Challenge your Brain Game Day.** 10 a.m. Center in the Park. Register: 215-848-7722, ext. 221. (Tuesdays & Fridays)

**9** **Book Club.** Discussion of "Small Great Things" by Jodi Picoult. 10:30 a.m. to noon. Coleman Library. 215-685-2153.

**16** **Healthy Steps for Older Adults.** Falls prevention program for adults 50-plus. Includes refreshments. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. 215-227-4393.

**23** **Passover Seder.** Traditional celebration with peers. 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. Register by March 14: 215-698-7300. \$  
**Wonders of Women.** Summit & panel to acknowledge women & discuss topics that affect everyday lives. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Center in the Park. Register by March 15: 215-848-7722.

**30** **Comedy Show & Dinner.** Featuring BET's "Comic View" star Charles Walden & performances by members of the center. 3 & 7 p.m. Older Adult Sunshine Center. 215-472-6188. \$

## SATURDAY

**3** **Phila. Flower Show.** 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Pa. Convention Center. 215-988-8800. \$ (Ends March 11)  
**Strength & Survival: The Universal Language.** Breast health program. Music by Philly POPS. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Kimmel Center. 215-238-8900.  
**Tax Prep Fair.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-686-5322.

**10** **Art, Ritual & Memory Salon.** One Book, One Philadelphia event. View images from the Prints, Drawing & Photographs collection & discuss with museum fellows. 1 p.m. Phila. Museum of Art. Register: 215-763-8100.

**17** **ST. PATRICK'S DAY**  


**24** **Bingo.** 12-3:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1971. \$

**31** **Philly Bop Ballroom Dance Class.** Learn classic dances. All levels welcome. 2-4:30 p.m. Lucien E. Blackwell West Phila. Regional Library. 215-685-7433. \$

## Milestones

Events that end with a "\$" require an entrance fee or advance ticket purchase. Free events may request donations or sell items. Please call the number listed for pricing or other details.

Send your calendar items to:

ATTN: Milestones Editor  
PCA, 642 N. Broad St.,  
Philadelphia, PA 19130  
Phone: 215-765-9000, ext. 5081  
Fax: 215-765-9066  
Email:  
milestonesnews@pcaCares.org

Event submission deadline: 25th of the month for publication in month after next.

## Foreclosure

• continued from page 1

"One client who came to me had responded to a TV ad and showed me a [financial] power of attorney document the advertiser wanted him to sign," Frank said. "The homeowner could have signed away the house he lived in, plus other financial assets, if he had pursued that offer."

The counselor said the most satisfying part of her job is "when the clients make the decision about what they want to do, based on options available in their individual situation, and we are able to resolve the problem. In some cases, clients decide to let the house go, and that's their choice," she said.

Housing counselors can also help by assisting homeowners in analyzing their household budget to determine whether better financial management could improve your situation.

### Preventing property tax foreclosure

As a result of the city's reassessment of property values in 2013, many seniors and others find that the property taxes on their homes have risen far beyond what they can afford, a key reason for tax property foreclosures.

The foreclosure process can be confusing,

and the potential loss of one's home overwhelming, especially for older adults. "No one wants to see people lose their homes," said Montgomery Wilson, an attorney with Community Legal Services' (CLS') Homeownership and Consumer Rights Unit. Wilson focuses on preventing property tax foreclosures on behalf of low-income clients, which is a major issue people bring to CLS' office in North Philadelphia.

"Many of our clients are elderly or have a mental or physical disability," he said. "They may have some level of cognitive impairment and are not sure what to do when they see tax bills piling up or a foreclosure notice. They may be physically unable to address the problem or confused about going to court."

If you face a property tax foreclosure or are struggling with delinquent property taxes on your home, you can work proactively to solve the problem and likely avoid a court hearing by calling the Save Your Home Philly Hotline and consulting with a housing counselor and/or attorney who can help you enroll in appropriate tax assistance programs.

SeniorLaw Center (SLC) attorneys, for instance, can conduct a property tax checkup for any senior homeowner who calls the SLC helpline, which provides legal assistance and referral (see sidebar on page 15). Elizabeth

Shay, SLC director of homeownership rights, advises calling Save your Home Philly Hotline first, then calling the SLC helpline if more legal assistance is needed. "We will enroll seniors in the available tax assistance programs, and if they have been sued for property tax foreclosure, we will negotiate with the city and stop the tax foreclosure usually before the first court date," Shay said.

CLS attorneys may also be able to help you address the issue before the foreclosure process progresses to a court hearing. "If the matter is simple, we may just refer the homeowner to a housing counselor for help enrolling in the various programs and payment plans," Wilson said. "But if a sale is pending or the matter is complex, we may represent and assist the client."

### Going to court

If you end up at a court hearing, you will be able to connect to Philadelphia's new Property Tax Foreclosure Prevention Program. Housing counselors and lawyers are available on-site to schedule appointments and offer help or advice. The hearing will often be postponed to a later date or may be averted entirely if your home is approved for the Owner-Occupied Payment Agreement (OOPA) – through which homeowners can make affordable monthly payments on past-due property taxes – or another payment agreement with the Department of Revenue. A second tax delinquency hearing may be scheduled to resolve matters if needed.

There are additional options that may help to relieve your property tax burden. These include tax discounts, like the Long Time Owner Occupants Program; tax credits, like the Pennsylvania Property Tax Rebate; and programs exclusively for older adults, such as the low-income Senior Citizen Real Estate Tax Freeze.

### Preventing mortgage foreclosure

Philadelphia's Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program began in 2008 at the time of the national financial and housing foreclosure crisis. Since then, the program has saved more than 10,000 homes, become a national model and inspired the creation of Philadelphia's Residential Property Tax Foreclosure Prevention Program.

Missing two mortgage payments usually triggers a pre-foreclosure notice. Making a call to the Save Your Home Philly Hotline before reaching this point and arranging to meet with a housing counselor and, as needed, an

attorney through its legal services partners can help you avoid the foreclosure process by making payment plan arrangements.

If you do not have a plan in place, the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas schedules a conference that both you and the lender are required to attend. The court will require you to call the Save Your Home Philly Hotline to make an appointment with a housing counselor to work on a payment plan in advance of the conference. At the conference, you, the counselor and the mortgage company representative evaluate the repayment options, as well as refinancing, loan modifications or other alternatives to stop the mortgage foreclosure. The court may schedule another conference, if needed, to resolve the delinquency. Through the SLC Triage Program, attorneys attend the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Court every Thursday and can assist any senior with a foreclosure lawsuit.

### Everybody wins

Hiram Carmona, manager of housing counseling and foreclosure prevention for the city's Division of Housing and Community Development, focuses outreach on seniors, many of whom are too frail and too economically vulnerable to risk the loss of their home, he said.

Through these programs, everybody benefits, CLS' Wilson said: Seniors get to stay in their homes, if that is their choice, and connect to programs and budgeting assistance that can help. Lenders and city revenue officials resolve payment issues and collect revenue needed to fund city services and schools and, along with the courts, avoid the burden and expense of ongoing litigation.

*Marcia Z. Siegal is public relations manager for Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA).*

### Crossword puzzle solution

(See page 23 for clues.)

T	S	O	L	T	N	E	S	P	Y	E	A	S	E
E	L	E	I	F	N	E	A	T	E	N	A	V	E
A	B	A	E	L	E	P	A	E	L	E	O	O	G
R	I	O	N	I	R	E	P	R	E	O	N	I	R
S	L	D	S	T	E	R	O	L	D	S	T	E	R
R	H	E	R	N	E	A	T	E	N	A	V	E	D
P	O	P	E	P	O	P	E	A	T	E	N	A	V
W	O	M	E	S	E	N	S	E	C	L	E	N	P
N	E	A	L	E	S	A	V	A	S	I	C	A	L
N	E	T	R	A	T	I	S	N	S	T	R	A	T
T	O	R	T	O	R	I	M	T	R	I	M	T	R
X	A	U	A	V	A	T	E	A	V	A	T	E	W
X	B	E	I	S	I	N	G	S	R	I	N	G	O
R	A	P	E	C	A	P	L	E	O	D	I	L	E
R	S	T	A	N	M	O	S	A	N	M	O	S	A

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## Get legal help with foreclosure prevention, housing issues

The following three agencies can provide help with foreclosure prevention and other housing issues.

**Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS):** CLS provides free civil legal assistance to low-income Philadelphians. Its Homeownership and Consumer Rights Unit represents homeowners in residential mortgage foreclosures and real estate tax foreclosures. For information: Center City Office: 1424 Chestnut St.; 215-981-3700; North Philadelphia Law Center: 1410 W. Erie Ave.; 215-227-2400; clsphila.org.



**Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA):** PLA's Consumer Housing Unit provides free civil legal assistance to low-income individuals and families in Philadelphia. It advises homeowners about what they need to do to avoid losing their homes to mortgage foreclosure or real estate tax foreclosure. In a limited number of cases, PLA defends mortgage foreclosure cases in court or represents clients who are in

Chapter 13 bankruptcy cases. The Save Your Home Philly Hotline is a project of PLA. For information: The Cast Iron Building, 718 Arch Street, Suite 300N; 215-981-3800; philalegal.org. Information about PLA's Save Your Home Philly Hotline is available by calling the hotline at 215-334-HOME (4663) and at saveyourhome-philly.org

**SeniorLaw Center (SLC):** SLC's Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP), supported largely by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Philadelphia Division of Housing and Community Development and PA IOLTA, provides legal assistance with a wide range of housing issues, including mortgage foreclosure and tax problems. For information: Two Penn Center, 1500 JFK Blvd., Suite 1501; SeniorLaw HelpLine: 1-877-PA-SR-LAW (1-877-727-7529) or 215-988-1242 (Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon).

SLC also offers educational presentations on legal issues related to homeownership and is particularly targeting the following ZIP codes for presentations, as these areas are hard-hit by foreclosure: 19120, 19124, 19131, 19138, 19140, 19143 and 19152. To schedule a presentation, call SLC at 215-988-1244 or email Elizabeth Shay, director of homeowner rights, at bshay@seniorlawcenter.org.

## Food programs

• continued from page 4

"This program gives our seniors the opportunity to take advantage of the produce they wouldn't usually have available to them in their neighborhoods," Goldstein said. "Adding extra fresh fruits and vegetables to your plate is a great way to promote health and well-being."

Distribution of these vouchers begins in June each year and continues through September, or while supplies last. To be eligible, seniors must be 60 or older by the end of the year, live in Philadelphia, and meet income guidelines. Information about the 2018 produce voucher program will be published in the June issue of Milestones.

Alicia M. Colombo is editor of Milestones.

## Meal choice is coming!

PCA recently began an initiative that allows Aging Waiver Program participants to select their meal entree from a menu

of more than two dozen options. The program currently serves participants in South and Northeast Philadelphia, where it has been well-received. PCA looks forward to city-wide implementation by July 1.



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## Critics' Corner

# Carly and Bruce: A review of their audio memoirs



By Frank Burd

As I age, I have become more enthralled with the people of my generation. No longer struggling to raise a family or earn a living, I want to know how my more famous baby-boomer contemporaries handled those challenges. But while once I was a prolific reader, now I often choose audiobooks, which accompany me as I drive. The most recent memoirs I've listened to are relatively new: Carly Simon's "Boys in the Trees" (2015) and Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run" (2016).

We learn from the start that both Simon and Springsteen grew up in screwed-up families. Simon's had money. She grew up in Riverdale, New York, and went to a top private school and then to Sarah Lawrence College for a time. Springsteen grew up on the streets of Freehold, New Jersey, where he went both to Catholic and public schools. But both struggled.

Springsteen's father was a difficult man. Often unemployed and disappointed with his own life, he was forever criticizing his son. Simon's father, Richard Simon, was co-founder of Simon & Schuster Publishing. He was also very connected to the music industry and exposed his daughter to the genre that would make her famous.

Springsteen's religious upbringing led to his not touching alcohol as a young man but made a sexual life difficult for him. Simon relates that she was molested by an older boy when she was 7. She developed a serious stutter that, ironically, helped launch her singing career: She didn't stutter when she sang.

I was fascinated listening to Springsteen tell in detail of his youth and playing with local bands, his work at the Jersey Shore in

Asbury Park, and then his cross-country performing sojourns. Simon's memoir is more about how she was feeling, rather than what she was thinking, as she grew as an artist.

We travel with Carly and Bruce – her with James Taylor for a spell, him with his E Street Band and other famous musicians. But Springsteen's book is long, and as he becomes more recognized, he continually reminds us of how true he is to his roots and how special his creative mind is. At times, it's a little over the top, but his fans may love it. Simon is humbler, which appeals to me more.

Another wonderful feature of the memoirs is hearing how the musicians created such classics. "You're So Vain," "Anticipation" and "Nobody Does it Better" are among my favorite Simon songs. And what Springsteen fan doesn't want to know the backstory on "Born in the U.S.A.," "Thunder Road," "Rosalita" and "Born to Run?"

Though Simon reminds us that she still has stuttering issues, the soft, simple narration is honest and even comforting to the listener. Springsteen, on the other hand, is constantly pushing a word here, another word there, for emphasis, and sometimes it gets tiresome.

Audiobooks are a treat I relish. The great advantage is that you can listen while taking a drive or just relaxing on the sofa. The downside is that, if you come to a less interesting spot in the narrative, it is harder to fast forward than it would be to skip pages. But the opportunity to listen to the stories of our heroes or just of people we want to know more about is priceless.

*Frank Burd is a writer of fiction, plays, history and poetry, when he's not photographing.*

## Qi gong

• continued from page 9

chi for more than 20 years and is passionate about his work. He's also studied yoga, reiki and shiatsu. "I teach because I care about people. I consider all the things that I learned as a compliment to each other," McCormack says.

\*\*\*

For more information on class locations or about forming a class, contact Michael McCormack at 267-934-0230 or email him at [dmccormack111@gmail.com](mailto:dmccormack111@gmail.com).

*Author, speaker and writer Barbara Sherf tells the stories of businesses and individuals.*

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*Patrice Shanker, Manager, Meal Distribution Center Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA)*



PCA's Patrice Shanker

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## Living with Disabilities

# Navigating the world without sight: A story of love and companionship

By Alicia M. Colombo

South Philadelphia native John Martino, 75, lost his sight at just 24 when his retinas suddenly detached. Emergency surgery was only able to restore partial sight to his right eye. Two years later, he was completely blind. "It took me a while to get acclimated," Martino says. "It certainly didn't happen overnight."

To help him adjust, he underwent six months of intensive vision rehabilitation therapy. During that time, he learned how to use a guide cane to help him navigate and received career counseling. Prior to losing his sight, Martino worked in a tailor shop making men's suits. "My state case worker suggested two types of work: serving food in a cafeteria and massage therapy," he says. "I wanted to get into something where I could still use my hands, so I decided to study massage."

Undaunted, he went on to become certified in massage therapy and has embraced his craft, dedicating himself to serving his clients.

"With massage, I learned that you either like it or you don't," he says. "Some people can't get a traditional massage. A massage doesn't necessarily have to be done with the person lying on a table. You can do it while the client is sitting in a chair – whatever is most comfortable for the person."

Throughout his life, Martino has made an effort to remain social and connected to his community. In 1979, he became active in a blind support group at Winnet South Philadelphia Community Center. "I learned to do what I needed to do to survive," he says. "I had two offers to get married from two blind women, but I turned them down. In order to continue doing what I was used to doing on my own, I knew I needed to be with a sighted woman. I know of blind couples who made it, but I don't see how they do it. If I want to take a walk outside, besides just going around the neighborhood, I knew I would need a companion."

One day his father suggested that he attend the Saturday night dance held at the Guerin



Paola Nogueiras

**John Martino, who lost his sight more than 50 years ago, remains active in the community with the support of his loving wife, Carmella. They are pictured at the Marconi Older Adult Program.**

Recreation Center. As fate would have it, fellow lifelong South Philadelphia resident Carmella Postiglione also attended the very same dance, at the urging of her mother. The two met and had an instant connection.

"Before I got involved with Carmella, I asked her if she wanted kids," Martino says. "When she said, 'Yes,' I told her, 'There's the door.' I felt I owed it to her to be honest. It wasn't right for me [to have kids]. I wouldn't have been able to see my children."

Carmella decided that her love for him was all that mattered. "He knew what he wanted, and I knew he needed help," Carmella [now Martino] says. They got engaged on Christmas Eve in 1979 after a year of dating.

Their 37-year marriage has been filled with both joyous and tragic events, including the sudden death of Carmella's 50-year-old uncle the day before their wedding. The couple has enjoyed the comfort and support of navigating life's challenges together. "I don't like to use the word 'caregiver,'" says Martino. "I just got married to my wife."

Carmella, 68, agrees they are companions, rather than caretaker and care receiver. "I help him if he needs to separate money or match clothes," she says. "But he's very independent. He cooks and even made stuffed shells, and even my Italian mother was amazed at how good it tasted."

The couple has remained connected to their community through regular participation in senior community center activities. John joined the Marconi Older Adult Program at 15th and Porter streets when he was

in his mid-50s. Carmella was allowed to join, even though she was only in her late 40s, because her husband was a member. "She didn't want to join at first," Martino recalled. "But her mother talked her into it." The Martinos have reaped the many benefits of the center's programs for more than 20 years.

"We're regulars. We come five days a week," Martino says of the Marconi Older Adult Program. Carmella adds, "It gives us something to do. It gets us out of the house."

According to Luke McKetta, director of Caring People Alliance – South Philadelphia, which manages Marconi, the Martinos are beloved members of the Marconi family. Carmella, who has experience working in a cafeteria, volunteers in the center's kitchen and participates in all the center's activities, including exercise and theater groups. Martino participates in the holiday show and shares his singing voice in the music programs. The couple also runs the Friday morning "Coffee Café" and leads the Phone-a-Friend group, which checks in on members who are sick.

The Martinos plan to keep up their activities for some time to come. Martino says that longevity runs in his family; his father lived to 101. "Seventy-five is not considered old today," he said. "Maybe, back in the day, it was. I don't feel old, and people tell me I don't look my age. It's how's you take care of yourself that matters." His advice for staying healthy: "You don't have to eat healthy 24/7, but be careful about what you eat. And exercise."

Alicia M. Colombo is editor of Milestones.

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## Recipe Box

### Nutritious roasted salmon rice bowl



Thinkstock

Salmon is one of the 10 best foods to consume, according to the Nutrition Action Newsletter, mainly due to its high content of omega-3 fatty acids, which can help lower your risk of heart disease. Like meat and poultry, salmon provides you with complete high-quality protein.

Salmon tends to flake easily after cooking. That makes it an excellent source of protein for seniors and people with digestive problems, as it requires less chewing and is easy to digest, experts say. The recipe below makes an easy, satisfying meal packed with protein, whole grains and veggies. To ensure that you're getting 100-percent whole grains, look for a wild rice blend that consists of wild and brown rice.

#### Roasted salmon rice bowl with beets and Brussels sprouts

(Servings: 4)

##### Ingredients:

- 1 cup wild rice blend
- 2 medium golden beets, peeled and cut into ½-inch wedges
- 8 oz. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¾ tsp. salt, divided
- ¾ tsp. ground pepper, divided
- 1 lemon
- 1 lb. wild-caught salmon fillet, cut into 4 portions
- 2 rosemary sprigs, cut in half
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, such as thyme, basil or rosemary
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. chopped pistachios

##### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 °F.  
Cook rice blend according to package directions.

Meanwhile, toss beets and Brussels sprouts in medium bowl with 1 tablespoon oil and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

After the rice has cooked for 10 minutes, spread the vegetables on a large-rimmed baking sheet and roast until just beginning to brown and soften, about 15 minutes.

Cut lemon in half crosswise. Cut half the lemon into 4 slices (reserve the other lemon half).

Push the beets and Brussels sprouts to one side of the baking sheet and place salmon on the empty half. Sprinkle the salmon with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper and top each piece of salmon with a rosemary sprig and a lemon slice. Continue roasting until the vegetables have softened and the salmon is opaque in the center, 9 to 11 minutes more.

Meanwhile, squeeze the juice from the remaining lemon half into a small bowl. Whisk in the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, herbs, garlic, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

Divide the rice among 4 bowls. Discard the lemon slices and rosemary sprigs. Arrange the salmon and vegetables on top of the rice. Drizzle each serving with about 1 tablespoon lemon juice mixture and sprinkle with pistachios.

Source: *Eatingwell.com*

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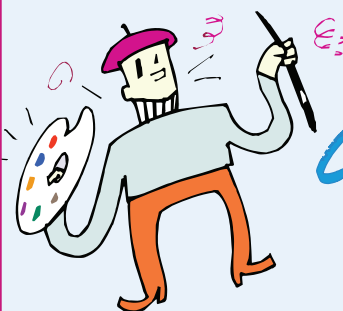
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## Therapist

• continued from page 1

I have a very high IQ, but I can't access the information, and it is very, very frustrating."

Moses, who has taught yoga for 43 years, now has balance issues and broke her wrist and arm in two falls last year. "I'm still teaching yoga, but it's a constant reminder for me of what I used to be able to do," she said.

Her experience as the mother of a child with disabilities has helped her navigate her own health challenges. Moses was married for 23 years and has four grown children. Her first son was born 12 weeks prematurely.

"Tim has mild cerebral palsy and Asperger's syndrome, so I had to learn how to deal with disabilities as a caretaker," Moses said. "He was introduced to music and loved it. I decided to work with very young children who had disabilities and help them through music." She worked in classrooms in Philadelphia and suburban schools for 13 years.

When her first marriage ended, Moses went back to school to become an occupational therapist. She later met and married Jude Brandt, a physical therapist at Moss Rehab. Seventeen years ago, the couple adopted two daughters from Cambodia.

To help her deal with the increased regularity of her seizures, Moses needed physical and mental exercise every day. In January 2016, she decided to write a haiku each day and take a photo to go with it. A haiku is a Japanese form of unrhymed poetry with three lines, traditionally comprised of five, seven and five syllables, respectively.

"I don't know why I chose haiku," Moses said. "I had never done it before, but I always liked writing and did so for a few years professionally in my early 20s. Anyway, I figured, 17 syllables, how hard could that be? Each night,

before I go to sleep, I have my haiku time and will often write a half-dozen of them because, once I get started, they keep coming."

Inspiration for many of her poems comes from looking through a thesaurus given to her by English teacher Hugh Gilmore at Abington High School on the last day of ninth grade. (Gilmore now writes for the Chestnut Hill Local.)

"He was my favorite teacher, and I think he saw something in me," said Moses. "I would open [the thesaurus he gave me], point to a page and find a big, fat, juicy word and write around it." Moses also bought herself a new thesaurus, figuring there must have been some new words added since she had been a child. She would often walk her dog, Wally, who is a certified therapy dog, and take photos of nature, people and their pets, and anything that spoke to her to pair with the haiku. "Sometimes the poem came first, sometimes the picture," Moses said.

She made a collection of 30 of her favorite pairings to share with her family and friends. "They loved it," she said, noting that she is still writing the haikus and taking pictures and is exploring the idea of self-publishing a book.

While participating in a recent Quaker conference, she was asked to display 10 of the photo/poem pairs in the conference's art gallery. "I felt it was quite an honor," she said. "Most of the [other exhibitors] were professional artists."

Moses recently had another seizure and is unable to drive for six months. She continues to turn to her poetry and photos to keep herself balanced and engaged.

*Author, speaker and writer Barbara Sherf tells the stories of businesses and individuals.*

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# Gray pride: She's gone 'au naturel'

By M.L. Polak

Like my mother before me, I started going gray in my early 20s. Although I was partial to the dark eyes/dark hair look, finally, after decades of periodically dyeing my hair, I came to my senses and decided to go gray. I would let my hair grow out to its natural color. It was time. I was well past 50 and reluctant to continue exposing myself to possibly harmful chemicals. Yes, brunette dye has a bad rep, and I hoped I was done with it forever.

Forget the current, curious craze for "granny hair" among numerous very young women, famous and not, who actually choose to color their locks gray for fashion's sake. On them, it's a striking statement – the shimmering glamour of pewter, silvery, gun-metal, charcoal, slate, smoky, as opposed to the daily reality of dull, dull, dull.

Let's face it – gray hair can really be aging. So it takes a modicum of courage to dare to enter a room as a woman of a certain age and be the only one there who has let her locks go gray. You feel you're the center of attention, but not necessarily in a good way. And although you may keep reminding yourself how, in various foreign countries, white hair on a woman is a sign of wisdom and respect, it's not easy to proclaim that in America, where even a few errant gray hairs can earmark a female worker for the corporate dustbin.

Where did our fear of gray hair begin? With that ditty, "The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be?" Or maybe when we women realized we couldn't be considered as good-looking as movie star Richard Gere, comedian Steve Martin or the great motivator Byron Katie?

The last time I had my hair colored was a true nightmare, enough to deter me forevermore. My occasional hairdresser, "Thad" – not his real name – gave me an appointment on the eve of a holiday.

Since, in my holistic worldview, your typical brunette hair dye has been implicated as possibly carcinogenic – in short, truly dangerous – Thad agrees I may bring "natural," non-toxic herbal color to use instead.

Thad fancies himself an artiste and a sculptor, with hair as his medium. Barely reading the instructions, like the genius he believes himself to be, he glops this "100 percent natural permanent color" on my head.

Suddenly, my hair begins to smell like an



M.L. Polak

**A self-portrait by the author reflects her natural hair color.**

actual tossed salad, inspiring alarming comments from the shampoo girl, before it comes out ... green. Thad then applies a darker color, kind of a mahogany that I had had the foresight to bring along as well, and it turns out an even more awful shade of green.

Nothing Thad does changes it.

Just as I'm sitting there under the dryer, freaking out with this awful misadventure, the receptionist slithers up to me and assails me with her nasal whine. "Ohhhhhhh, you don't use chemicals?"

"No," I reply.

"Why not?" she persists.

"Against my religion," I say.

"Which is?" she queries.

Exasperated beyond belief, I mutter under my breath, "Martian."

"Never heard of that one," she responds.

Then she suggests I pay up because it's 4:30 p.m. and she's ready to leave for the holiday. "That will be \$65 and \$65," she demands without blinking. "One-hundred-thirty dollars even though I brought my own color?" I bleat, stunned, traumatized, and trapped under the dryer.

Eventually, after the holiday, I returned to Thad one last time so he could correct the color, and I was on my way to being who I really am. And while someone, maybe the late Nora Ephron, once noted some ZIP codes were totally without women who had "gone gray," there's at least one in 19102.

*M.L. Polak is an award-winning writer, editor, cartoonist, editor, seniors coach and filmmaker.*

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Courtesy of April Harkanson

**Pictured from left to right are Flo as a nun in 1949 with unknown child; mother/daughter family photo in 1987; and celebrating Flo's 85th birthday in 2016.**

## A unique bond between mother and daughter: Love given and received

By Sally Friedman

They are a team. A pair. A portrait of love and loyalty.

Flo Harkanson, a former nun who retired from teaching at 79, has had a distinguished history as an educator. But she needed no tutelage in becoming the official adoptive mother of a child she had cared for since the baby's birth, starting in her own middle age.

The instincts were there, if not the specific experience.

And for her daughter, April Harkanson, that was enough.

"I knew from the time you can know such things that I was loved," April said with gratitude and conviction. "I knew that I was cared for. And I don't think there's anything more important in a life."

Their tale of a mother and daughter whose lives came together through fate might make a fine film or novel, but for now, the two are fulfilled by just celebrating every day and the gifts they have brought to one another.

Their story began by happenstance. Flo, a Philadelphia native who had entered the convent and religious life at 18, was always connected to her Catholic faith community. After she had already spent years as an educator with a special passion for first-grade learners, Flo happened to see a notice in a neighborhood church bulletin about the need for someone to take in an unwed pregnant teen.

Flo had served as a nun for 33 years, leaving that life in 1982. While her life was already full to the brim with community work, something about that call for help touched her, she recalled.

And without worrying about the "what-ifs," she welcomed that 17-year-old mother-to-be and saw her through the end of her pregnancy and her delivery. But then she went way "above and beyond" in her giving: she decided to raise April as her own. The girl's birth mother died of a drug overdose when April was 16. April had met her only once before she died.

"I had been thinking about needing and wanting another mission in my life, another chance to help those in need, and this opportunity came into my world," Flo said. "My own mother had died when I was very young. I knew how that deep loss felt for a child. Things happen for a reason, and this just felt right."

While she has heard this story many times, April still is moved by it – and by the remarkable will and resilience that convinced a genteel 54-year-old woman to uproot her life. "I don't know how many younger women in easier life situations would dream of doing this," April said. Flo, meanwhile, juggled her busy post-convent working life with meeting the huge responsibility of caring for April as a single mom, which meant finding the right child-care arrangements so that she could support the two of them.

Fortunately, she had inherited a house from an uncle for whom Flo had cared during his final illness. Also, caring friends helped out during those daunting early years.

The jobs Flo held to support her daughter and herself included working for an eye doctor, delivering phone books and bookkeeping

for a car dealership. Flo had been a school principal before she'd left the convent and taught first grade at both parochial and public school in Philadelphia until she retired at 79.

"I never felt abandoned," said April, who vividly remembers how safe and secure she felt in their household, even though other families had different configurations.

But something was missing, and that, too, was arranged with great joy and gratitude on both sides. April's official adoption at the age of 6 was a glorious marker for both mother and daughter. Even the judge who officiated at the ceremony was moved by the obvious and touching connection between the child and her – at last – official and legal mother. April literally leaped into her mother's lap once the words "Adoption granted" were said. There was even a party in April's first-grade classroom to celebrate the adoption.

And how did the usually challenging adolescent years go for this older mother and her spirited daughter? "April was a wonderful child and teenager," Flo said. "Neither of us was perfect, but we always managed to get along so well." April said her mom was an exceptional seamstress and made dresses for her Holy Communion and other milestones.

But more vivid for this proud mom was her daughter's wonderful academic record and her delight in dance and music. "I always wanted to please my mother because I never ever forgot – then and now – what she has done for me," said April, who is a graduate of Temple University, music director for a

church and a musician herself with a special interest in both instrumental music and vocals. "I am very blessed to have my life, and I am grateful for everything my mother has done for me," April said.

Both mother and daughter credit each other for the lives they have lived. And if that seems corny, neither cares a bit.

"I can honestly say that Flo is my everything," April said, adding that she will be proud and honored to help her mother through her older years whenever necessary.

At 87, Flo is sometimes frustrated by the physical challenges of growing older. But she is impressively sharp, alert and aware.

These days, Flo has another devoted fan in April's longtime boyfriend, who is now part of their household. Flo now has someone else for company, daily life comfort and assistance when it's needed.

This former nun's story is one of shared gratitude and caring. April is the first to acknowledge that she and her mother are a devoted team. Without each other, April says, they would both have missed an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate the richness of what they have now.

For Flo, there is a clear pride and enormous satisfaction in being mother to her daughter. "Giving back to my mother is my great joy," April said. "Mom always told me to follow my heart and do what makes me happy. That is what is most important."

*Sally Friedman has written for the New York Times and other publications.*

## Don's Column

# Goodbye, winter! Welcome, spring!



By Don Harrison

March, according to the old adage, comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.

For technical reasons, this must be written in advance, so I can only guess how March will arrive, but judging from the killer winter we've survived, it may be safe to speculate.

What a winter! The constant threats of snow, ice, high winds, record-shattering cold and the like were so gleefully predicted by local TV weathercasters.

In my case, my recent stroke has me confined to walkers and to using a stair glide to avoid the risk of falling. So, I survived the winter indoors, without incident, except for one brief daylight power outage.

In a power outage, the phones don't work, which used to leave victims in the dark as to whether the outage would last for hours or days. But the cell phone makes a difference now. If you call PECO, you can learn whether you alone are in the dark – or you have company (72 properties, in our case) – and get an estimate of when the power will be restored (4:20 p.m., we were told; it was just

after 3 ... nothing to do but reset our clocks). Thanks, PECO. Now if you can only come up with a way to avoid outages completely.

Being essentially homebound can be a bore, but there are ways for it be a little less intolerable. In my case, the Veterans Administration has been very helpful, but the real heroine has been my wife, whose life has been changed as much as mine. Competent and caring, she has stood up to the challenge of my dependence – and growing selfishness.

This development has been most troubling. I wonder whether it has troubled other handicapped people out there. Dependence on others equals selfishness, no matter how understanding you try to be of the demands you place on others.

Egocentrism aside, March is here, lion-like or lamb-like. By the time this Milestones is published, we'll be nearing spring, when the TV news will start concentrating on crime and traffic again instead of the "wind chill."

*Milestones Editor Emeritus Don Harrison was deputy editor of the Daily News opinion pages and assistant managing editor and city editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin.*

## Tell us about your unusual art!

As a complement to PCA's Celebrate Arts & Aging festivities in May, Milestones newspaper is looking for stories from seniors about unconventional forms of art. Expressions of artistic creativity can span well beyond painting, drawing and sculpting to include scrapbooking, cake decorating, calligraphy and more. Tell us why what you do is art, and we might publish your story in the May issue of Milestones, as well as in the Milestones e-news.

**To submit an essay or story idea, email [milestonesnews@pcaCares.org](mailto:milestonesnews@pcaCares.org) by Monday, March 12.**

*Milestones, published by Philadelphia Corporation for Aging for more than 15 years, is the premier publication for older adults in Philadelphia (PCA). For more information about Milestones or to download past issues, go to [pcaMilestones.org](http://pcaMilestones.org).*

## Crossword

# Punny Rhymes

### Solution

The solution can be found on page 14.

### Across

- |                                  |                                |                               |                              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Spiny-finned fish              | 20 Cakes that are works of art | 40 Oars maneuver              | 59 Painter Rembrandt         |
| 5 Native American language group | 23 Decorate                    | 41 Vacant                     | 60 Napoleonic stopping place |
| 10 Asterisk                      | 24 Small morsel                | 43 To ___: exactly            | 61 Site of Vulcan's forge    |
| 14 Baptism, e.g.                 | 25 Sleeve type                 | 44 <i>Essay on Man</i> author | 62 Consumed                  |
| 15 <i>Swan Lake</i> character    | 28 Narrow: arch.               | 45 Abandoned                  | 63 Eriksson                  |
| 16 Ness or Inverness             | 33 Toward shelter              | 47 More ingenious             | 64 Kind of street?           |
| 17 Concert halls                 | 34 Italian wine center         | 49 Chronic                    | 65 Used up                   |
| 18 Resounds                      | 36 Balance                     | 50 Follows road               | 66 Forfeited                 |
| 19 Wild goat                     | 37 Bolt                        | 51 Artistic negligee?         |                              |
|                                  | 38 Free                        | 58 Genuine                    |                              |

### Down

- |                              |                            |                                 |                     |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Forehead                   | 11 Proscribe               | 30 Seer's cards                 | 46 Animal fats      |
| 2 Verdi's Ethiopian princess | 12 Tip                     | 31 Flee                         | 48 Brain rec.       |
| 3 Let it stand               | 13 Film reviewer Reed      | 32 More unfamiliar              | 50 Moon: comb. form |
| 4 Mariners' home             | 21 Epoch                   | 35 Abode                        | 51 Roster           |
| 5 Of glacial piles           | 22 Obliterate              | 38 Casals' instrument           | 52 Ages             |
| 6 Stigma                     | 25 Fast                    | 39 Capable of fine distinctions | 53 Harvest          |
| 7 Intone                     | 26 Type of skirt           | 42 When shadows are shortest    | 54 Toupee site      |
| 8 Pond growth                | 27 Ms. Rowlands' namesakes | 44 Irish nationalist leader     | 55 TV backdrop      |
| 9 Wisest old Greek           | 28 Position                |                                 | 56 Wading bird      |
| 10 Leg-pain nerve            | 29 Antler branch           |                                 | 57 Float            |
|                              |                            |                                 | 58 Turn right       |

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64					65						66			



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