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NEWS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR SENIORS

Milestones™

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**BLAST
FROM THE
PAST**

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PCA

PHILADELPHIA CORPORATION FOR AGING

WHAT 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
- Home-delivered meals
- Home repairs and modifications
- Protective services
- Senior centers
- Caregiver support
- Employment and volunteer programs
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EDITOR'S COLUMN

By Alicia M. Colombo, Milestones editor



This month, Milestones got a facelift! The cover and calendar now feature dynamic, eye-catching graphics and text. I hope you enjoy the new design and this history themed issue, which is (not coincidentally) one of my favorite topics. It's an appropriate time to look back as Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), publisher of this newspaper since 2001, celebrates the 46th anniversary of its founding in December 2019.

Read all about our "legacy of caring," which highlights accomplishments from nearly a half-century of serving for older adults and people with disabilities. You can also learn about lost Philadelphia history, William Penn's abolition of cave homes along the banks of the Delaware River, efforts to restore the historic Strawberry Mansion home of jazz great John Coltrane, and much more.

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"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

~ George Santayana

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I have always been fascinated with history. It was my favorite subject in school. Each lesson was like being transported to a different time and place, where I could envision both the great triumphs and horrific tragedies that had once occurred.

A feeling of wonderment enveloped all of my senses when I first heard Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream Speech," originally given in 1963. (I still get that same feeling every time I've heard it since.)

Then there were the indescribable lessons that evoked sheer confusion and utter fear – slavery, the Holocaust, and other senseless acts of violence and injustice. It was these lessons that always left me asking, Why? Who could do such awful things? Even now, decades later in adulthood, I have no answer.

But I have learned something very important from it all. These events, as well as the people, places and things associated with them, need to be learned, stud-

ied and remembered – both the good and the bad; it all matters.

One of my favorite quotes, by noted Spanish-American philosopher and writer George Santayana (above), speaks to the importance of remembering the past. Ironically (or, perhaps not), it is often misquoted (thanks to a speech by Winston Churchill) as "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." Either form offers the same important philosophy: Progress depends on retention.

After we are gone, history will be all that is left. What stories and memories do you want to preserve for your family or future generations? Write them down. Share photographs and mementos. For a holiday gift, consider giving your grandchildren and other young relatives tickets to a museum or take them on a trip to a cultural landmark. Clothes will be outgrown. Toys will be quickly cast aside. But memories are forever. Cherish them.





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A LEGACY OF SERVICE



1965

Older Americans Act passed

PCA founded

1973



1974

First services provided: Meals, Helpline, Transportation, Home Care

Senior centers

1975



1978

Care management

Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians established

1979



1980

Housing repairs & legal services

Ombudsman Program

1981



1983

In-Home Support Program

Long Term Care Assessment & Options programs

1985



PCA has been advocating for the rights of seniors since its inception. Seniors at a legislative hearing in 1975 protest cuts to personal care services.

DON'T CUT MONEY FOR HOMEMAKERS

PCA: A LEGACY OF CARING

By Shannon Reyes

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) proudly serves over 140,000 seniors in Philadelphia. The organization contracts with close to 250 service providers to offer more than 20 senior programs to older adults. With such a long list of services, it's

hard to imagine anything but PCA as it stands today. Yet in the early '70s, PCA began with just meals, personal care aides, transportation and the helpline (known as SARA, at the time). Prior to then, there was no federal mandate for senior services.

That all changed with the passage of the Older Americans Act in 1965, which allowed states to receive grants

to help older adults age in place, including in-home and community-based programs. In 1973, the Older Americans Act established Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide seniors these programs. PCA was founded that same year, and with Rodney D. Williams serving as executive director, began offering its original programs in 1974.

The following year, PCA began funding senior community centers throughout the city. Today, PCA operates 28 senior centers and satellite programs. These centers allow for seniors to socialize, enjoy various programming and eat hot lunches together.

In the span of the next 10 years, services offered at PCA grew at an exponential rate. In 1979, PCA also created the Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians, which is responsible for delivering more than \$3.9 million of emergency funds to older adults since its inception.

While Holly Lange currently serves as the president and CEO of PCA, her time with the organization began in 1988 when she joined PCA as a deputy director. Later, she was named the senior vice president and chief operating officer of PCA.

"When I came in 1988, the services we had were senior centers, transportation, a little bit of home care, legal services and ombudsman," Lange says. "That year, the state authorized AAAs to provide family caregiver support and adult protective services. Adult protective services were previously housed in the city's Department of Human Services."

PCA continues to work closely with the city on a number of initiatives for the betterment of Philadelphia's older adults.

Two decades after the helpline began, the heatline was established through a partnership with the city in 1994, following one of the deadliest summers in the city's history. PCA activates a heatline when the city declares a "heat health emergency." The heatline serves as a lifeline for older adults experienc-

ing the effects of extreme heat, providing information such as tips to cool down and locations of cooling centers.

A year later, in 1995, APPRISE was launched. APPRISE is Pennsylvania's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) that assists those eligible for Medicare in selecting coverage. That



In 2019, PCA provided over 140,000 older adults with services, including in-home care, health programs in senior centers and home repairs.

same year, PCA was also the first AAA to provide the Aging Waiver Program in Pennsylvania.

After 39 years of service, Williams retired in 2012 and Lange was named his successor in 2013. Of PCA's many accomplishments during her time as president and CEO, Lange is especially proud of the organization's ability to foresee the future especially during the evolution of the assessment and the Aging Waiver Program, which is now Community HealthChoices. This ability, she attributes to significant growth

of the agency. In July 2019, PCA Care Connections was created by PCA to help to meet the long-term care needs of adults by contracting with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) as part of the changes associated with Community HealthChoices.

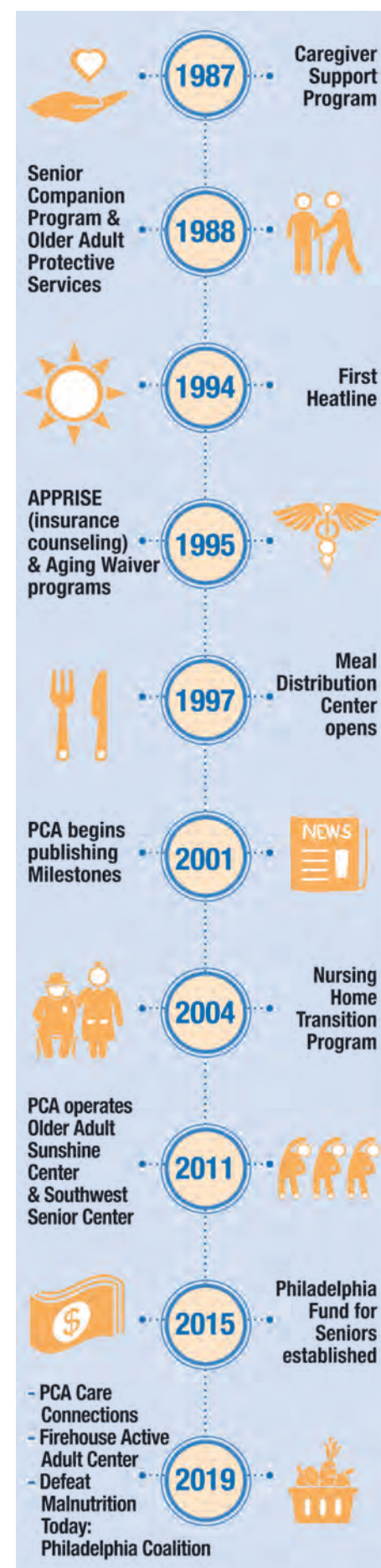
Lange also believes the most important aspect of running a successful AAA is being in tune with the older adult population. "We've also been working with the senior centers on more health promotion programs," Lange says. "All of the senior centers now have exercise programs and computer programs, because we heard the members of those centers ask for them. We always try to keep up with what older adults want from their community services."

To this day, PCA continues to meet the needs of those in the community, despite the fact that public funding has failed to keep pace with the demand for services over the years. Approximately 40% of all older adults in Philadelphia are considered to be low-income and tend to need more services.

Despite these challenges, Lange is confident that PCA will always find a way to meet the needs of older adults. "Our mission is to improve the quality of life for older Philadelphians and those with disabilities and to assist them in achieving the greatest possible levels of health, independence and productivity," Lange says. "That was our mission in 1973 and it will continue to be our mission in 2020."

To learn more about PCA's services, visit pcaCares.org or call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

Shannon Reyes is public relations specialist at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.





Local historian 'Radio Rick' Spector helps keep lost Philly alive

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

As we fondly recall times of the past, we can enrich that reminiscence with "100 Years of Philly History in 13 Minutes." This delightful documentary was created by native Philadelphian and former host of the Milestones Radio Show Richard "Radio Rick" Spector.

Besides superb images of the city's past set to sprightly tunes, the film offers interesting tidbits like the one about W.C. Fields, a son of the City of Brotherly Love. It seems that Fields distrusted banks so much that he had 700 bank accounts under fictitious names in case some of the banks failed, the film notes. Then there's mention of baker William Frehofer's "day olders," sold from his plant in North Philly, which helped many a housewife stretch her food budget during the Depression.

Born in Northeast's Oxford Circle, Spector, 68, also has his trove of personal memories. "I attended Gilbert Spruance Elementary School, and later Northeast High," he says. "I remember a peddler

who used to come down the driveway calling out, 'I'm buying men's clothing!'"

From early on, Spector felt drawn to history. "My dad inspired me with countless stories about growing up in Philly," he says. Spector earned a bachelor's degree in American history from Temple University, and later, a master's degree in social work from there.

Prior to his retirement three years ago, Spector worked at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) for 35 years, where he hosted the now-defunct weekly Milestones Radio Show when it aired for several years on AM radio. Prior to joining PCA, he was a caseworker with the former David Neuman Senior Center in his old Northeast neighborhood. Among his many accomplishments at PCA, he takes the greatest pride in connecting isolated older adults with services through the PCA Helpline and Community Relations Department, which he headed at different times during his tenure.

Spector's attraction to filmmaking dates back decades. "I was fascinated by reading the newspaper and looking at the movie

section," he says. "What captivated me was that the old theatres were such vibrant symbols of the old neighborhood. Now, they're all gone. My favorite movie house was the Cayuga on Germantown Avenue. When television started killing the movies, the theatre's owner changed its name to Aardvark to capture the first listing in the movie section. But the ploy didn't help for long."

Spector honors that inspiration with the name of his company, Moviehouse Productions, which has presented nostalgia programs for older adult audiences throughout the Philadelphia area since 1983. The live programs, which include commentary, music and film, range from "The Nostalgia Cabinet" to "Philadelphia A to Z." However, his most popular show focuses on "Lost Philadelphia."

"I'm just a small filmmaker," says Spector, an avowed morning person. "I marvel at the meticulousness and precision big movies require. Sometimes, I find myself in my office at 5 a.m., when I'm working on a film."

"His filmmaking is more than a hobby," says Shirley, Spector's wife of 30 years. "It's a passion. He enjoys every aspect of it." The Spectors, who live in Bucks County, have one son, Daniel.

Spector folds humor, culture and quizzes into his films. For example, in "100 Years of Philly History in 13 Minutes," viewers are asked the name of the other Philadelphia phone company, besides Bell Telephone, in the pre-World War II years. The answer is Keystone Telephone. One of the film's cultural gems is African American musician and songwriter James Bland. A popular and prolific composer, Bland wrote "O, Dem Golden Slippers" in 1879, which has become the theme song for the Philadelphia Mummers Parade.

Sports also get their due in the film. One clip shows the Eagles' 1948 win over the Chicago Cardinals in a blizzard. "Norm Van Buren, the Eagles' halfback, lived in Upper Darby," Spector says. "He got to 69th Street, took the El, and then the Broad Street Subway to North Phila-



delphia Station, the stop closest to Shibe Park at 21st and Lehigh. It was snowing so hard that the referees could hardly see the lines. But Van Buren made the only touchdown of that NFL championship game, and the Eagles won 7-0."

A man of good humor, Spector spices his presentations with jokes. "Why was Willie the Worm [the puppet host of a WCAU-TV show in the '50s] so smart?" Spector asks. "Because he tunneled for four years under the University of Pennsylvania!"

Nostalgia may evoke a laugh or longing, but it has meaning beyond that at this stage of life, Spector believes. "I think it's important for us older people to do a summing up," he says. "It's good to review our lives. We've made mistakes at times, but it's good to look back, to remember what we accomplished."

For more information about Spector's nostalgia programs, go to the website moviehouseProductions.com.

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



Courtesy: Rick Spector

Most of Philly's old-time diners have disappeared, including the now demolished Oak Lane Diner in North Philadelphia.



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Building up, building down

By Dorothy Stanaitis

For over 80 years, Philadelphia honored the gentleman's agreement that no building in the city would rise higher than William Penn's hat. The 37-foot-tall bronze statue of the city's founder by famed sculptor Alexander Milne Calder stood tall and proud atop Philadelphia's City Hall overlooking the city until 1987. That's when One Liberty Place was built, stabbing the sky at 945 feet, 400 feet higher than Penn's bronze hat.

But the city paid dearly for that impertinence, which heralded the famed "Billy Penn Curse." For many years afterward, no major Philadelphia sports team would win a national contest. The Flyers lost the Stanley Cup finals. The 76ers blew their NBA finals fight. The Eagles were deprived of their championship. And, there were no national championships for the Phillies. Even a Chester County horse lost at Belmont, one win shy of the Triple Crown.

Yet, the building up continued. When Comcast began construction on a 974-foot-tall building that would become the new city's tallest structure, frustrated sport fans knew that something had to be done. And, the ironworkers on the Comcast project were the ones to do it. When the building was completed at the end of 2007, the ironworkers took a Christmas

tree up to decorate the roof. They also smuggled up a three-inch statue of Billy Penn and welded it there. Billy Penn was back in his rightful place, overlooking his green country town. The Phillies won the World Series within a year, in 2008.

In 2017, when the Comcast Tech Center went even higher, it too bore a small statue. So it seems that as long as he can overlook them, William Penn is satisfied with higher and higher buildings.

Building down

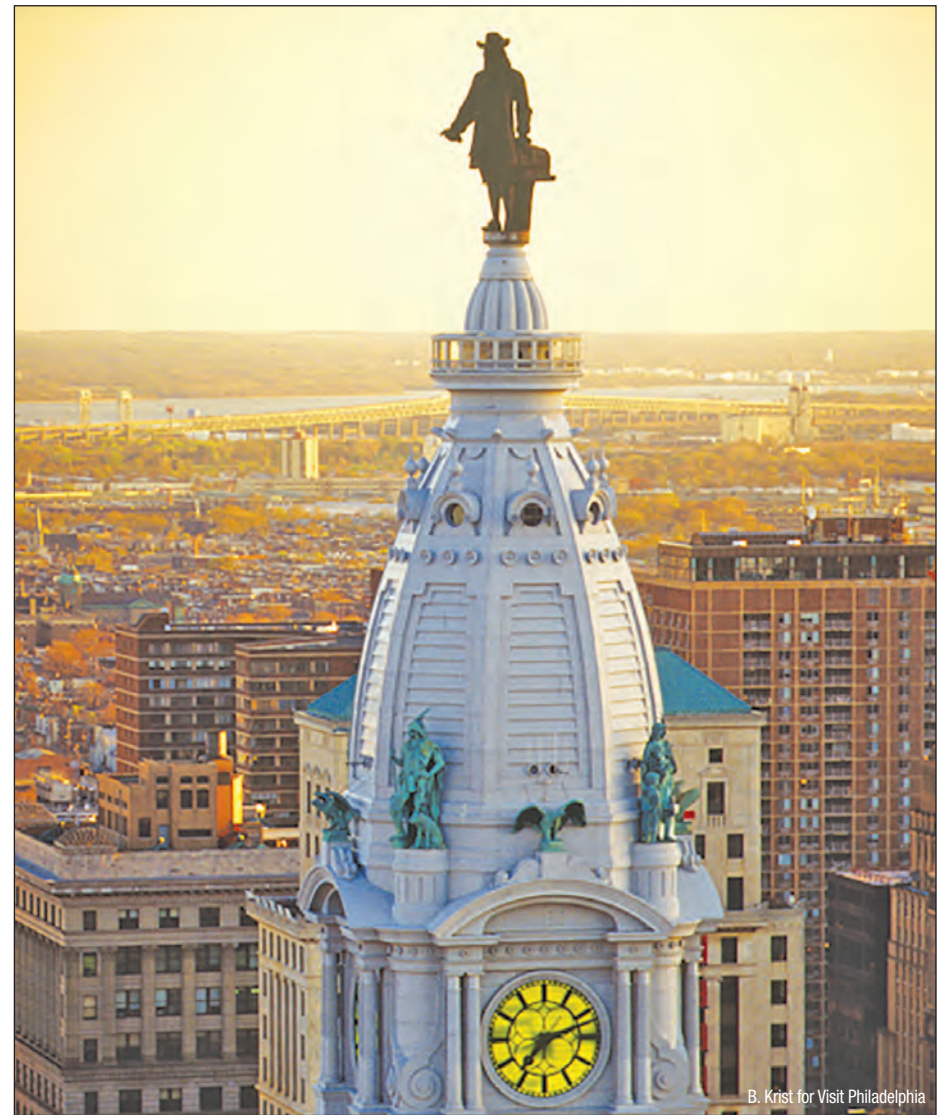
However, building height was not the problem in 1681. Instead of building up, Philadelphians were building down, and Penn became quite displeased.

At the time, one-third of the Philadelphia population was living underground. It started when pioneering Quakers began digging caves in the muddy banks of the Delaware River, creating shelters for their families while they built permanent homes nearby. The Delaware American Indians told the Quakers that they often used caves for winter shelter and had even enlarged muskrat holes for human use.

The caves, called bank homes, were about three-feet deep with above-ground walls of about three-feet tall formed from sod, soil and brush. The roofs were layers of tree limbs overlaid with sod, straw or river rushes as thatch. Timber reinforced the walls and a front door and window would be cut. The windows had sliding boards to shut out cold and light. Sometimes, isinglass would be stretched over.

In 1682, John Kay, the first English child born in Philadelphia, arrived in a cave near Race Street. Upon his death at 85, Benjamin Franklin wrote in the Pennsylvania Gazette that William Penn, first Proprietor of Pennsylvania, had given Kay a lot of land for being the first child born in Philadelphia.

In 1683, Francis Daniel Pastorius, a German scholar, lawyer and ardent abolitionist, came to Philadelphia as an agent of German Investors, called the Frankfort Company, who wanted to purchase prop-



B. Krist for Visit Philadelphia

erty. Penn sold them the land that became Germantown. During his stay in Philadelphia, Pastorius lived in an elaborate cave near today's Front and Lombard streets. Half below and half above ground, his cave was 30-feet long and 15-feet wide. It accommodated 20 people and had oiled-paper windows. A sign over the door read: "A little house, but a friend to the good: keep away ye profane."

But sadly, many profane and worse began living in those caves along the Delaware. Word of debauchery and illicit behavior, unlicensed taverns, brothels, and gambling reached Penn, who was in England at the time. From overseas, he released a Proclamation Concerning the Caves in Pennsylvania: "I did, at first, in regard of the infancy of things and specially out of tenderness to the poorer sort, permit diverse caves to be made in the

banks of Philadelphia facing the Delaware River and taking further notice of ... the disorders their great secrecy hath given occasion to loose persons to commit in them, I do hereby desire and strictly order all the inhabitants of the said caves to depart the same within two months."

After the caves emptied, some were filled in and others became basements of houses and stores built – above ground – between Front and Water streets.

According to historian Harry Kyriakodis, many structures on Front Street, between Vine and Callowhill, have basements that may date back to the caves of the 1600s. Today, some homes use them as storage closets, wine cellars or exercise rooms. William Penn would probably approve.

Dorothy Stanaitis, a certified Philadelphia Tour Guide, writes about history and culture.

Crossword puzzle solution

(See page 19 for clues.)





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December 2019

1

World AIDS Day



2

Deck the Halls

10 a.m. Center in the Park.
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Holiday Luncheon
and Festive
Sweater Party

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Center in the Park.
215-848-7722. \$

22



Hanukkah
Begins at Sundown

23

Intergenerational
Hanukkah
Candle Lighting

11:30 a.m. KleinLife: NE Phila.
215-698-7300.

3

Learn Khmer

Communicating
basic Khmer
(Cambodian)
phrases. 10 a.m.
Marconi Older
Adult Program.
215-218-0800.



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Holiday
Tree
Lighting

5-7 p.m. City Hall.
215-683-2060.



4

18

Holiday Bazaar

Find that perfect gift for your loved one.
10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Center in the Park.
215-848-7722.

25



Christmas

Re-enactment of Washington
Crossing the Delaware

1 p.m. Washington Crossing Historic
Park. 215-493-4076.

26

Kwanzaa
Begins

New Year's Eve
Party

11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.
KleinLife: NE Phila.
215-698-7300. \$



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the month
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month after next).

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10

Hanukkah Concert &
Holiday Tree Lighting

Cantor Don Samuels will sing
your favorite songs. 7 p.m.
Sisterhood of Congregations of
Shaare Shamayim. 215-677-1600

Holiday Bazaar.

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. PSC - Arts.
215-546-5879.

12

Happy Holidays Concert

Holiday favorites sung
by the PSC choir.
1 p.m. PSC - Arts.
215-546-5879.



20

Hanukkah & December
Birthday Party

11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.
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New Year's Eve

31

Fireworks on the Waterfront

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SENIOR CENTER SPOTLIGHT

Language is a bridge, not a barrier at Philadelphia Senior Center – Arts



Michael Hanisco

Helen Tran and David Truong have been attending English as a Second Language classes at Philadelphia Senior Center – Avenue of the Arts for a year.

By Michael Hanisco

One might think there are barriers to serving a highly diverse group of older adults in one location. On the contrary, Philadelphia Senior Center – Avenue of the Arts (PSC – Arts), has embraced the diversity of its membership, using differences in language and culture as a bridge between members, staff and the community at large.

With its highly accessible location just a half-mile from City Hall, PSC – Arts attracts diverse older adults from all over Philadelphia to its location at 509 S. Broad St. In 2017, membership diversified further when PSC – Arts expanded to include the Asian Pacific Senior Resource Center, which previously served the city's elder Asian population at a location close to Chinatown.

"I think that [diversity] is what makes

us really unique," said PSC – Arts Center Director Julie Nelson. "We have members from every ZIP code in the city. Since the Asian Pacific Senior Resource Center moved here, that's the second largest group that we serve, after African-American women."

PSC – Arts offers an array of language-focused programming, much of it driven by its members, according to Nelson. Members have volunteered to teach classes in Spanish, French, Chinese and Italian, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL). Classes range in skill level, from beginner to advanced.

Elba Baldinger has volunteered to teach ESL classes through the Asian Pacific Senior Resource Center for 18 years, going back to the previous location. Baldinger studied Chinese for two years at community college before she learned about

• continued on page 13

PSC – Arts

• continued from page 12

volunteer opportunities to assist ESL older adults. For her, the work is very personal. Growing up as an ESL student herself, she understands the isolation that differences in language can create.

"I was born in Cuba so I had to learn English, and I had to teach most of my family English because they were out in the world," said Baldinger. "I would teach them the same kinds of things I'm teaching here."

She says it's the daily impact she sees in the lives of her students that keeps her coming back to volunteer each week, even well into retirement.

"I'm treated so well by my students," she explained. "Even the people who are no longer coming will stop me on the bus or on the street in Chinatown to say thanks."

That impact was on display during a recent visit to her beginner-level ESL class. Students took turns reading about food items in a textbook and then discussed which types of food were available for lunch at the center that day, using their lesson to instantly form a deeper connection to other members at PSC – Arts.

"We've been coming to this class for about a year and a half to improve our English," said David Troung, who attends the classes with his wife, Helen. "It's been very successful."

In addition to language classes, the center offers a wide array of stimulating activities, including arts and crafts, Bible study, fitness classes, and intergenerational programming. PSC – Arts is also one of three centers in the city with a full-service kitchen, where meals are prepared on-site each day.

Philip Lai, who manages the Asian Pacific Senior Resource Center programming at PSC – Arts, sees the center not only as a place for the community to come together for leisure and meals, but also as a hub for connecting older adults to social services. He wants to get the word out to those in need that help is

closer than they might think.

"We may not be experts on every subject, but we [PSC – Arts staff] can assist people with any problems they are facing and refer them to others who can help if needed," Lai said.

Michael Hanisco is multimedia communications specialist at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.

Companionship. Culture. Community.

Philadelphia Senior Center – Avenue of the Arts and Asian Pacific Senior Resource Center, located at 509 S. Broad St., is a member of the NewCourtland Senior Services network. Founded in 1949, the center recently celebrated its 70th anniversary and is the third-oldest senior center in the country. The center is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, stop by the center, call 215-546-5879 or go to philaseniorecenter.org.

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Fighting for John: One activist's struggle to save Coltrane House

By Kerith Gabriel

Faye Anderson will take this fight to whoever will listen, but it's falling on deaf ears. The lifelong Philadelphian, activist and jazz devotee is the director of All That Philly Jazz. For 10 years, Anderson, 64, has kept a close eye on plans for the restoration of the famed John Coltrane House in Strawberry Mansion, the historic home of the jazz great.

There are no plans for restoration. There is no revival coming. Instead, the Coltrane House is literally decaying.

"It's a complicated process [for the city to take it over or do something] but it's not like anyone is trying," Anderson said. "There are 67 [National Historic Landmarks] in Philadelphia, yet the Coltrane House is the only one crumbling."

The deed for the home is as tangled as it gets. As Anderson explains, Coltrane transferred the property to his mother in

1958, who lived there until her death. A man named Norman Gadson then purchased it in trust for his daughter, Hathor Gadson, in 2004. As trustee, Gadson, who died on in 2007, held the title for his daughter to whom the property would be transferred upon his death.

Here's where it gets tricky. Gadson is still listed as the owner of record. The property was never transferred to his daughter, who is incapacitated and whose legal guardian is unknown.

Meanwhile, the historic home at 1511 N. 33rd St. sits with boarded-up windows and doors, a shell of its former self and unconnected to jazz's massive history.

"The property is in violation of the Windows and Doors Ordinance, which bans plywood or other boards, [of which] the city imposes a fine of \$300 per opening per day," Anderson wrote. "The third-floor windows are not operable. The crumbling front steps violate the Property

Maintenance Code; the list goes on."

Real estate taxes on the property are unpaid and the account is in collections. To see a home that means so much to the jazz fabric potentially get auctioned off at Sheriff's Sale makes Anderson sick.

That's why she's rallying the fight on her own. She's petitioned the city and encouraged her allies in the jazz community to do the same. A huge first step would be for the city to designate a conservator under the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act, which would allow a means for people to help.

"Right now, if a wealthy Coltrane fan wanted to pay for the repairs, there is no responsible organization to which to make the check payable," she wrote. "I will not be complicit to demolition by benign neglect. [We] should hang our head in shame for allowing this National Historic Landmark to become a national embarrassment."



Kerith Gabriel

Kerith Gabriel is the communications manager at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.

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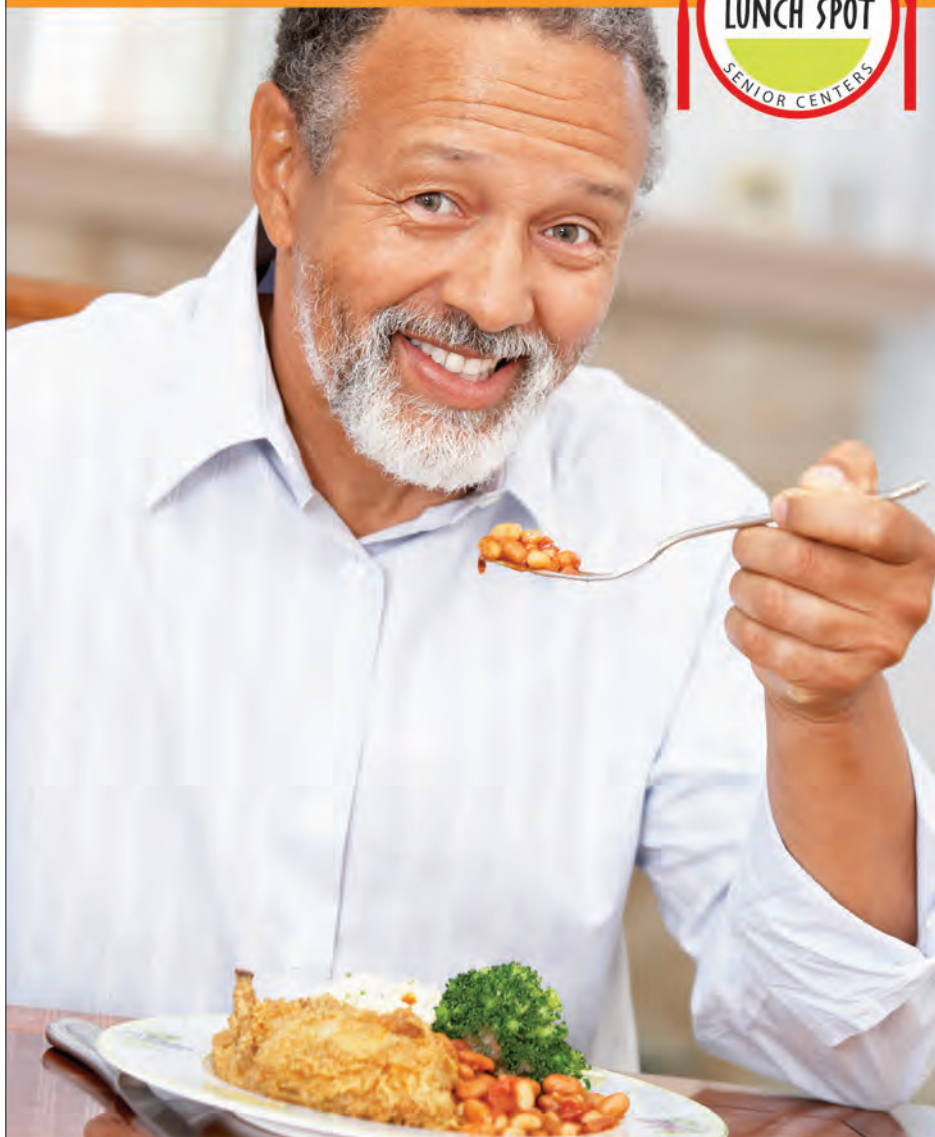
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Recipe Box

Enjoy sweet, savory holiday recipes

The holidays are right around the corner; and with them, come plenty of comfort foods and sweet treats. Whether joining a holiday party or entertaining at home, here are some sweet and savory recipes that are sure to be a hit.



Cheddar Ham Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 cups potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup carrot, sliced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups 2% milk
- ¼ to ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 ½ cups ham, cooked and cubed
- 1 cup frozen peas

Directions:

In a large saucepan, combine the potatoes, water, carrot and onion. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook until tender, for 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in another saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour until smooth. Gradually add the milk, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in cheese until melted. Stir into undrained potato mixture. Add ham and peas; heat through.



Cranberry Pecan Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 tube (16 ½ ozs.) refrigerated sugar cookie dough, softened
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- ⅔ cup white baking chips
- ⅔ cup dried cranberries
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, combine cookie dough, pecans, chips, cranberries and vanilla. Drop by tablespoonfuls, 2 inches apart, onto ungreased baking sheets.

Bake until lightly browned, 10-12 minutes. Cool 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks. Store in an airtight container.

Source: Taste of Home

Retirement communities doing their part to reduce carbon footprint

By Kerith Gabriel

The residents of Roxborough's Cathedral Village are ahead of the times.

The entire 55-plus community recycles. They routinely pick up litter and have two in-house committees that work with organizations on sustainability and climate change.

The group made headlines in September, when over 50 residents stood in solidarity with students who spoke out during the nationwide Climate Strike series of protests, urging government leaders to do more to slow the rampant effects of climate change on a global scale. The work being done is admirable and on notice by a collective many would least expect.

"This affects us all," said Cathedral Village resident and activist Dennis Brunn, following the Climate Strike rally. "There's this misconception that we don't believe it to be true, or that we as a senior community simply don't care and that could be the furthest from the truth. It's important we let these kids know that we hear them and that we're just as worried about the fate of the planet as they are."

Brunn also knows that when it comes to energy consumption his generation shares much of the blame.

According to federal data, the energy consumption of residential communities, like Cathedral Village, is among the nation's highest. The data analyzed household energy usage from 1987-2009 and showed that Americans 30-54 use considerable amounts of energy, compared with younger Americans. It's assumed that most people within this age bracket are within family households, which could partially explain the spike. The spike then plateaus around 60, before ramping back up again after 70 – and keeps going up.

Residential communities, with their sophisticated HVAC systems for optimal climate control, mass-scale production of foods and inefficient equipment, are



energy guzzlers.

It's why many of these communities are also turning to "energy engineers" to run an audit of these buildings, assess and develop initiatives, or create an "energy management system" for the structures to conserve energy. These methods have proven to save residents significant money on energy bills in the process. Everything from switching to lower-energy and longer-lasting LED bulbs to installing new energy-efficient HVAC systems are the goal.

A recent report in McKnight's Senior Living examined a 244-resident community in Hamden, Connecticut, which consulted with "energy engineers to assess the community and develop a plan." According to the report, with the installation of lighting and heating systems, residents saw more than \$317,000 in annual energy savings. In the aftermath, the team created what they called a Conservation Committee, comprised of engineers, facility managers, maintenance staff members and concerned residents all looking to reduce their carbon footprint.

"We are aware that we're part of the problem, but I think we all are as a people," Brunn said. "[Here at Cathedral Village], we have another long-standing group called the Environmental Stewardship Committee, and they've been concerned about environmental issues. Their focus is on daily living, making sure the facility does its part to get rid of plastics, not using pesticides, stuff like that. It's a small part, but we're working to do it."

Kerith Gabriel is the communications manager at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.



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The history in your DNA

By Barbara Sherf

Last year, Anne Marie Townsend* decided to do a DNA test just for fun, and it opened up a chapter of family secrets she never anticipated.

After talking with a co-worker who had done a DNA test through Ancestry.com, Townsend was intrigued. So she decided to confirm her Irish heritage by sending a sample of her saliva in a tube to the company. While the test did indeed confirm her Irish roots, it also revealed something deeper. Townsend was contacted by a woman who was listed as “close family to first cousin” on the Ancestry.com website. That’s when she started sleuthing.

She chatted with her older brother and sister. All three siblings remembered a time growing up in the Logan section of Philadelphia when their mother was sent away for months because she was having a nervous breakdown – or so they were told.

Townsend’s mother and father are both deceased, so the siblings questioned their aunt. They suspected their mother had actually had gone away to have a child who was not conceived by their father. Shockingly, their suspicions were confirmed.

“This half-sister lives in Bucks County and does have a resemblance to my mother,” Townsend said. “She has not told her grown children yet, so we have not met her, but have corresponded by email. I now feel sad for my mother and can’t imagine how extremely difficult it must have been on her to keep this secret.”

Uncovering salacious family history through genealogy research is fairly common. Mary Lee Keane, who teaches genealogy classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Temple University and the Northwest Village Network, was not surprised to hear the story.

During a recent lecture at the Chestnut Hill Library, Keane shared what she has learned about DNA testing. She sent away for her own DNA reports from five testing services and received very different results.

“There are complex algorithms they use, but they don’t take into account how people moved around and also how borders had changed throughout history,” Keane said, noting that while companies are trying to get the science right, there are continuing new developments in DNA testing. “I took five tests in part because I knew the results would be different, and I hoped that in aggregate



they would give me an accurate picture, which they did.”

Linda Maslin, of Blue Bell, knows this all too well. Maslin took a test through the DNA testing company 23andMe.com five years ago. Surprisingly to her, the results revealed very little of her Italian heritage. The company recently revised her results based on its updated algorithm, which is the result of more people having been tested.

“After the first test, I just simply discounted DNA testing because we had oral history in our family noting our Northern Italian heritage,” Maslin said. “The follow-up test did hit the mark, but really I paid for something I already knew.”

There is an important lesson to be gleaned from these experiences. “If you have older relatives, talk to them now because you don’t know if they will be here tomorrow,” Keane said.

She shared some surprising statistics on how widespread DNA testing has become. According to a report published in MIT Technology Review, more than 26 million people have done some sort of DNA testing. 2019 was a record year for sales in the industry. Over the next two years, it is estimated that more than 100 million people will have been tested.

All of the testing raises not only paternity issues, but also concerns regarding

the use of DNA information within the medical and insurance communities.

“I can see one thing that will happen down the road and that is genomic testing will become the norm,” Keane said. “The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 was passed so that companies with 15 or more employees cannot discriminate against you based on your genetic information, but what if you work for a smaller business? Once this information is out there, there is no good way to get it back.”

Keane said in the future an individual may be able to do DNA testing of an ancestor if they have an envelope or stamp that person licked. She noted that costs can range from \$55 to \$99 for a basic test. More intensive gene testing can cost \$199 or more. Some companies are now offering VIP services with a quick turnaround and provide experts to talk to about the results, which can be confusing and unexpected.

In the case of Townsend, her half-sister wants to pick the right place and time to tell her grown children, but is open to meeting her half-siblings. “We all want to meet her when the time is right and not a minute sooner,” Townsend said. “It has to be on her terms.”

Author and speaker Barbara Sherf captures the stories of businesses and individuals.

**Last name has been changed*

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Health Brief

Older adults benefit from exercise

When it comes to heart disease, the numbers tell a sad story. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the top cause of death for both men and women in America. Over 600,000 people die of heart disease in the United States each year and well over 700,000 will experience a heart attack. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) adds that this severely affects adults 65 or older in large part due to the physical makeup and evolution of the human heart over time.

We all know that even routine exercise can stave off the possibility of a heart attack from occurring. But according to an October study from the Canadian Journal of Cardiology, older adults actually benefit more – both physically and psychologically – from exercise than young adults. It was also noted, however, that this same demographic may be one of the least represented.

One prevailing theory is that physicians aren't as likely to refer older adults to rehabilitation centers or even encourage them to be physically active, since medication often trumps therapeutic means of staying active. Make no mistake, if you're an able-bodied individual, the impact that regular exercise can leave on the body is immense. Forget the obvious, like the loss of weight and lower blood pressure – both of which are direct benefits on the heart – but it's been shown to drastically ease stress, boost morale and heighten sexual function given the improved oxygen efficiency.

So how did scientists land on this research?

They followed the effects of exercise on more than 700 people over a three-year-period who had received a 25-session cardiac rehab program in Dijon, France. Subjects were divided by age – under 65, 65 to 79, and 80 and older – tested each one for any physical or psychological issues before conducting the study.



Keren Perez

Scientists discovered that although all participants improved within weeks, the ones with the greatest physical and psychological impairments from the beginning were the ones who benefited the greatest from the program. Some initial steps to get started:

- Get your heart checked by your doctor, to ensure that it's healthy enough for exercise.
- Based on your evaluation, determine which mode of exercise works best for you.
- Consider getting a heart-rate monitor that can evaluate in real time the stress your heart is going through before, during and after exercise.

This new research proves that carving out time now for exercise may just add a bit more time to your ticker.

Sources: CDC, NIA, Canadian Journal of Cardiology.

Crossword

Geographic

Solution

The solution can be found on page 8.

Across

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| 1 Shepard forte | 21 Biblical brother | 40 Animal revered in ancient times | 49 English forest |
| 5 Business | 22 Insects | 41 Sycophant | 52 Bumpkin |
| 10 Boat, of sorts | 23 Slapstick props | 42 <i>Bus Stop</i> playwright | 53 Nigerian native |
| 14 Excellent | 24 Discomfort | 43 At no place | 56 Timberland tracts |
| 15 Belonging to truss inventor William | 26 Songs | 45 City in Ohio | 60 Of grandparents |
| 16 Hipbones | 29 Inhuman | 47 Command: arch. | 61 Regions |
| 17 Occurs to | 32 French friends | 48 Punctilious person | 62 Particles |
| 20 Understanding | 33 Tropical animal | | 63 Confederates |
| | 34 Travel term | | 64 Simpletons |
| | 36 NY locale | | 65 Celebes ox |

Down

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| 2 Knowledge | 13 Young boys | 31 Dialect | 50 Be footloose |
| 3 Shortly | 18 Spinnaker | 33 Show surprise | 51 Colorless |
| 4 Vote | 19 Metals workers | 35 Gulf of ___ | 52 Canadian Indian |
| 5 Old Greek city | 23 Elegant | 37 Rival of 5 Down | 53 Lake near Erie |
| 6 <i>The War of the ___</i> | 24 Garden flower | 38 Digits | 54 Western city |
| 7 Mil. misdemeanor | 25 Italian city | 39 Ocean fish | 55 Greek peak |
| 8 Home | 26 A large pasture: Afric. | 44 Water ___ | 57 Game |
| 9 Compass pt. | 27 Violently | 45 La ___ | 58 With caution or pay |
| 10 Adriatic port | 28 A Beatle | 46 Helper | 59 Narrow inlet |
| 11 Came to rest | 29 Grass or oar | 48 Requests | |

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