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News and Possibilities for Seniors

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Pinochle marries competition and action



Photos by Alicia M. Colombo

Avid pinochle players (pictured left to right) Benjamin Jones Sr., James Mitchell, Sandy Campbell and Olivia Johnson gather regularly.

by Alicia M. Colombo

Sandy Campbell is a cutthroat card shark with 40 years of experience. She was introduced to pinochle when she was a little girl sitting on her mother's lap. "They didn't play for money. They played for fun," she remembers of her mother's card games with friends. Campbell spent years sitting by just watching, taking it all in. "After I graduated high school, I had more time to play pinochle with my college friends," says Campbell. "I've been playing cards most of my life. I won't tell you how old I am, but I'm a senior citizen," she says.

She enjoys other card games, including Tonk and Pitty Pat, but says pinochle is her favorite. Her affinity for the game motivated her to join the Older Adult Sunshine Center,



Sandy Campbell shows a great hand.

which is near her home in West Philadelphia, three years ago. "I used to bring my mother to the center years ago, but then she passed away. Instead of sitting at home alone, me and a friend from the neighborhood decided to start coming to the center," she says.

Pinochle is why she first came, and it's why she stays. Since joining, she's become very active with the fierce Pinochle crowd there. "Even though my friend can no longer come, it's really good for me to get out to the center. That's my main activity, but I join in other things too, like line dancing at parties and sometimes bingo," she says. "Once I'm here, I stay for the day. They have an elevator to help me get around, plus entertainment and other activities that keep me busy."

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Games Seniors Play

Scrabble spells fun

By Marcia Z. Siegal

David Brown and Sara Varaderey are playing Scrabble, each armed with a dictionary for reference. "If it's a new word, I want to know what it is," says Brown as he puts down the letters for selkie, which the dictionary defines as "a mythical creature in Irish/Scottish folklore that looks like a seal in water but assumes human form on land."

The game was invented in 1931 by Alfred Butts, who based it on his love of crossword puzzles and named it "Criss Cross Words." It was later renamed "Scrabble" by the firm which bought the rights to market the game. A Scrabble game can be found in one out of every three American homes, according to the National Scrabble Association. The game features 225 squares on a multi-colored board and 100 tiles, 98 of which have an assigned letter and a point value. There are also two blank tiles which can

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Photo by Paola Noguerras

Scrabble player Sara Varaderey consults her dictionary to look up a word in play.

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Health Briefs

Vaccines aren't just kids' stuff: Older adults still need them to stay healthy

Adult vaccination rates are well below national goals, and there are significant racial and ethnic disparities in adult vaccination rates. To combat these disparities, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention have launched a new project to educate adults and medical providers about vaccines that are indicated for adults.

that the campaign is aimed at one of the primary barriers to being vaccinated, which is the belief that vaccines are only for children. Another issue may be inadequate records. If you don't remember if you were vaccinated as an adult, ask your doctor or pharmacist to check your medical history. Adult immunizations should be incorporated into routine patient care, she said. Take the opportunity to discuss vaccinations with your doctor at your next medical appointment.



Photo by Evangelina Iavarone

Flu season is here

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a flu vaccine every year. Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza, including older adults and people with chronic health conditions. Flu season runs from October through March and peaks in February. If you haven't had a flu shot yet this year, it's not too late; but you should get one as soon as possible.

Seniors are at high risk for vaccine-preventable diseases, due to weakened immune systems.

"Adults need vaccines to stay healthy," said Caroline C. Johnson, M.D., interim deputy commissioner and division of disease control director for Philadelphia Department of Public Health. "All older adults should get the shingles, pneumococcal and flu vaccines. Some adults may also need the Hepatitis B vaccine. The Health Department is working with local doctors, nurses and pharmacists to provide patients with many options for getting vaccinated. You can go to your doctor, a community health clinic or a pharmacy to get the vaccines that you need. Check with your insurer to see if there are any restrictions on where you can go, then choose the option that is most convenient for you," Johnson said.

The diseases that vaccines prevent can be dangerous, painful or even deadly, particularly for older adults. Vaccines reduce the risk of infection by creating antibodies to protect you. Johnson said

"It is especially important for seniors to be vaccinated as they can be more susceptible to infection because of their weakened immune systems," said Ronald Goren, M.D., infectious disease specialist at Nazareth Hospital. "Getting a flu vaccine each season is the best way for seniors to protect themselves against influenza. The flu often mutates, which is why a new vaccine is produced each year. The vaccine is developed to cover the most common circulating strains that year."

It is a common myth that the flu vaccine will get you mildly sick. "This is not true. The virus within the flu vaccine is not alive. The flu vaccine is safe and effective. It has been shown to prevent the flu, and to decrease hospitalizations and deaths," said Goren.

For more information about vaccines, go to www.vaccines.gov or www.flu.gov.

Games Seniors Play

Matching moves and wits, dueling chess players savor challenges of the game

By Marcia Z. Siegal

Bob Eberhardt and Frank Tigano are pondering their moves. Chess is a thoughtful game. The two are taking their time.

Eberhardt is quiet where his opponent is talkative as they sit across from one another at the long wooden table where the chess board lies between them. The two are among a number of devotees who regularly play chess at the Northeast Older Adult Center. "I like chess. It's intelligent and logical," Tigano says. "It really energizes your mind."

One of the world's most popular board games, chess originated in India before the seventh century as "Chaturanga," a Sanskrit word that refers to the four types of military units from that period: infantry, cavalry, elephantry and chariotry. Modern chess started in the late 15th century and the rules were standardized in the 19th century. The four military units of earlier times evolved into pawns, rooks, bishops and knights; and the king and queen were added. Each of the six pieces moves across the board in a different way; rooks (also called castles), for example, move horizontally along straight lines, while bishops move diagonally. The queen is the most powerful – "just like women are in life," Eberhardt jokes – because she can move any number of squares horizontally or diagonally.

The goal is for a player to "checkmate" the opponent's king by placing the king under unavoidable threat of capture, with no safe place to move.

Play by play

"You go, sir," Tigano says.

Eberhardt makes his move.

"That's a gift, Bob. Wrapped and delivered – beautiful," says Tigano, capturing an enemy bishop with his own.

"It's getting ugly, Frank," Eberhardt says. Minutes later, he's ready to capture Tigano's undefended king when an opening occurs. "Say goodnight, Frank. Checkmate. You never should have



Photo by Paola Noguerras

Frank Tigano (left) and Bob Eberhardt are frequent competitors in chess games at Northeast Older Adult Center.

moved your bishop."

"It's your game, alright," Tigano tells him. "Let's play another one. I've got to persevere."

For a while, the two are evenly

matched as captured rooks, pawns, bishops and knights pile up on both sides.

"That's much better, almost acceptable," Tigano says. "You just gave me a little breather."

"I was just concentrating on protecting my king. Nothing changed," Eberhardt says of his opponent's chances. Then he pounces. "Checkmate."

"That's not right. It defies the imagination," says Tigano. "He's invincible today."

For more information about chess and other activities at Northeast Older Adult Center, located at 8101 Bustleton Ave., call 215-685-0576 or go to www.northeastolderadultcenter.org. For information on chess at other senior community centers, visit Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's (PCA) website, www.pcaCares.org, and search for "chess" in the calendar listings. To find a senior center near you, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or search for senior centers on PCA's website.

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at msiegal@pcaphl.org

Pinochle

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About the game

Pinochle is derived from the card game bezique, which started in 19th century France. It's a trick-taking card game for two to four players that uses a special 48-card deck. There are two aces, kings, queens, jacks, tens and nines in each of the four suits.

"In Partnership Pinochle, the game is played with four people and you work with a partner to beat the other pair. If there aren't enough players, we play cut-throat with three people. You're on your own, there's no one to help you out," Campbell says.

Players take turns playing cards and the highest card played each round wins the trick. Players score points by trick-taking and also by forming combinations of cards into melds, which have point values. Some of the highest valued melds include a marriage – queen and king of

the same suit; pinochle – queen of spades and jack of diamonds; and a run – in pinochle, the order is Ace, 10, King, Queen, Jack, 9. The first player or pair to reach 120 points wins the game.

Rise and fly

Once you see the game in action, it is easy to get the hang of it and Campbell predicts you will soon become hooked on the fun of it. "You learn by watching others and from your mistakes. Pinochle can get exciting and loud. It's a fun game, but it's also a competition. You want to be able to see if you can beat your opponents," she says.

More than 40 members of Sunshine Center play pinochle regularly. "The games start in the morning. We play until lunch and take a break to eat. Then we're back at it again, and we play until the center closes," says Campbell. "People come here to play pinochle and enjoy other activities. It's like a party every day."

Center Director Kafi Chism says pinochle is played daily at the center – in the afternoon on Tuesday and Wednesday, and all day on Monday, Thursday and Friday. "It's so popular that we had to purchase additional tables to accommodate all the players," she says.

On some days, there are five full tables of games going with more people standing by, waiting to join. When the pinochle tables reach capacity, Campbell says the games become "rise and fly." "If you lose, you have to get up and let someone else play. People flock here because it's a fun game, and we have a good group of people," says Campbell.

For more information about pinochle and other activities at Older Adult Sunshine Center, call 215-472-6188. The center is located at 137 S. 58th St. and is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Afghan refugees find safe haven here



Photo by Paola Nougeras

Pictured above: Refugees Saliha Ameeri and her son, Roman, survived harrowing times in Afghanistan before settling in Philadelphia.

By Marcia Z. Siegal

It's been 12 years since Afghan native Saliha Ameeri fled from the village militias that murdered her husband, took one daughter from her and burned down her home with her other daughter inside. She and her son initially found refuge in Pakistan. However, it wasn't until this past spring, when they arrived in the United States, that Saliha Ameeri, now 70, began to feel secure again.

"I feel safe here," she says. "I feel like I can try to put the bad things in the past."

"I feel like we have been reborn coming here," says her son, Roman Ameeri. "We are so happy, I can't tell you."

When he was born, in 1987, the family lived in a rural village in central Afghanistan. His father, Liwal Ameeri, worked as a military trainer and radio transmission specialist for the Afghan army for many years. His mother, who was well educated, unlike most women in the village, taught girls academic subjects in her home. In 1996, with civil war tearing their country apart, the family relocated to Pakistan, where his father was able to support his family by working odd jobs, such as selling fruit or repairing radios. Liwal Ameeri decided to

move the family back to Afghanistan in 2003 when NATO agreed to take over command of security forces in that country. He planned to work for NATO there and hoped to help build Afghanistan's nascent democracy.

Move proved fatal

However, in the village where they lived, the family was quickly confronted by ultraconservative religious militias who resented their more liberal thinking, Roman Ameeri says. "They arrested my father and imprisoned him. After that, they killed him." The militia then approached the family demanding that Roman's oldest sister marry one of its members. When the family said no, the militia kidnapped Roman in retaliation. "They told my family they would let me go if the family would give them my sister, Faraba. We refused to do this, but my sister went to them on her own so I could be free," he says.

Saliha Ameeri went to the police asking them to find Faraba, but was unsuccessful. "To this day, we don't know where she is or if she is alive," she says, as her son interprets. For these actions, the older woman, was severely beaten by members of the militia. Still, she tried to write to the police to ask for help in locating her daughter. She gave the letter to someone, who rather than taking it to the police, took it to the militia. In retaliation, militia members burned the family's house down with her younger daughter, Nazila, still inside. "She burned like a piece of wood," Saliha Ameeri says softly. "I couldn't do anything for her. I am always so sad for that."

After that, with help from a doctor in their village, mother and son fled to Pakistan where they lived amid Afghan refugees and sympathetic Pakistanis. Saliha Ameeri stayed in her tiny quarters, too traumatized to venture outside for many of their 11 years there. She was also afraid to let her son out of her sight, despite others in

Afghans

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the community urging her to “let your son work and be with people.” Once, Roman Ameerri says, he went on an outing with friends for five hours. “She was terrified. She kept asking, ‘What happened to my son?’”

Their case was reviewed by the U.N. High Commission of Refugees in Pakistan, and the agency suggested that they apply for refugee status in America. The process took almost three years to complete.

Agencies offer aid

Their new life stands on a strong foundation these days, built in large part by Nationalities Service Center (NSC), which provides social, educational and legal services to immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area. NSC welcomed them upon their arrival in Philadelphia. A case manager took them to a temporary apartment stocked with groceries, furniture, clothing, linens, dishes and other necessities, then found the mother and son a permanent apartment to live in. The agency helped them within days of their arrival to apply for Welfare and Social Security benefits available for refugees, and also Supplemental Security Income (due to age) for Saliha Ameerri. NSC social and medical case managers continue to assist them and keep in close contact. “I can never thank them enough for giving this home and all this support to us,” she says.

Philadelphia Corporation of Aging (PCA) also provides much-needed support, says NSC Health Case Manager Jessica Nambudiri. “When I see immigrants and refugees who are 60 and older and who may need aging services, I refer them right away to PCA for an assessment,” she says. Saliha Ameerri sustained traumatic back injuries from the savage beatings she endured, and suffered a stroke in recent years. As a result, she has difficulty walking and performing some basic tasks. Through PCA long-term care services, she has a part-time aide and help with care coordi-

ination, Nambudiri says.

Another NSC program helping the family rebuild in Philadelphia is the Philadelphia Partnership for Resilience (PPR) – a collaboration between NSC, HIAS Pennsylvania and BuildaBridge International that provides extensive, culturally sensitive services for survivors of torture and their families. Roman Ameerri plans to attend a PPR men’s group and recently transitioned from NSC’s resettlement program to PPR for services and support. He hopes to go to college and learn a profession soon, “but I need advice and help with that,” he says. Much of his time is taken up being his mother’s primary caregiver. He is devoted to that, mirroring her

gentle voice with his own as he speaks to her.

Roman Ameerri says he now knows his way around Philadelphia fairly well. In addition to accompanying his mother to her medical appointments, where he helps to interpret, he has taken her on several outings, including one to Spruce Street Harbor this past summer to see the colored lights. On another outing together, his mother made a friend, a Finnish-born artist about a decade younger. She subsequently invited Saliha and Roman Ameerri to her home, and the two women cooked their native dishes together.

Roman Ameerri’s 28th birthday was December 19, and he says this new land and

the future it offers is the greatest gift he could have received. “I feel like America is my country now,” he says. “I want to be an American and to be a good citizen.”

For more information:

Nationalities Service Center (NSC), 1216 Arch St.; 215-893-8400; www.nscphila.org

Philadelphia Partnership for Resilience, c/o NSC; www.hias.org/ppr

BuildaBridge International, 205 West Tulpehocken St.; 215-842-0428; <http://buildabridge.org>

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Looking to buy or sell vintage dolls, trains and toys? Resources to guide you



Photos by Linda L. Riley

Bye-Lo Baby dolls like this one were first created in 1922

By Linda L. Riley

You're wondering whether to sell your mother's Bye-Lo Baby doll from the 1920s; or your original 1959 Barbie in her black-and-white striped, strapless bathing suit and little plastic high heels. Or maybe you really want to find a Lionel circus train set, like the one you got when you were seven. How do you find it, or find out what it's worth?

There are several primary sources of information for antiques and vintage collectibles: guide books and magazines; dealers and auctions; and the Internet. The value of vintage toys depends on the age, condition, and rarity of the item, and on the whim of the marketplace. While some people may collect them as an investment, the prevailing wisdom is that values can fluctuate so much that it is better to base your collecting on personal preference and meaning than on the expectation of future profits.

Guides for sellers and buyers

"Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price Guides" are among the best known, but if you don't really know what you have, they won't be of very much help. As one example, more than 100 different "Bye-Lo Baby" dolls were made, and if you know exactly which one you have, it may be helpful; but the descriptions in the book are brief to the point of being cryptic. The good news is, you can

check the guide out for yourself, free, at the library – but be sure to get the most recent one available; Philadelphia's Free Library system has 67 copies, dating from 1969 to 2015.

Books dedicated only to toys or about a specific type of toy are probably most helpful, because they are focused, and can have more detailed descriptions and photos than a book which attempts to cover all antiques and collectibles. There are books dedicated to everything from collecting marbles and toy soldiers to Star Wars figures, far more than can be covered here. Following are recommendations of a few books to get started:

"Toys & Prices: The World's Best Toys Price Guide" by Mark Bellomo focuses on toys from the 1950s and later, and is heavy on action figures and GI Joe; Barbie is the only doll included that is not a "character" tie-in to a movie or other pop culture vehicle.

"O'Brien's Collecting Toy Trains: Identification and Value Guide" provides color photos and detailed descriptions, along with pricing; it is also available at the Free Library.

"Antique Trader's Doll Makers and Marks: A Guide to Identification" by Dawn Herlocher can help you determine what you have, as the marks on a doll are often a more definitive identifier than a photo or general description.

There are also specialty magazines on collectibles; each of the following also has a website: Antique Doll Collector Magazine can be found at www.antiquedollcollector.com; Classic Toy Trains Magazine at www.classictoytrains.com; and Antique Toy World at www.antiquetoyworld.com.

These are of particular interest both for the articles and because they provide information about dealers, auctions and toy shows of interest to collectors.

The world at your fingertips

Armchair shoppers can hunt the world for the object of their dreams, or get an idea of the market for collectibles without leaving home, thanks to the Internet. Pricing may be more accurate than printed guides, because auctions on eBay and sales on other sites are taking place in "real time," and are not subject to the same de-

lays as print publications. At the same time, people have their own ideas about the value of their wares, which means the same item can be posted at wildly different prices. Condition and age are also key factors. For example:

- An unused, unopened 1976 edition of the board game CAREERS was listed by one seller on eBay (www.eBay.com) for a "Buy it Now" price of \$160.93, while another seller was asking \$3.25 for a "gently used" 1971 edition.

- A 1950s Ouija board, planchette and directions in the original (worn) box listed for \$75 at www.timewarptoys.com. A 1902-1910 William Fuld Ouija board was listed on the Etsy shop "Recovered Relics" for \$450.

If you are feeling entrepreneurial, you may want to try selling your items online yourself. A couple of requirements for online sales: you have to be prepared to take good photos of your merchandise, and be able to download them to your computer in order to sell online. You also have to provide a method for people to make payments, generally by setting up a PayPal account, which is fairly easy to do.

Among online selling sites, eBay is probably the best-known. You can list up to 50 items per month for sale on eBay, at no cost. If the items sell, eBay charges the seller 10% of the total sale price, including shipping (but not sales tax). If they don't sell, you pay nothing.

Etsy (www.etsy.com) is an online marketplace where vintage and handmade items and craft supplies are sold. It's easier to find things to buy here than to connect with someone who wants to purchase what you have to offer. On the other hand, it is easy and inexpensive to set up your own shop, if you have the impulse. It costs 20-cents to list an item, and if it sells, Etsy charges you a transaction fee of 3.5% of the price, not including shipping.

Ruby Lane (www.rubylane.com) is an online marketplace where many dealers have "shops" specializing in antique, collectible and vintage items. Categories such as Dolls, Bears, Banks and Games make it easy to narrow your search. Most of the sellers also purchase items, so whether you are looking to buy or sell

it is a good place to make a connection. Setting up a shop yourself is more expensive than eBay or Etsy – there is a one-time setup fee of \$100; a monthly charge of \$54 for up to 80 items; plus 39-cents per item listed.

TimeWarp Toys is an online store owned and operated by a couple who live in the Catskill Mountains. They buy and sell toys and collectibles from the 1950s through the 1970s, and will travel for toy collections, or buy through the mail. Currently, "The Fugitive" is one of their highest-priced board games, at \$175. A 1960s Viewmaster in mint condition is selling for \$24; a 1950s tin hutch painted with a Pennsylvania Dutch motif is \$30. For information, e-mail TimeWarpToys@aol.com, call 845-688-2221 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. or go to www.TimeWarpToys.com.



Photo by Linda L. Riley

These collectible O-gauge Lionel trains were made before World War II

Shops, shows and dealers

For train enthusiasts, Bussinger's Trains in Ambler is a doubly delightful destination – it's a toy train shop in the historic Ambler train station at 23 W. Butler Pike. You can even catch a train to get there, on SEPTA's Lansdale/Doylestown Regional Rail line. The shop is tiny and narrow, and made more so because it is stuffed with an amazing array of trains, tracks, layouts, buildings and every accessory you can imagine. They will get your old trains

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Vintage

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running, buy and trade, and can even customize your trains, buildings and billboards with names, logos and designs. Bussinger's is open weekdays from 2:30 to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, call 215-628-2366, e-mail BTrains1@verizon.net or go to www.bussingertrains.com.

Greenberg's Train and Toy Shows are among the best-known and most widely advertised shows, but despite the name, they are primarily focused on trains, with very few toys and no dolls. The next one coming up in this area is in Wilmington, Del. on February 20 and 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$9 and are good for both days; children under 12 are admitted free. If you have quite a few items to sell, you may want to rent an eight-foot table at the show for \$72.

The 33rd Annual Parade of Dolls, Bears & Toys Show is both a show and sale, featuring modern and antique dolls, bears, toys and related items, including vintage and antique fabrics and accessories. The show includes a doll hospital, and doll appraisals are available for \$2 per doll. Hosted by the Twin County Doll Club, it will take place on May 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Forks Township Community Center, 500 Zucksville Rd., in Easton, Pa. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$1 for children under 12. For information, e-mail Earl Bethel at ebgeeb@ptd.net or call 610-322-7702. For information about other doll shows, visit www.dollshowusa.com.

If you watch Antiques Roadshow on PBS, you may have seen Noel Barrett delighting people with his appraisals of their toy trains and trucks, mechanical banks, and automatons. Barrett is located in Bucks County, and deals primarily in toys made before 1950. He will appraise individual items or collections both large and small. Call him at 215-297-5109 to discuss what you have; you may also e-mail photos to toys@noelbarrett.com. For more information, go to www.noelbarrett.com.

Ann Lloyd Antique Dolls in Doylestown buys and sells dolls dating to 1925 or earlier. "When I was a child, my neighbor had ball-jointed dolls that were made in

Germany," Lloyd said. "When I was about 30, I went to an auction and bought three of them." She soon realized she couldn't afford to just keep buying dolls – she had to sell them, too. She has an online shop at www.rubylane.com/shops/anntiquedolls. She will consider dolls for purchase or consignment; to learn more, call her at 215-794-8164 or e-mail alloyddolls@gmail.com.

Richard Saxman Antiques in Valley Forge specializes in dolls manufactured before 1930, and in Steiff or Lenci stuffed figures and bears. Saxman said most of the demand at this time is for dolls from 1910 or earlier. Sending him photos in an e-mail is the quickest way to determine if you have something that would be of interest. "I've got regular collectors, and I know what they're looking for," he said. He began dealing in antiques in the 1970s, and said the market is not as good as it once was. "Younger people in general just aren't collecting very much," he said. Added to that is the impact of the Internet, which vastly expands collectors' access to what's for sale, anywhere in the world. He can be reached by e-mail at ricksax@earthlink.net, or by phone at 610-415-9344. More information is available at www.richard-saxmanantiques.com.

Looking at guidebooks or online to get an idea of prices is all right as a starting point, Saxman said, but ultimately, the value hinges on both the condition of your toy or doll, and the demand for it at the moment you decide to sell.

Contact Linda L. Riley at lriley@pcaphl.org

History museum displays Philly toymaker's vintage creations

Classic toys made by Philadelphia toymaker Albert Schoenhut, including the Humpty Dumpty Circus and a submarine that explodes, are on display now through April at the Philadelphia History Museum at 15 S. 7th St. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission: Adults \$10, Seniors \$8, Students \$6, 12 and under free. For more information, call 215-685-4830 or go to www.philadelphiahistory.org.

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Games Seniors Play

American Mahjong at KleinLife: Players gather to match tiles and socialize

By Alicia M. Colombo

The tiles have been shuffled and distributed. A brief silence falls over the room, as the players study their hands intently. Some are muttering to themselves in frustration – or anticipation. A new game of mahjong has begun.

“The game of mahjong is a challenge to learn and play, but when you get the hand you’re looking for and win, it’s a great feeling,” says veteran mahjong player and teacher Linda J. Brown.

Mahjong originated in late 19th century China and is based on popular draw-and-discard card games of the time. It was imported to the United States in the 1920s, and some of the first sets were sold here by Abercrombie & Fitch. “Ezra Fitch’s mother liked to play mahjong with her friends,” Brown says.



Photo by Alicia M. Colombo

Mahjong players (clockwise from bottom left) Joan Fixman, Barbara Bettinger, Reina Berger and Barbara Lissansky share tips and a few laughs.

“The ladies would meet weekly and play this game in response to men’s

smoking circles. Mahjong in America started out as a socialization activity for Jewish women,” she says.

Similar to the card game gin rummy, mahjong is a game of skill, strategy, and calculation that also involves a degree of chance. It’s played by four people using 144 tiles resembling dominoes that bear Chinese characters and symbols. The tiles are laid on the table upside down, and the players all shuffle them around to mix them up. Then each creates a wall, 18 tiles long and two tiles high, and pushes it forward to join with the others in a square. As the game progresses, players pick tiles and keep them to make matches or discard them. Thus, the wall is slowly taken apart, tile by tile.

The American version of mahjong differs from its Asian ancestor in both its game play and scoring. The National Mah Jongg League (NMJL), which was founded by Jewish players in 1937, publishes a new scorecard each year. The goal of American mahjong is to be the first player to match your tiles to a hand from the NMJL’s scorecard.

“Everyone is in the same boat when the new game card comes out in March. For a while, we’re all on the same level again,” says Joan Fixman. She had played mahjong several years ago, but needed a refresher course. This past October,

Fixman was among 11 seniors who took a six-week mahjong class taught by Brown at KleinLife: Northeast Philadelphia. “I hadn’t forgotten everything, but it’s all coming back to me now. I could continue playing and could probably hold my own, the more I play,” says Fixman.

Brown has been sharing the excitement of mahjong with others for about 45 years. She’s even taught the game to people on the beach and in synagogues. “When you like something, it’s fun to see other people joining in,” she says. “The learning curve is steep, but everyone I’ve encountered has grown to embrace and enjoy it. A couple people in the class at KleinLife played when they were young, but most are new to the game. After years of not playing, you have to start all over again. Since they’re still learning, it takes about an hour to play one game. Experienced players can get through a game in 15 minutes,” says Brown.

The social nature inherent in the game adds to its appeal for the players at KleinLife. “We work well together and have a desire to learn,” says class member Barbara Bettinger. “The game is great for memory and critical thinking. It helps keep your mind active.”

Reina Berger started coming to the center a year ago, after her husband died. “When you’re alone, it’s very lonely. This gives me an opportunity to be with other people,” says Berger. She and Bettinger became friends at the center and enjoy many activities together. “I never played before, and I still can’t play,” Berger jokes. “The game is much more involved than you think. You have to be of above-average intelligence. You gotta know what you’re doing. I wanted to learn this game. I like the people. They’re helpful.”

Mahjong has a dedicated and growing following at the center. “We have an ongoing game here every Tuesday and Thursday of ladies who consider themselves expert players. I had been asked many times over the years to get a mahjong teacher. Linda is an excellent teacher. She’s very patient and extremely knowledgeable about the game. She predicted a six-week course should do it, and she was right. These players who



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Scrabble



Photo by Paola Nogueras

David Brown (left) and Sara Varaderey say Scrabble helps to improve players' vocabulary.

• continued from page 1

be used as any letters but have no point value.

Each player gets seven tiles to start; the challenge is to use them to form words with high-scoring letter combinations. The most challenging letters to use – Q and Z – are worth 10 points each, whereas an A or an E is worth only one point. The person with the highest score wins.

"I was always a Scrabble player. I play every chance I get," says Brown, who started coming to the Northeast Older Adult Center after retiring two years ago. "I like the broad range of people here and there are some really good players. These games are a great way to get together." About 20 center members participate in the activity. Typically, two to eight people are playing on any given day "We get to know each other and talk out problems as we play," says Brown. While he also plays Internet Scrabble, "it's a lot different playing face-to-face and a lot more fun," he says.

Most weekdays, Betty Loev gets a group together after lunch for a four-person game. "I played all the time as a kid," she says. "Scrabble takes a lot of thinking." Loev says she likes the chance to exercise her brain that way. "You know what they say, 'use it or lose it,'" she jokes.

Many of the center's members emigrated from other countries and Loev says some are drawn to Scrabble hoping to improve their English vocabulary.

Varaderey, a native of Colombia, has been playing the game for the past year. She immigrated to the U.S. 40 years ago, but says she still appreciates the chance to learn new words and hone her thinking skills. Brown, her opponent, says Varaderey recently had a 72-point word.

Varaderey is not only fast in assembling words on the board; she's also fast on her feet. She is one of the center's most accomplished ping pong players and enjoys dancing as well. "If I hear music playing, I stop playing Scrabble and get up and dance," she says.

For more information about Scrabble and other activities at the Northeast Older Adult Center, located at 8101 Bustleton Ave., call 215-685-0576 or go to www.northeastolderadultcenter.org. For information on Scrabble at other centers visit Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's (PCA) website, www.pcaCares.org, and search for "Scrabble" in the calendar listings. To find a senior center near you, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or search for senior centers on PCA's website.

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at msiegal@pcaphl.org

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Events that end with a \$ require an entrance fee or advance ticket purchase. Events that are free may request a donation or offer items for sale. Please call the number listed for information on pricing or other questions about an event.

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Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

New Year's Day

1

2016 Mummers Parade. Annual Philadelphia New Year's Day tradition featuring comics, fancies & string bands: Parade starts 9 a.m. at City Hall & Marches south on Broad St. to Washington Ave. Fancy Brigades: Noon & 5 p.m. at Pa. Convention Center. All events televised. Fancy Brigade tickets: 1-800-298-4200. \$ (Parade/free)

2

Kristin Chenoweth Performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Emmy & Tony Award-winning actress & singer performs current & classic hits from Broadway, Hollywood & beyond. 8 p.m. The Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall. Tickets: 215-893-1999. \$

3

Capitol Steps. Washington, D.C.-based political theatre troupe performs a unique blend of tasteful musical comedy. 2 p.m. The Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall. 215-893-1999. \$

4

Beat the Winter Blues. Tips to avoid seasonal depression: 10 a.m. Take a virtual walk in the woods: 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.
Paying Bills Online. Access billing information, pay utility bills, get resources & tips for saving, & set up automatic bill payments. 9 a.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225. \$

5

Afternoon Movie with Popcorn: "The Hundred Foot Journey." 1:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

6

iPad Lessons. Learn to navigate the Internet & install/operate applications ("apps"). 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926. (Continues Jan. 13, 20 & 27.)
Rubber Stamping Club & Card Making Class. 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225. (Continues Jan. 20.) \$

7

Opera: Behind the Veil. Singer Leigh Munro introduces Bizet's other famous leading lady, Leila, the veiled temple priestess of The Pearl Fishers. Includes live HD broadcast from The Met. 2-3:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654 (Continues Jan. 14 & 21.) \$
Sore Shoulder? Temple Surgeon Leslie Barnes discusses rotator cuff injuries. 12:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

8

Rock, Roll 'n' Remember Dance Party. DJ, food & prizes. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969. \$

9

Women's International Craft Circle. Bring knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, jewelry making, sewing or other craft project to work on while socializing with the group. English learners may practice conversation skills while crafting with others. 10 a.m. Northeast Regional Library. Register: 215-685-0512.

10

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Orion Quartet with Oboist Richard Woodhams. Works by Mozart, Kirchner & Beethoven. 3 p.m. The Kimmel Center. 215-569-8080. \$

11

Caregiver Support Group. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.
Spiritual Journey Class. Session for the mind, body & spirit. 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926. (Jan. 25.)
What Did You Say? Hearing Loss Assn. of America. Attendees encouraged to bring smartphones. 12:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

12

Mahjong. 1-3 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.
Mahjong for Beginners Class. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. (Continues Tuesdays through Feb. 16) \$.

13

How to Use Your iPhone. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.
Science Workshop. Interactive presentation by educational consultant Anita Dupree about chemistry & physics. 11 a.m. St. Anne's Senior Citizen Community Center. 215-426-9799.
Trip: Tropicana Casino. Includes bingo on the bus. 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Phila. Senior Center on the Avenue of the Arts. 215-546-5879, ext. 209. \$

14

Speaker Series: Successes of the Philadelphia Navy Yard - Sustainability & Progressive Energy in Practice. Presentation by Will Agate, senior VP, Navy Yard Energy Operations & Initiatives 12-1:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.
Substance Abuse Workshop. Information & resources about addiction & recovery. 10:15 a.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.

15

Cookology Class. Dietitian makes delicious, nutritious treats. 10 a.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.
Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. Intergenerational discussion with Mastery Charter School students about Dr. King's work. Topic: "Where do we go from here: Chaos or community?" Refreshments. 1 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.

16

A Winter Gala. Formal dress. 7-11 p.m. Spring Garden Senior Center. 215-787-2944. \$

17

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal. Blend of ballet, modern & street dance that showcases hip, funky moves infused with infectious energy, humor & imagination. 7:30 p.m. Prince Music Theater. Tickets: 215-893-1999. \$

18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
21st Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service. Volunteer service & civic engagement projects. To volunteer: 215-851-1811 or www.MLKday-ofservice.org.
Breast Cancer Support Group. 1-2:30 p.m. Center in the Park. Register: 215-848-7722, ext. 225.

19

Dessert with a Docent. Philadelphia Museum of Art docents present visual lecture of "Audubon to Warhol" exhibit with decadent desserts. 1-2:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654. \$
Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Daedalus Quartet. Features baritone Randall Scarlata & pianist Marcantonio Barone. Works by Maggio, Arauco, Chan & Boyle. 8 p.m. Settlement Music School. 215-569-8080. \$

20

Blood Pressure Screening. 10-11:30 a.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.
How to Use Your Android Cell Phone. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.

21

The Air War in Europe. David Friedman shares his father's experiences as co-pilot of a B-24 that flew 35 missions over France & Germany. 1 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.
Weatherization Workshop. Learn about installation of materials; energy costs; conservation, assistance & tax credit programs. 1 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722.

22

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Europa Galante with Violinist & Conductor Fabio Biondi. Works by Vivaldi, Martinelli, Perotti & Latilla. 8 p.m. The Kimmel Center. 215-569-8080. \$

23

Jerry Blavat: Salute to Street Corner Harmony. Special guests, including The Demensions, The Dubs, Eugene Pitt & The Jive Five, The Solitaires & The Chantels, perform hits from the late 50s & early 60s. 8 p.m. The Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall. 215-893-1999. \$

24

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Imani Winds. 3 p.m. Phila. Museum of Art. 215-569-8080. \$

25

Line Dancing. 12:45 p.m. Beginners class at 2:30 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225. (Mondays) \$

26

African American Journeys. 1 p.m. Center in the Park. 215-848-7722, ext. 225.
Monthly Birthday Party. Lunch, cake, ice cream & live entertainment. 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Peter Bressi Northeast Senior Center. 215-831-2926.

27

How to Use Your Basic Cell Phone. Learn about the functions of a flip phone. 12:30 p.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.
Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Pianist Alexandre Moutouzkine. Works by Rachmaninov & Schumann. 8 p.m. American Philosophical Society. 215-569-8080. \$

28

Managing the Elder Care Maze: A Practical Guide to Senior Housing. Interactive conversation about living options, how to get started, what to look for & next steps. 1-2:30 p.m. Center on the Hill. 215-247-4654.

29

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Presents Horszowski Trio with Violist John Dalley. Works by Beethoven, Tower & Brahms. 8 p.m. American Philosophical Society. 215-569-8080. \$

30

Tarantulas: Alive & Up Close. Come face-to-face with the biggest & most fearsome of all spiders - fangs and all. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. 215-299-1000. (Through May 30.) \$

31

Mack Avenue SuperBand. Ensemble of jazz greats includes Grammy Award-winning vibraphonist Gary Burton; saxophonist Tia Fuller; trumpeter Sean Jones; & bassist Christian McBride 7 p.m. Zellerbach Theatre. Tickets: 215-898-3900. \$

In Season

Pot roasted beef uses winter root vegetables: Carrots, potatoes and turnips



This is a tender and satisfying roast beef dinner that can be served with a green salad and bread.

Ingredients:

½-pound beef round roast
 ½ tsp. salt
 ½ tsp. black pepper
 ¼ tsp. vegetable oil
 4 red potatoes, peeled and quartered (or 1 can, about 15 ozs., low-sodium sliced potatoes, drained)
 1 turnip, peeled and quartered (or ½-can, about 8 ozs., low-sodium sweet potatoes)
 ¼ cup onion, chopped into 1-inch pieces
 ¼ cup carrots, chopped into 1-inch pieces
 ¼ cup low-sodium tomato juice

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
 Season the roast with salt and pepper.
 In a large pan, brown the roast in the oil

over medium to high heat for 10 to 12 minutes. Drain fat.

Use a large iron skillet or roasting pan. Put the roast in the middle of the pan. Add potatoes, turnips, onions and carrots around the roast. Pour the tomato juice over the roast and vegetables.

Cover the pan with a lid or foil and bake for 1 hour or until potatoes are cooked. If desired, cut roast into one-inch chunks. Mix and serve.

Notes: The recommended safe minimum internal temperature for beef roast is 145 degrees F, as measured with a food thermometer. This recipe makes 3, 1 ¼ cup servings, and can be doubled to make 6 servings.

Source: *A Harvest of Recipes with USDA Foods*

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Bullying occurs in senior years, too

By Marcia Z. Siegal

Bullying, unfortunately, is ageless. Some seniors bully others wherever they meet: in long-term care facilities, in senior community centers, and in senior housing, says Lynda Pickett, ombudsman program manager at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA).

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health, "bullying is when a person or group repeatedly tries to harm someone who is weaker or who they think is weaker." Usually there is a real or perceived imbalance of power, in which the perpetrator has more "power," physically, socially or emotionally.

The most recent national report by the National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center found that, in 2013, there were 5,235 incidents of resident-to-resident conflict in nursing homes and a total of 1,589 incidents in personal care homes/assisted living. Experts believe senior-to-senior bullying occurrences are actually much higher; however, many victims are ashamed to report it.

Some typical bullying behaviors include:

- Verbal: Name calling, teasing, insults, threats or jokes targeting a specific individual
- Physical: Hitting, pushing, punching, kicking or destroying an individual's property
- Antisocial behaviors: Shunning/excluding; gossiping; spreading rumors; and using non-verbal body language, like mimicking or offensive gestures

"Whatever form it takes, bullying can be very demeaning," says Pickett. The Ombudsman Program, which she oversees, works to protect residents' rights and quality of life in Philadelphia nursing homes, personal care homes, domiciliary care homes and adult day care facilities.

While bullies often target their victims repeatedly, even one incident can have a profound impact. Victims often experience shame, depression and/or fearfulness. Bullying can also worsen existing mental health conditions. Some victims may try to cope by seeking relationships

with supportive people and focusing on positive activities. However, others focus on avoiding situations where they may encounter such mistreatment. This can result in isolation. For instance, someone who is rejected when trying to sit at a communal table in the dining room may choose to eat alone instead. Staff and family should take notice if a senior in a congregate setting begins to self-isolate, Pickett says.

Bullies usually target those they perceive as vulnerable or different. They may hone in on someone who cries easily, or who is shy, introverted, anxious, or physically or mentally impaired. Some bullies target their victims based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

Many older bullies may have displayed such behavior since childhood. "Just because they are in their 70s or 80s, it doesn't mean they've changed their ways," Pickett says. "They view it as a behavior they can get away with."

Seniors may also use bullying to assert control at a time when they feel powerless; for instance, if they have given up independent living to move to a more regulated senior facility.

Some bullies may lack self-awareness about the effect of their words and actions. "What people may not realize is that bullying impacts the well-being of everyone in that environment, because it allows negativity to flourish," says Pickett. By joining in, or standing by and doing nothing, those who witness that behavior help to contribute to it. "Everyone has the responsibility to speak up against it and to show zero tolerance for it. It's also important that facilities educate staff and residents about bullying and have policies and procedures in place to prevent and deal with senior bullying, including channels for residents to report this type of mistreatment," she says.

Residents can also be proactive. One facility developed a peace council to promote its no-bullying policy. Often facilities have resident ambassadors to welcome newcomers and help smooth their acceptance and comfort in their new environment.

Contact Marcia Z. Siegal at msiegal@pcaphl.org

Ombudsmen help educate long-term care residents on abusive behavior

PCA contracts with two providers for the Philadelphia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (PLTCOP): the Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interest of the Elderly (CARIE), and Center in the Park. These agencies work with and train staff and volunteer ombudsmen who provide information, respond to complaints, and make quality assurance visits to residents in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen also will make presentations for staff, resident councils and family councils of long-term care facilities about bullying, residents' rights and quality of life. Each agency covers a designated geographic area of the city.

For South, West or North Philadelphia, contact CARIE at 2 Penn Center, 1500 JFK Blvd., Suite 1500; 215-545-5728; 1-800-356-3606 (toll-free); or www.carie.org.

For Northeast or Northwest Philadelphia, contact Center in the Park at 5818 Germantown Ave.; 215-844-1829; or www.centerinthepark.org.

PCA's ombudsman program will also present senior bullying education programs at senior centers and senior housing. To schedule a presentation, contact Lynda Pickett 215-765-9000, ext. 3109 or e-mail lpickett@pcaphl.org.

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Here's how to be street-smart, stay safe, whether you are walking or driving

By Alicia M. Colombo

Many factors can determine whether or not a person is a safe driver. Knowledge and skills can increase over a lifetime of driving; but as we age, other elements, such as slowed reflexes and failing vision, can enter the equation. These factors and other safety tips are addressed by Street Smarts – Philadelphia's Highway Traffic Safety Project, which is a program of the Public Health Management Corporation.

"We're not here to take away anybody's keys. We don't want to do that, and we can't," said Donna Ferraro, project director for Street Smarts. "Street Smarts is applicable to people of all ages – from babies to older adults. The goal is to decrease the number of avoidable deaths and injuries associated with traffic-related crashes," said Ferraro.

Safe travels

The program stresses the importance of taking care of yourself and maintaining good health, so you are in the best possible shape. Seniors should get an annual eye exam and physical, and know the side effects of all medications. "Be proactive about your health," said Jessica Jones, health educator with Street Smarts. "Understand that an over-the-counter medicine, such as a pain reliever, may interact with your regular medications. Learn about your health conditions and medications. Also know that alcohol af-

fects your body differently as you age. So, if you're going to mix prescriptions with alcohol, be careful."

Many prescription or over-the-counter drugs can impair your judgment or reaction time. A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that nearly 70% of drivers age 55-plus are taking a prescription drug that can interfere with driving, and 10% are taking five or more of these drugs. If you take medications for blood pressure, diabetes, anxiety or pain, be sure to read the labels carefully. These drugs may cause drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision, memory lapse, confusion and/or lack of coordination. It's important to take all medications as prescribed; and consult a doctor or pharmacist about the effects of medication on walking alone or driving.

Buckle up for safety

"Even though state law doesn't require adults to wear a seat belt in the back seat, we always recommend that you do so," said Jones. "It's not just for your own safety, but also for the safety of other occupants. In an accident, you can become a projectile and injure other riders." Crash statistics indicate the people age 75-plus who do not wear seat belts are four times as likely to die in a car crash. Wearing a seat belt helps keep the person

in place during a crash, absorbs energy forces and reduces ejection.

"Most seniors we talk with are usually on board with wearing seat belts. Sometimes we find that non-compliance is really an issue of discomfort. People don't realize they can adjust the height of the seat belt or tilt their seat to make it more comfortable. Shorter people especially have difficulty with seat belt comfort," said Jones. The correct way to wear a seat belt is over the shoulder and low on the hips, she said.



Car adjustments

AAA advises taking a couple of minutes to make sure everything is adjusted properly before starting the car, to prevent problems once you are driving. (See page 17 for driver safety resources that offer more tips on proper car adjustments.)

Adjust the height and distance of the seat so you can easily reach the pedals. In vehicles with air bags, allow at least 10 inches between the chest and the bag, which is located in the center of the steering wheel or above the glove compartment. A good rule of thumb is to move the seat back as far as you can, while still reaching the pedals comfortably.

Improper adjustment of a head rest can result in head or neck injuries during an accident or even a sudden stop. The height should be mid-ear or higher, and the distance from the back of your head should be 2 ½ inches or less. It is all right for it to touch the back of your head.

There is a simple yet powerful technique to increase visibility and reduce your vehicle's blind spot. To adjust the left side mirror, rest your head against the closed window and set the mirror to barely show the side of the car. To set the right mirror, lean to the right so your head is directly below the rearview mirror. You should always perform a quick head turn over your left shoulder to check through the window for oncoming cars before changing lanes.

You should also do a periodic check

of your car's tires. Air pressure should be checked monthly and refilled when low. To measure the tread depth, place a quarter into several grooves across the width. If part of George Washington's head is always covered by the tread, your tires are safe. But if the top of his head is visible, it's probably time for new tires.

Be comfortable

Being a safe and careful driver also comes from being aware of and respecting your personal comfort zone. Aging eyes can become more sensitive to bright light or glare. "Tilt your eyes up or down, and look beyond the headlights of approaching vehicles. That way, you are not focusing directly on the light, so it's not clouding your vision," said Ferraro.

You may prefer to drive only during daylight hours, or to avoid challenging conditions, such as rush hour or bad weather. "Seniors may say they don't like to drive highways, so I recommend going places with a neighbor or family member who is driving, or leaving the car home and taking public transportation," said Ferraro.

Walk smart

"We talk about pedestrian safety a lot. We suggest that seniors travel with a buddy and map the route out ahead of time. You should know exactly where you're going and how to get there," said Jones.

When walking, make sure you stop at the curb or intersection every time you are about to cross the street. Give yourself enough time to cross without rushing. Never start to cross the street when the crosswalk light shows a flashing or steady hand or Don't Walk. Even when you have the right of way, always look left-right-left, behind and in front of you before crossing.

Drivers need to be aware of pedestrians, too. Always yield to pedestrians who are using marked or unmarked crosswalks, and to those who are blind or physically handicapped. Stop and look in all directions before turning right on red.

Contact Alicia M. Colombo at acolombo@pcaphl.org

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Resources to check, improve your driving

Online virtual tests, information about driving laws, instructional videos and driver education are available from various organizations to help older drivers be at their best behind the wheel.

- AAA offers a wealth of online driving tools and resources for older adults. Test your current driving skills, check your state's driving laws and more at www.AAA.com/SeniorDriving.

- AARP Driver Safety provides low-cost classroom and online Smart Driver courses that may save you money on your car insurance. For information: www.aarp.org/drive or 1-888-AARP-NOW (227-7669). Local classroom courses are often listed in the *Milestones* calendar.

- The American Occupational Therapy Association helps people of all ages participate in daily activities, including driving, with independence and dignity. For online resources, including a geographical search of driving specialists and programs, go to www.aota.org/

older-driver.

- CarFit is an educational program that provides a quick, yet comprehensive review of how well you and your vehicle work together. Events are held outdoors from spring to fall. Helpful information and videos on making proper adjustments to your vehicle can be found at: www.Car-Fit.org.

- Pennsylvania's Yellow Dot Program assists citizens in the "golden hour" of emergency care following a traffic accident, when they may not be able to communicate their needs themselves. Placing a Yellow Dot decal in the vehicle's rear window alerts first responders to check your glove compartment for vital information to ensure you receive the medical attention you need. The program is recommended for seniors and people with disabilities or chronic conditions. To order your free Yellow Dot kit from PennDot, go to www.YellowDot.pa.gov or call 717-787-6746.



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Mahjong

• continued from page 8

knew nothing can now play. They started their own game here right after the class ended," says Shelley Geltzer, program director at KleinLife: Northeast Philadelphia.

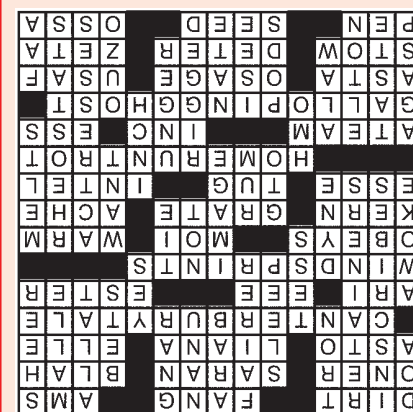
There are also computer-based versions of the game, but Brown says, "the computer game is not at all like traditional mahjong. The tiles are similar, but that's it."

For more information about mahjong and other activities at KleinLife: Northeast Philadelphia, call 215-698-7300 or visit <http://kleinlife.org/adults-55/northeast-philadelphia>. The center is located at 10100 Jamison Ave. and is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Contact Alicia M. Colombo at acolombo@pcaphl.org

Solutions to the *Milestones* Crosswords puzzle

(see page 19)



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Don's Column

“Looking old” or not – in eye of beholder



By Don Harrison

“Old” is not a four-letter word, but the way it’s avoided, you’d think it was.

Euphemisms abound. We’re “senior citizens” or “Golden Agers.” We’re so many “years young.”

It’s as though being old is something to be ashamed of. It’s not, any more than it is to be proud of. It is what it is – a phase in our lives.

In some societies, old people are revered. In others, they’re cast aside. To some, we’re objects of pity – to others, ridicule. Actually, although many of us may have slowed down or lost our edge, the same infinite variations exist among us as among everyone else.

The only difference?

We’re old.

There, I’ve said it. Should I wash my mouth out with soap?

* * *

Looking our age

It’s intended as a compliment, I’m sure, so when someone tells me I don’t “look my age,” I respond as graciously as I can, considering I don’t know what “looking my age” means.

What they’re really saying is that I don’t look like their image of what someone my age should look like. And what determines that?

Maybe it’s their recollection of what their grandparents used to look like to them, but childhood recollections change over the years.

Or maybe it’s the image of old people on TV and in the movies or in magazine ads – but that’s changing too.

Or maybe old people really do look different, thanks to medical advances, lifestyle changes and everything else involved in our increased longevity.

Whatever it is, it goes both ways. To me, many of you don’t “look your age,” either. Even authority figures – cops, teachers, doctors, bank tellers – look 14 years old.

* * *

An exercise in banality

“We’ll just have to score more than they do.”

A typical response in that grand American tradition – the locker-room interview. Even athletes who are smart and articulate are hard-pressed to avoid such platitudes.

That’s because part of the charm of sports is its basic simplicity. No matter how cerebral the strategizing gets, it’s basically one side winning and the other losing. So if you put a camera in front of a guy who has just pitched a no-hitter or missed an extra-point kick, don’t expect enlightening insights.

Add to this the fact that many interviewers today don’t know how to interview, and you get an exercise in banality. Interviewing is a skill, maybe even an art, that doesn’t seem subject to standards it once was (if that sounds old-fogeyish, so be it).

No point, though, in suggesting that the locker-room interview be scrapped. Sports fans would be lost without it.

* * *

An important postscript

Happy new year!

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

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The Milestones Crossword

Giddyap!

ACROSS

- 1 Grime
- 5 Sharp tooth
- 9 Morning hrs.
- 12 Unique thing
- 13 ___ Wrap
- 14 Insuper
- 15 Regarding
- 16 Tropical vine
- 17 Femme’s pronoun
- 18 Wife of Bath’s story, for one
- 21 Mogul Onassis
- 22 Shaq’s shoe width
- 23 Poly ending
- 24 Torturous track exercises
- 29 Heeds
- 30 Me: Fr.
- 31 Sincere
- 35 Composer Jerome
- 36 Shred Locatelli
- 38 Dull pain
- 39 To be: L.
- 40 Haul
- 41 Computer company in the chips
- 42 Slugger’s triumphant gait
- 45 Mr. T’s group
- 49 Ltd. kin

- 50 Curved letter
- 51 Grange’s moniker, after The
- 56 Charleses’ dog
- 57 ___ orange
- 58 Mil. branch
- 60 Load cargo
- 61 Prevent
- 62 Greek letter
- 63 Sty
- 64 Kernel
- 65 Greek peak

DOWN

- 1 Edmond O’Brien film
- 2 Writes in a yearbook
- 3 Fees paid to lawyers
- 4 Disney sci-fi film
- 5 More just
- 6 Saudi native
- 7 Half of Mork’s farewell
- 8 Growl
- 9 ___ once: suddenly
- 10 Director Louis
- 11 Transparent
- 13 Visit dreamland
- 14 Plays the lottery
- 19 Mrs. Dick Tracy
- 20 Acceptance word
- 21 Responded to the alarm

- 25 Physics force measure
- 26 Counterpart
- 27 Negator’s word
- 28 Business apparel
- 31 Desire
- 32 Cinemadonnas
- 33 Dimming devices
- 34 Defrosts
- 36 ‘60s sports car
- 37 Pirate’s drink
- 41 Ruler part
- 42 Dr. payment plan
- 43 Fixed, as an election
- 44 He maddened Madison
- 45 Breathless
- 46 Flavor
- 47 Singer ___ John
- 48 There oughta be ___!
- 52 Herds of whales
- 53 Clairvoyant’s words
- 54 Jean d’Tub
- 55 Greek liqueur
- 59 Air-traffic agcy.

Solution

The solution for the crossword puzzle can be found on page 18.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
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58						59					60			
61						62					63			



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