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**NEXT MONTH:
 Celebrate Arts**

[Earth Day | April 2019]



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Many seniors have accumulated mountains of paper throughout their lives that clutter their homes. Taking steps to organize and reduce your paper can help restore order to your living space.

Cut the clutter: How to organize all those papers, restore order at home

By Alicia M. Colombo

Is your home overloaded with papers? From catalogs to financial statements to receipts, paper can become an all-consuming mess that clutters our lives. Taking steps to organize and reduce your paper can help bring order to your home. "When you craft and maintain systems to manage your information, you'll reduce stress, save money, increase your credibility and feel masterful," says Leslie Robison, a professional organizer for more than 20 years and principal of Mastery Coaching and Consulting in Lansdale.

Robison teaches courses on organization and decluttering at Mt. Airy Learning Tree and Main Line School Night. When it comes to seniors and paper, Robison often sees a backlog. "People tend to save paper," she says. "People don't know what to save, how long to store it and what should be shredded or tossed. So they tend to just save everything."

What do you need to save?

There are several types of documents and other papers that should be saved. These include anything to do with property ownership, such as your home or car; taxes, both personal and property; legal documents; health records; and proof of who you are. The later includes licenses; passports; birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates; military records; and name-change documents.

When it comes to your car, you should save the bill of sale, title, current registration, all repair records and current warranty information.

Medicare and health-related paperwork can be copious. You should save the "Explanation of Benefits" statements until the bill is paid in full and keep health insurance statements in storage for three to five years. Robison says she has found discrepancies between providers and Medicare billing, so it's wise to keep those records for a few years.

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Engage!

Volunteerism takes flight: Senior uses time to care for butterflies

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

Nature has painted butterflies with a cunning brush, notes Chris Johnson, 70, a volunteer in the butterfly exhibition at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, 19th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. "This one has what looks like an owl eye on each wing," Johnson says, referring to the winged insect in his hand. "Thanks to its deceptive wing pattern, the owl butterfly scares off potential predators, like small birds."

As he speaks, standing in the large open space within the academy that houses the live animal exhibit, more than 100 butterflies flutter around him like fugitive color from an artist's easel. "I'll tell you one thing: I've learned a lot about butterflies and insects since I started volunteering here seven years ago," Johnson says. He then points to a monarch butterfly that has landed on a tree nearby, a "master mimic" whose coloring scares off birds, frogs and other animals that eat

• continued on page 11



Will Klein

The owl butterfly has a deceptive wing pattern that scares off potential predators, according to Academy of Natural Sciences volunteer Chris Johnson.

PCA

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WHO IS PCA?

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) is a nonprofit agency dedicated to serving Philadelphia seniors. In addition to bringing you Milestones newspaper, PCA offers:

- Care in the home
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- Home repairs and modifications
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- Senior centers
- Caregiver support
- Employment and volunteer programs
- Legal services
- Transportation



- Ombudsman services
- Health education
- Information and referral

For more information, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040 or visit pcaCares.org.

Health Brief

Recognizing depression in seniors



iStock

Feeling depressed is not a normal part of the aging process. On the contrary, many studies have shown that a majority of seniors report feeling happy and satisfied with their lives. Depression is a serious condition, and misconceptions about aging often mean that it goes undiagnosed in seniors.

According to the National Institute on Aging, nearly 15 percent of Americans 65 or older suffer from a depressive disorder. The most common types include major depressive disorder, in which severe symptoms interfere with one's ability to function normally in isolated episodes; and persistent depressive disorder, in which less severe symptoms persist for long periods of time, usually two years or more.

There are several suspected causes and known risk factors for depression, including a personal or family history of depressive disorders; misuse of drugs or alcohol; and stressful life events, such as the loss of a spouse or caring for someone with a chronic condition.

Depression can also co-occur with other illnesses common among older adults, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease and Parkinson's disease. Symptoms of depression may be overlooked in seniors with chronic conditions or regarded as side effects from medications. However, treating depression in people with chronic conditions may help them to better manage these conditions and improve their overall health.

Watch for symptoms

Older adults and caregivers should look out for signs of depression and talk to a doctor if symptoms persist for more than a few days. Common symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or guilt
- Irritability or restlessness
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Fatigue or decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems without a clear cause
- Frequent crying

Seek treatment

There are many treatments for depression, including medication and psychotherapy. It is important for seniors to work together with their doctor to find the best treatment for them.

The National Institutes of Health offers online tools to aid in talking to doctors about sensitive subjects, including depression and mental health. For more information, go to nia.nih.gov and click on "depression" or "doctor-patient communication."

Source: National Institute on Aging

Milestones

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PCA Helpline: 215-765-9040
Outside Philadelphia toll-free:
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Engage!

Never stop learning: Keep your mind active at Philadelphia's libraries

By Linda L. Riley

"Use it or lose it" is advice that becomes increasingly relevant as we age. According to the National Institute on Aging, engaging in meaningful activities and learning new skills can help improve thinking and memory – and protect you from depression.

There are so many opportunities to learn and grow in the Philadelphia region that the biggest challenge may be choosing where to look first. There are more than 100 colleges and universities, plus hundreds of museums, historic sites and community arts organizations. The list goes on and on. But, for both practical and financial reasons, the best place to start is the library. And the good news is that, here in Philadelphia, there is a library right in your neighborhood.

A closer look at local libraries

The largest and oldest branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia is the Parkway Central Library, which opened in 1927 at 1901 Vine St. Since then, the system has expanded to comprise 49 neighborhood libraries, three regional libraries, and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 1500 Spring Garden Street. With more than 6 million in-person and 9 million online visits annually, the Free Library is one of the most widely used educational and cultural institutions in Philadelphia.

Did you know that you can obtain a Free Library card without charge, even if you don't live in Philadelphia? Residents of Pennsylvania, as well as those who work in, pay taxes to or go to school in Philadelphia, are eligible for a library card that also gives you access to the library's catalog, available at libwww.freelibrary.org. If you have a library card from another Pennsylvania library, you can request that books in the Free Library's collection be sent to your home library through inter-library loan. Also available online is an extensive calendar of daily events, many of which are free, held at all the library branches. All are open to the public. (For a sampling of events held at libraries this month, see the Milestones calendar on pages 8-9.)

The Parkway Central Library is the hub for many activities and is home to vast collections of rare books, art and artifacts that are



Libraries provide a variety of free and low-cost events, activities and learning opportunities. istock

periodically displayed in curated exhibits and are available for viewing upon request. Special events and exhibits highlight the library's most unusual works. For example, the exhibit "Philadelphia: The Changing City" showcases 300 years of prints, photographs, maps and other documents that reveal how Philadelphia has been re-shaped throughout its history. The exhibit is on display in the Special Collections and Research Department now through April 13. A free guided tour of the exhibit will take place April 11 at 3 p.m. Online reservations are required at eventbrite.com. (Type "The Changing City" into the search box to locate the event.)

Philadelphia's main library branch is also home to Central Senior Services, a dedicated area that includes a computer lab, books and resources of interest to seniors, and whose staff organizes programs and events for seniors throughout the year. Starting this month, a four-part workshop "Exploring the World of Ancient Rome," traces the evolution from modest republic to mighty empire and its impact on our political system. Sessions will be held April 11 and 25 and May 8 and 23 at 11 a.m.

Three days a week, one-on-one computer tutoring is offered by volunteers who, according to Senior Services Librarian Richard Levinson, "are specially selected for their computer knowledge and teaching ability and who are patient and kind." Tutoring is available all day Monday, Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons. Appointments are required and can be made by calling 215-686-5331. "People

can keep coming back week after week; it's very flexible," Levinson said.

Branching out

Each of the Free Library of Philadelphia system's branch and regional libraries is independent and determines its own programming based on its resources and the neighborhood it serves, according to Levinson. "One of the reasons the Free Library system is so good is the freedom the branches have," he said. "It allows a maximum degree of independence and flexibility to respond to the challenges they're confronting in their neighborhoods."

Among the neighborhood challenges that will be addressed at library educational events is the local and national opioid addiction and overdose crisis. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health will present free training on overdose awareness and overdose reversal using naloxone, or Narcan, at three libraries this month: April 1 at 6 p.m. at Fishtown Commu-

nity Library, 1217 East Montgomery Ave., 215-685-9990; and April 8 at 6 p.m. at South Philadelphia Library, 1700 S. Broad St., 215-685-1866, and Whitman Library, 200 Snyder Ave., 215-685-1754.

Many local libraries offer a variety of educational events and classes to meet the needs and interests of neighborhood residents, such as an Italian-language movie matinee at the Fumo Family Library, 2437 S. Broad St., held on the second Friday of each month.

A rare connection

Six years ago, Philadelphia's library system expanded, merging with the Rosenbach Museum and Library, located at 2008-2010 Delancey Place. The merger, according to the Free Library, united "two of the world's pre-eminent collections of rare books, artifacts and manuscripts."

The Rosenbach offers generous access to its holdings and regularly presents extensive exhibits that draw on these collections. Currently on view at the Rosenbach (through December) is an interactive exhibit titled "Off the Shelf ... Game On!" that challenges visitors to match their wits with a giant game board that introduces many of the museums holdings, including the manuscript of James Joyce's "Ulysses," Bram Stoker's notes on "Dracula," "The Bay Psalm Book" and the living room of poet Marianne Moore.

Coming up on April 6 and May 4 are "Shakespeare Free Read-Alouds" of "King Lear," and on April 12 a Chaucer-themed cocktail party. For more information about the Rosenbach Museum and Library, call 215-732-1600 or go to Rosenbach.org.

Linda L. Riley is an award-winning journalist, book author and former editor of Milestones.

Milestones wants to hear from YOU!

We welcome your story ideas, feedback and suggestions. (Story-specific comments or questions will be forwarded to the writer.) Submissions of letters or articles for publication must be signed and dated and include your address and phone number. Submission constitutes permission to edit and publish in any form or medium.

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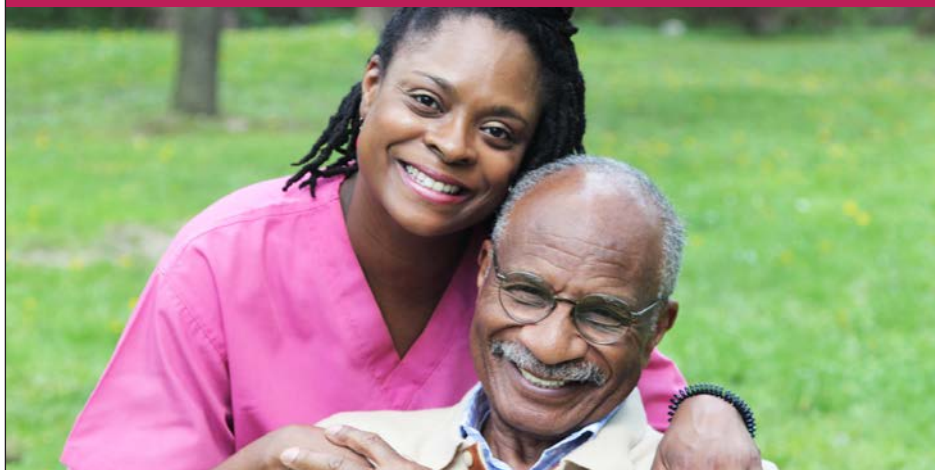
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In Memoriam

PCA bids farewell to Marcia Siegal — colleague, journalist, friend

By Alicia M. Colombo

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the loss of a member of our beloved Milestones family. Milestones writer Marcia Z. Siegal (nee Zoslaw) passed away Feb. 26. She was more than just a colleague to me; she was a confidant and friend. Since 2007, Marcia had been public relations manager here at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), where she also served as a vital member of the Milestones newspaper staff. We both were members of the paper's editorial board, and I worked very closely with Marcia on a daily basis, as she helped me to guide content and wrote multiple well-crafted articles each month.

Marcia's reach went well beyond that of Milestones newspaper. She worked tirelessly to promote PCA and its programs through the local media; served as editor of several newsletters, including the Milestones e-news and PCA's Update; and helped with the agency's community outreach and employee wellness initiatives.

Those who worked with Marcia at PCA knew her to be a skilled writer, especially with features. She loved to tell people's stories and enjoyed learning about different cultures through the people she met.

Marcia had a long, award-winning journalism career. She received the prestigious Simon Rockower Award for Excellence in Jewish Journalism and went on to receive many National Mature Media Awards for her writing in Milestones. Her work has also been published in the Jewish Exponent, Jewish Times, and Inside and Haddassah magazines. Prior to PCA, Marcia worked for Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia, and Wills Eye Hospital, among others.

I worked with Marcia for the entire 11 years she was at PCA. We collaborated closely on many projects. From the beginning, it was obvious to me that Marcia was talented, hard-working, highly intelligent



Evangelina Iavarone

Marcia Z. Siegal was public relations manager at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), where she served as media liaison and wrote for Milestones.

and dedicated to serving seniors. She was always willing to give advice about and offer solutions to the professional and personal issues that I shared with her. She was never too busy to help out a friend or colleague.

Marcia was amazingly well-versed in politics, current news and events, world culture, literature, cinema, and many other areas. I learned a lot from her, including about Jewish culture and traditions and how to craft a good story lede. I also appreciated how Marcia was both honest and open-minded during our discussions.

She cared for the well-being of others, often ahead of her own needs and wants. Marcia often spoke about her husband of more than 36 years, Ira, and two adult sons, Eli and David, whom she loved deeply. I followed their lives along with her. I'm sure everyone who worked with Marcia here at PCA and throughout the community will miss her. I know I will.

Alicia M. Colombo is editor of Milestones.

Engage!

For Senior Companion volunteers, helping others yields great rewards

By Linda L. Riley



PCA-managed

Dorothy Hembry is so warm and outgoing, it seems like just about anyone would feel comfortable talking with her. It's a quality that has served her well as a 17-year volunteer with the Senior Companion Program.

Managed by Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), the Senior Companion Program matches homebound elders with volunteers who visit with them, providing a much-needed social connection. Companions may also help with tasks such as light meal preparation, accompanying the person to medical appointments or doing small errands. In some cases, the seniors are isolated and have no family nearby; in others, the senior companion provides much-needed respite for a caregiver.

The benefits go both ways, according to the 84-year-old Hembry. "It makes me feel good to know that I'm needed and that they care for me," she says of the seniors she visits. "We get along great, and it's been that way with all of them." Over the years, she said she has been matched with four men and more than 10 women. "When I come to see them, they really are joyous. Some of them maybe don't have a family and some of them have families that are at a distance. I'm coming to visit them, and that means a lot to them."

Health benefits

A study recently released by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which funds the Senior Companion Program, backs up Hembry's experience. The study found that volunteers with the program reported significantly higher self-rated health scores and lower depression compared to older adults who do not volunteer. In addition, the volunteers reported that their service provided opportunities for personal growth and a sense of accomplishment. The program is part of the federal Senior Corps program, which also includes RSVP, a volunteer program for people 55-plus.

Senior Companions is a "win-win," according to Lynda Pickett, PCA's assistant director of volunteer services. "Both parties benefit from



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Volunteers with PCA's Senior Companion program provide much-needed support and social connection to homebound elders.

the opportunity for socialization and engagement and remedy the negatives associated with isolation," she says. "Senior companions receive monthly in-service trainings where they are provided with information about healthy living and services that can benefit them and also be passed along to their participants."

Volunteer stations

Hembry first learned of the program through her aunt, who was also a Senior Companion. She is now connected through the West Philadelphia Senior Community Center, which is part of a citywide network of volunteer stations that includes senior centers, senior housing facilities and hospice programs. These volunteer stations identify individuals in need of a Senior Companion and also make matches and provide ongoing supervision for the companions.

When possible, matches are made between individuals who share common interests or hobbies. For example, knitters and board game enthusiasts have been matched with like-minded counterparts.

"Being the age I am and the age they are, I

• continued on page 15

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MONDAY

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

1

First Monday Writers Group. Discussion group for writers. 6:30 p.m. Oak Lane Library. 215-685-2848.

TUESDAY

2

The Slave Next Door: Mapping Haitian Slavery in Philadelphia During the 1790s. Presentation by historian Scott Heerman. 6:30-8 p.m. Historical Society of Pa. 215-732-6200. \$

SUNDAY

7

Trip: Morris Arboretum. 10 a.m. Presented by Congregations of Shaare Shamayim. Register: 215-677-1600. \$

8

Nutrition Fair. La Salle University presents nutrition info, healthy recipes, raffles & more. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Journey's Way. 215-487-1750.

9

Passover Discussion with Rabbi Reuben Israel Abraham. 7 p.m. Congregations of Shaare Shamayim. 215-677-1600.

Smartphone Basics. 11:30 a.m. Charles L. Durham Library. Register: 215-685-7436.

14

Manayunk StrEAT Food Festival. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Main Street in Manayunk. 215-482-9565.

Ostomate & Continent Diversion Support Group. Caregivers welcome. 2 p.m. Penn Hospital. 267-231-4517.

Sakura Sunday at the Cherry Blossom Festival. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. West Fairmount Park Horticulture Center. 215-685-0096. \$

15

TAX DAY

Free Workshop: Advance Directives & Living Wills. Space limited. 5-7 p.m. Mercy Nazareth Hospital. Register: sara.burns@vitas.com.

16

The Art of Nature with Bartram's Garden. Create botanical illustrations with watercolors & pencils. 4 p.m. Kingessing Library. 215-685-2690.

Knitting & Other Needlework with Pitzie Linksy. 1 p.m. Congregations of Shaare Shamayim. 215-677-1600.

21

EASTER

88th Annual Easter Promenade on South Street. Parade, live music & more. 12:30 p.m. South Street & Passyunk Avenue. 215-413-3713.

22

EARTH DAY

Medical Marijuana 101. Learn the basics regarding Pa.'s new medical marijuana laws. 6:30 p.m. Fumo Family Library. 215-685-1758.

23

Sanctuary Now, Sanctuary When? Explore the history of sanctuary in the U.S. & what we can learn from refugees past & present. 6-8 p.m. Arch Street Meeting House. 215-413-1804.

28

El Carnival de Puebla. South Phila.'s Mexican community presents a parade & street fair. Washington Avenue & 16th Street. 8 a.m. Parade at noon. 215-764-6069.

29

Art Class for Adults. Free hands-on art projects. Noon. Lillian Marrero Library. 215-685-9794.

Tyler Kepner's 'K: A History of Baseball in 10 Pitches.' Author traces the colorful stories & fascinating folklore behind baseball's pitches. 7:30 p.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-567-4341.

30

22nd Annual Jewish Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Inductees include Howie Roseman, executive VP of football operations for the Philadelphia Eagles. 5:30 p.m. Rodeph Shalom. Tickets: 215-900-7999. \$

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:

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Email:
milestonesnews@pcaCares.org

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

WEDNESDAY

Author Event: Patricia Gallo-Stenman's 'Diary Of A Beatlemaniatic.' **3**
An insider's look at the impact of the Fab Four. 7 p.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-6868-5322.
Your Eye Health. Workshop on eye health & safety tips. 10:40 a.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 215-698-7300.

Author Event: Kwame Onwuachi's 'Notes from a Young Black Chef.' **10**
7:30 p.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-686-5322.
Elder Law Clinic. 11 a.m. Marconi Older Adult Program. 215-717-1969.
Passover Seder. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. KleinLife NE Phila. Register by April 3: 215-698-7300. \$

17
How Did Davy Die? Crockett at the Alamo. Examining David Crockett's death. 2 p.m. Fox Chase Library. 215-685-0547.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY **24**
Trains, Trolleys & Transportation: How Mass Transit Shaped the Region. Dive into the history of mass transit in Phila. from 1800s to present. 6:30 p.m. Historical Society of Pa. \$

THURSDAY

Author Series: Michael Dobbs' 'The Unwanted: America, Auschwitz, & a Village Caught in Between.' **4**
7:30 p.m. Parkway Central Library. 215-6868-5322.

Laptops for Tax Time. Reserve a laptop & private room for three hours. 2 p.m. Tacony Library. Register: 215-685-8755.

Author Series: Emily Bazelon's 'Charged: The New Movement to Transform American Prosecution & End Mass Incarceration.' **18**
6:30 p.m. The Rosenbach. Register: rosenbach.org.
Rosalie's Review. Friendly discussion on various topics in culture & the news. 12:45 p.m. KleinLife: NE Phila. 215-698-7300.

Jazz at the Clef Club. Boxed lunch, live band & movie. Noon. Marconi Older Adult Program. Register by April 18: 215-717-1971. \$
Penn Relays. Track stars compete at the oldest collegiate meet in the nation. 10 a.m. Franklin Field. 215-898-6151. (Various race times through April 27.) \$

FRIDAY

First Friday Genealogy. Roundtable discussion on ancestry. All are welcome. Noon. Independence Library. 215-685-1633.
Healthy Cooking Workshop. Low-cost cooking ideas, nutrition tips & giveaways. 2 p.m. Lucien E. Blackwell West Phila. Regional Library. Register: 267-658-4148.

Italian Movie Matinee. Italian-language films with English subtitles. Bring your lunch. Noon. Fumo Family Library. 215-685-1758.

PASSOVER BEGINS **19**
'Pride & Joy: The Marvin Gaye Musical.' Motown's untold story of Marvin Gaye & Anna Gordy Gaye. 7 p.m. Merriam Theatre. 215-732-5446. (Various show times through April 21.) \$

Edible Alphabet: Learning English through Cooking. **26**
9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Independence Library. Register: 215-686-5323 or freelibrary.org/ediblealphabet. (Through June 15: Fridays, 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. & Saturdays, 1:15-4:15 p.m.)
Wellness & Resource Fair. 9 a.m. to noon. Journey's Way. 215-487-1750.

SATURDAY

Financial Empowerment Series. **6**
Interactive session on repairing credit, reducing debt & building wealth. 6 p.m. Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek Library. 215-685-1973.

Mindful Clutter Control. Learn how to begin de-cluttering in a judgment-free zone. 3 p.m. Phila. City Institute. 215-685-6621.

African-American History & Culture Showcase. **20**
Featuring a diverse mix of activities that encourage interactive engagement. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pa. Convention Center. 215-418-4989.

Celebrating National Poetry Month. **27**
Local poet Vernita Hall reads selections from her newly published book. 2 p.m. Oak Lane Library. 215-685-2848.

Financial Literacy Month

National Volunteer Month

Clutter

• continued from page 1

Originals of important legal, health and financial documents should be saved in a secure place, such as a small fireproof lock box in your home or a bank safety deposit box. Keep copies in an easily accessible critical documents file. Robison also recommends telling a trusted person where all your important paperwork is located. Along with your vital records documents, you should keep a list of important computer, online and financial accounts, including account numbers, passwords and login information. Do not share account information with anyone, but keep this list locked away if your trusted person needs to access it.

Robison says she likes to see people hold on to their bank statements, tax records and important checks for four to seven years, in case they are needed for an audit, home sale or proof of purchase. "Check with your accountant for advice on archiving investment statements," she says. "You generally don't need to save interim statements, annual reports or prospectuses for IRAs. You only need to save the paperwork from the start and the ending."

What can I toss?

Beyond the essentials, Robison says, some may wish to save family historical documents, photographs and memorabilia such as emails or letters from family members.

"Some of it comes down to preference," Robison says. "But generally people save far more than they'll ever need or look at. When deciding what to save, ask yourself: What do I need to prove? You need to prove where you live; insurance for your medical needs, home, car, life and business; property ownership; and anything related to your taxes."

One thing you probably don't need to save long-term is utility bills, unless you're selling your house or own a business, saving one year of utility bills is sufficient.

Many of Robison's clients save paper for personal reasons. "I see a lot of unused magazines, articles and recipes," she says. "After a certain amount of time, they're not valid or relevant."

Where do I start?

If you are overwhelmed by the quantity of paper you've accumulated, then you might want to take a holistic approach to what you save and how you store it. Robison rec-

ommends starting with a clear, flat surface, such as a table, to begin a rough sort of your papers. "Depending on your situation and amount of paper, you might want to make some blanket decisions from the beginning," Robison says. "For example: You might decide that all coupons and catalogs can go." When discarding items, most things can go right into your recycling bin. "You don't need to shred everything that has your name on it," Robison says. "Shred your financial documents and medical information."

As you pick up each item, place it in a general category, such as:

- Financial – bank statements, and check-books
- Health – doctor/hospital bills, Medicare or health insurance statements, and medical test results
- Insurance – policy/coverage documents and bills
- Family memorabilia – photos, genealogy records and personal letters
- Utility bills
- Miscellaneous – Magazine articles, newspaper clippings and catalogs

After you've sorted all of your paperwork into categories, go back through each pile to choose what to discard and fine-tune the remaining contents. For example: Sort your financial statements by bank name and date.

How do I organize my papers?

Robison suggests using a few simple office supplies to establish an organizational system. Highlight the date and account number on statements and letters, then staple collated items together. "Don't use paper clips. They catch on everything and add bulk," she says.

The next step is to further separate your categorized papers into active and inactive. Active items contain information that is currently being used, such as a bill that needs to be paid, financial statements and utility bills for the year, and current insurance policies. Inactive items are often related to hobbies or property you used to own.

Robison recommends using a filing cabinet or desk with colored hanging file folders to store items by category. For example: green for financial statements. Red can be used for a crisis/911 file that contains a listing of where to find essential paperwork, your financial advisors and close family members.

How do I keep it under control?

To stop clutter from coming into your home, go electronic and unsubscribe from mailing lists. Most utility, retail and financial companies offer paperless billing that sends you bills electronically by email or website account. You should download a copy of each statement and save it on your computer.

Junk mail is one of the biggest producers of unwanted paper. "Unsubscribe: I can't say that enough," Robison says. "Some companies send a tremendous amount of mail. The company then sells your name to other companies." When you get an unwanted catalog or charity solicitation, call the company and ask to be removed or put on a reduced mailing list. You should also ask to be removed from any lists that company sells to other companies. To unilaterally stop or control which catalogs, magazines and advertising solicitations you receive, you can contact the Direct Mail Association at dmachoice.org.

Despite your best efforts, you will still get some unwanted mail. Robison recommends opening mail when you have time to attend to it properly. "Do it near the recycling container," she says. "Do not fold things and put them back in the envelope. It takes more time to go through it later, and you don't see it any more. Storing things flat also takes up less space."

Organization is an ongoing process. Once you've established a system of being choosy about the paper you keep and organizing it well, you must stick with the process going forward to prevent your clutter from getting out of control again.

Alicia M. Colombo is editor of Milestones.

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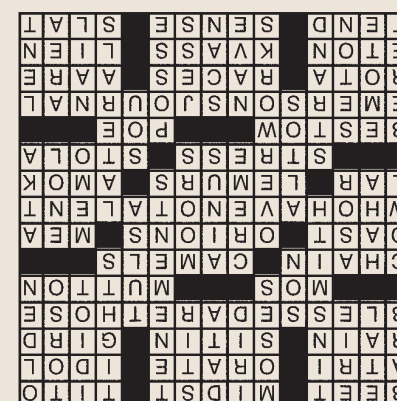
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Crossword puzzle solution

(See page 15 for clues.)



Volunteerism

• continued from page 1

butterflies.

The viceroys' orange and black coloring dupes lizards and other critters into believing that they're really monarch butterflies, poisonous to some animals due to the milkweed they consume.

A retired chemical engineer who lives in Swarthmore, Johnson took a roundabout route to his work with the butterfly exhibit. His son, who's now an adult, volunteered at the academy to fulfill his public service requirement in high school. Through his son's experience, Johnson thought about volunteering at the academy himself. In 2008, he started work there as a guide, or docent, in the exhibits, which change every three to six months. "After an exhibit on life in the deep sea closed, I asked, 'Where do you need help now?'" he says.

The staff snapped up Johnson for the butterfly area, a permanent exhibit, in 2011. Johnson now volunteers at the academy two days each week and has logged almost 4,000 hours in this exhibit alone, where the kinds of butterflies change constantly. "Butterflies and other moths have a life span of about two weeks, and we receive shipments from Costa Rica, Malaysia and other parts of the world each week," he says. The butterflies arrive in the pupa stage and are transferred to a container with controlled temperature and humidity until they emerge, according to Johnson. The pupa stage, he explains, is a nonfeeding stage between the larva – or infancy – and adult, during which the insect undergoes a complete transformation into a butterfly from inside a protective exoskeleton, called a chrysalis.

Johnson's duties include cleaning the exhibit, which maintains a temperature of 80 degrees; setting out food, including bananas and oranges; pruning the many ornate plants that decorate the butterfly habitat; taking a daily count of the butterflies; and greeting guests, including as many as 16 groups of students each day.

He gives instructions to a group of wide-eyed 4-year-olds on their recent trip to the academy: "Move slowly. The butterflies land on the plants, walls, ceiling and floor. You don't want to step on them. Please don't touch them. If one lands on you, it means you'll have good luck all day. When a butterfly doesn't fly off of you on its own, tell one of us and we'll take care of it."

Sometimes it is hard to tell who felt the most excitement: Johnson or the kids. "When they



Mackenzie Fitchett/Academy of Natural Sciences

Volunteer Chris Johnson, 70, of Swarthmore, holds two butterfly specimens – blue morpho and owl. Butterflies have a lifespan of about two weeks.

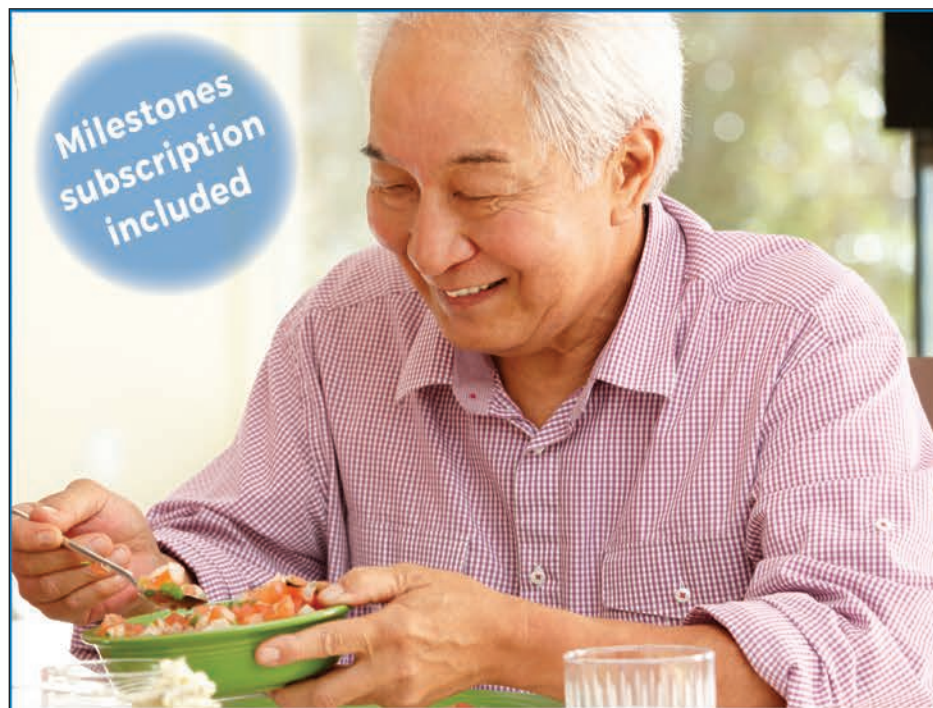
light up, it's priceless," he says with a glowing smile. "Once, a group of pre-schoolers who were learning French sang 'Happy Birthday' in French to a butterfly newly emerged from the chrysalis. It was great."

Johnson not only enjoys the children's delight, but he also likes the camaraderie he shares with other volunteers. "We belong to the pseudo-retired club because we still stay active," says Johnson. "You don't need perfect health to volunteer. One gentleman sets his hours according to his dialysis schedule."

Besides the friendships and activity involved with volunteering, Johnson enjoys the learning. As the country's oldest museum of natural sciences, founded in 1812, the academy provides educational opportunities to both visitors and staff. Like all volunteers, Johnson attends seminars on upcoming exhibits and has even made a newsworthy discovery. "One morning in 2014, I came in and discovered a gynandromorph, an extremely rare half-male, half-female butterfly," Johnson says. "KYW interviewed me, and the story ran in newspapers in Africa, China and Poland, where my name appeared as Johnsonski." A plaque in the academy's archives also includes Johnson's name – spelled the usual way.

For information about volunteering at the Academy of Natural Sciences and other locations, see page 14.

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



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Engage!

The art of conversation: Ways to connect more meaningfully with others

By Beth Goldner

Talking can help you connect more meaningfully with others and support your health and well-being. While digital communications may be easier and more comfortable than conversing for some people, it is worth the effort to participate in regular verbal conversations. Read on for tips to help you make the process easier and more enjoyable.

Reducing isolation

Conversations are a cornerstone of how we as humans connect and relate to each other. “Connections to others are what bind us to life,” says Patrick Arbore, Ed.D., of the Institute on Aging in San Francisco. “Yet society has come to view verbal communication with less gravity, as the rapid advances in technology over the past 20 years have led people to become more engaged with screens than with other humans.”

This increasing dependence on technology can have an isolating effect. Meaningful conversations are important for everyone, but they are particularly important for seniors who lack regular social contact. According to a Pew Research Center report, 26 percent of seniors live alone, which can be a predisposing factor to social isolation. That risk demonstrates a need for increased human interaction, whether in person or over the phone.

Isolation can put people at risk for depression. “Social connectedness is really important in preventing depression in older adults,” says Misa Romasco, vice president of Journey’s Way, a senior center in Roxborough.

Getting started

In order to connect, we must first approach another person, which can be intimidating. Romasco suggests drawing upon universal experiences when choosing topics for initial discussion, such as by asking about family. A good way to start a conversation is with a positive statement or a compliment. Be genuine and make eye contact with the other person. Try to introduce neutral topics. Avoid controversial subjects such as religion and politics.

It is important to ask questions to keep the conversation flowing. For example: Where do you live? This may get the other person talking about how their neighborhood has changed.



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Engaging in regular verbal conversations can help you connect more meaningfully with others and support your health and well-being.

Going deeper

Once you’ve gotten the ball rolling, one of the most important factors to keeping it going is to be intentional, says Arbore. Regardless of the topic, make it clear to the person you are engaging with that you are interested in what they have to say. State this aloud: “I’m really very interested in getting to know you.” Create a bridge of empathy from yourself to the other person, Arbore suggests.

Although small talk may be necessary to get things started, meaningful conversations need to go deeper. To take your conversations to the next level, try to avoid asking yes-or-no questions. Instead, ask open-ended questions. This technique leads you to find out what matters to a person by allowing the other person to move the conversation to cover what they find meaningful. “There are three words you can’t do without in a conversation: ‘Tell me more,’” Arbore says.

Listening

Heartfelt communication originates from the listener, is based on interest and is free of platitudes, says Arbore. “Listening is one of the most important factors in creating a true connection. Although listening seems obvious, doing so with intention may not come naturally. Many of us are not listening actively during a conversation, and we may not even know it. We may be so focused on formulating a response in our head that we are not carefully listening to the other person.

“The listener needs to create a sense of inti-

macy,” Arbore says. To do this, make sure you don’t interrupt the person speaking. Provide your undivided attention, and tune into the details of what the speaker is saying. Show you are actively listening by asking questions related to what they are talking about. People want to be heard, and by making it clear you have listened, a connection is made.

Body language

When you are at ease when speaking with someone, your entire body will show it. We say a lot before we even begin to speak, Arbore says. Studies show that 55 percent of communication is nonverbal. When you engage in a conversation, your facial expressions can be as important as your words. The manner in which you are seated or standing, whether you are relaxed or have your arms crossed, whether you are tapping your feet or have your hands gently folded on your lap, all convey your attitude towards the conversation. Physically leaning in while you are listening and talking demonstrates that you present in the moment and attuned to the other person’s words.

“Communication is a complex transaction,” Arbore says. When we are intentional in navigating this complexity, by initiating conversation, asking questions, actively listening and paying attention to the other person’s verbal and nonverbal cues, we generate opportunities for true connection.

Beth Goldner is a writer, editor and creative writing instructor.

Meeting new people

If you’re looking to meet others, here are ways to get connected within your community and widen your social network.

Even brief interactions can give you a sense of connectedness. These encounters may even lead to lasting friendships. Start talking to the person behind you in line at the grocery store or sitting across from you in a waiting room.

In the community

Senior centers, universities, libraries and other community spaces often host guest speakers or workshops, which are often followed by group discussions. Attending such events is a comfortable way to ease into social opportunities. One can just listen or join in the conversation.

People often gather to talk about a topic of interest, such as books, films, music and writing. Clubs may be community-based or formed among a group of friends. You could even start your own club by inviting friends and new people to join.

Faith-based events are typically interactive, and organizers make strong efforts to ensure new people are introduced to others and made to feel included.

Volunteer

Volunteering is typically a group activity and encourages interaction. It also helps raise one’s spirits because helping feels good. You can find volunteer opportunities online or go directly to an organization you are interested in to see how you can participate. (See page 14 for some options.)

Online

Websites such as meetup.com offer a host of social groups for seniors. You can find groups of people with similar interests, such as travel or cooking, to have conversations or do things with.

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Engage!

Volunteer opportunities for seniors abound at Philadelphia organizations

Philadelphia has a host of organizations seeking volunteers. Here are three possibilities for you to consider.

Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

The academy has many volunteering possibilities. "In some positions you greet guests while in others you work behind the scenes," says Maria Morales, the academy's manager of volunteer services. She urges seniors looking to volunteer to consider all the choices within an organization. Veteran volunteer Chris Johnson suggests seniors get a head start on volunteering by sampling different venues before they retire. Johnson volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and other sites before deciding on the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, where he tends to the butterfly exhibit two days a week. (See article on page 1.) "It makes for a smoother transi-

tion into the new stage of life," he said.

To learn more about more about volunteering at the academy and to apply, call 215-299-1029, email volunteers@ansp.org or go to ansp.org/get-involved/volunteer.

The Free Library of Philadelphia

The library also has a range of volunteer work, from wiping down surfaces after children's programs to help avoid spreading germs to giving tours of the Parkway Central Library at 1901 Vine Street, according to Paul Walchak, acting director of the volunteer services program. "You could also do basic maintenance, use your computer skills, assist with cataloguing or help in the community gardens," Walchak says. "We match your skills to the position." Programs that involve direct contact with children require clearances, he notes. To see the many areas that welcome volunteers and fill out an ap-



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plication, go to or call 215-686-5340, email walchakp@freelibrary.org or go to libwww.freelibrary.org/programs/volunteer.

Friends of the Wissahickon

If you're a gardener or like the outdoors, think about giving time to Friends of the Wissahickon. "Many of our volunteers work on habitat restoration [in Wissahickon Valley Park], which could include removing

invasive plants or planting native trees and shrubs," says Shawn Green, director of volunteer services for Friends of the Wissahickon, a nonprofit that partners with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation to restore historical park structures, maintain hiking trails and monitor water quality. "We post our volunteer projects on our website a month in advance," he says. For more information, email green@fow.org, call 215-247-0417, or go to fow.org/volunteering.

More options

Looking for more volunteer options? AARP's Philadelphia chapter offers several opportunities, which are searchable by ZIP code and keyword, at createthegood.org. The United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey also offers volunteer opportunities throughout the region on its website at volunteer.unitedforimpact.org/need. ☀

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Companion

• continued from page 7

I can relate to them and the things they've done in the past – how we were when we were young," Hembry says. When she first started out with the program, she was a companion to two or three people at a time, visiting them on alternate days. "I've gone all over the place, traveling on the bus," she says.

Currently, Hembry visits one 90-year-old woman for five hours a day, five days a week. "We just sit and talk," she says. "If there's something she might want, I pick it up when I go shopping for myself."

Low-income support

Senior Companions must be 55 or older and meet low-income guidelines to qualify. According to CNCS, this is because the program is specifically designed to enable low-income individuals to participate. To that end, the program provides a small hourly stipend; reimbursement; paid time off; and insurance. According to a CNCS press release, this finan-

cial support is "a key difference between Senior Companions and most other volunteering opportunities, which helps remove the financial barriers to volunteering that low-income individuals may encounter."

Currently there are 76 senior companions serving 141 consumers, according to Pickett. "We are actively recruiting volunteers," she says. Bilingual volunteers are much-needed, particularly those who speak Spanish or Korean. "Low-income seniors who have time and talents to share with homebound elders are invited to give the Senior Companion Program a try."

Information about the qualifications and process for becoming a Senior Companion can be found below. Homebound elders who would like to have a Senior Companion can call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

Linda L. Riley is an award-winning journalist, book author and former editor of Milestones.

Crossword

Quotable

Across

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 <i>The ___ Queen</i> | 24 Sheep | 40 Madagascar | 56 Tears |
| 5 Center | 25 Shackle | 41 primates | 57 Swiss river |
| 10 Josip Broz | 28 Desert teetotalers | Out of control | 58 English school |
| 14 Italian town | 31 Kiln | 42 Emphasize | 59 Fermented Russian beverage |
| 15 Take the podium | 32 Part of a constellation, with belt | 43 Roman matron's attire | 60 Legal claim |
| 16 Adored one | 33 ___ <i>culpa</i> | 44 Confer | 61 Care for |
| 17 Shower | 36 End of quote | 47 <i>The Gold Bug</i> author | 62 Clean through intuition |
| 18 Public protest | 39 Roman household god | 48 Source of quote | 63 Blind part |
| 19 Encircle | | 55 Ecclesiastical court | |
| 20 Start of a quote | | | |
| 23 Yr.'s divisions | | | |

Down

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| 1 Cutting remark | 11 Know-nothing | 32 Toils nonstop | 45 Overact |
| 2 And others: L. abbr. | 12 Body | 33 Notation | 46 American saint |
| 3 New York Indian tribe | 13 Ancient | 34 Organic compound | 47 Search party |
| 4 Metal worker | 21 Male offspring | 35 One of the Aleutians | 49 Church midsection |
| 5 Heston role | 22 OK Oil Capital | 37 Choir members | 50 Leaf through |
| 6 Rainbow: prefix | 25 Draped neckline | 38 Football plays | 51 Falcon strap |
| 7 Facts | 26 Hedge fence | 42 Maroon | 52 Brad |
| 8 Ado | 27 Hebrew lyre | 43 Old French coin | 53 Locale |
| 9 City dwellings | 28 Elite | 44 Headgear | 54 Period before Easter |
| 10 Dancer's garb | 29 Japanese aborigines | | |
| | 30 Othello, and others | | |

Solution

The solution can be found on page 10.

How to become a Senior Companion Program volunteer

Low-income older adults who have a caring heart and time to spare may be interested in becoming a volunteer with the Senior Companion Program. Volunteers must be 55 or older, meet the program's income-eligibility guideline of \$1,961 per month or less, commit at least 20 hours a week to the program, and pass a criminal background check. Applicants are interviewed by Senior Companion Program staff at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), which manages the program in Philadelphia.

Companions receive a small tax-free stipend, reimbursement for travel and meals, paid leave time, accident and liability insurance, paid training before beginning to serve, and four hours a month of continued training. During training, companions learn about topics such as how to detect telephone scams and tips to prevent falls; and have an opportunity to share experiences with other volunteers.

PCA partners with nonprofit organizations throughout the city that identify individuals in need of a companion. These organizations also serve as volunteer stations for the program, providing supervision and support for the senior companions. When a

match is proposed, the volunteer station supervisor takes the applicant on an introductory visit to the homebound elder's home to check for compatibility and discuss a visiting schedule.

Once the match is in place, the volunteer station provides the senior companion with guidance and supervision; monitors the companion's volunteer time; and makes sure the match continues to be a good fit.

There will be a Senior Companion Open House on April 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, 642 N. Broad St., for anyone interested in volunteering with the program. To attend the open house or become a senior companion, call 215-422-4888 to be screened for eligibility. You will hear a brief message stating the program requirements, then be prompted to leave your information if you meet all qualifications.

For additional information, call the Senior Companion Program office at 215-765-9000, ext. 5122. Korean-speaking older adults interested in becoming Senior Companions or having a senior companion assigned to them can call Jaisohn Center, Social Services Department, at 215-224-9528.

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