Sarasota & Manatee

Today's Senior America

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Senior Friendship Centers

[Sarasota, FL] **Senior Friendship Centers** and national multimedia company Growing Bolder introduces the nation's first senior-center Longevity Club in Sarasota, FL. Its first monthly meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 9, at 1:30 p.m. at 1888 Brother Geenen Way. The program will use research, real-life stories, and group activities to help older adults challenge limiting beliefs about aging, discover new possibilities, and build meaningful connections.

The initiative comes as new research challenges the assumption that physical and cognitive decline are inevitable with age. A March 2026 study by Yale University researchers, published in the peer-reviewed journal Geriatrics, found that 45.15% of adults 65 and older experienced improvements in cognitive function, walking speed, or both over up to 12 years. Researchers also found that participants with more positive beliefs about aging were more likely to experience improvement.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the findings are particularly relevant in Sarasota County, where 38.8% of residents are 65 or older, compared with 22.8% statewide. The World Health Organization also estimates that one in two people worldwide holds ageist attitudes toward older adults, which are associated with poorer physical and mental health, social isolation, and reduced quality of life.

Developed by Growing Bolder and sponsored by Uber, Longevity Club is a monthly lifelong-learning, personal-growth, and social program designed to turn research on healthy aging into everyday action. Each meeting includes a 20- to 30-minute video featuring inspiring stories of ordinary people challenging traditional expectations of aging, along with expert insights, guided discussions, downloadable workbooks and activities that encourage participants to explore new interests and remain engaged between sessions.

Cont page 6

The Pops Orchestra of Bradenton and Sarasota is proud to announce that it has received a $10,000 grant from *The Exchange in Sarasota, Florida.*

The Pops
Music You Love
Musicians You Know

The Exchange's continued generosity has allowed The Pops to continue providing engaging and accessible music experiencesfor audiences across the Sarasota-Bradenton region and beyond.This partnership reflects the community-oriented missions of both organizations and a commitment to strengthening arts and culture inour local area.

"We are incredibly grateful to The Exchange for its continued investment in Sarasota's arts community," said Dr. Robyn Bell, Managing and Artistic Director of The Pops Orchestra. "The support of their board of directors, staff, donors, and customers allows organizations like ours to create exciting experiences, bring people together through the arts, and continue serving our community."

Cont page 7

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POETRY CORNER

Invent Your Happiness

If life isn't the way
You want it to be
Try this out
And you will see

If life is unromantic
Invent some romance
Picture yourself sharing
A beautiful dance

Someone is not the way he should be?
Instead of fighting
Imagine the kindness
Between you and he

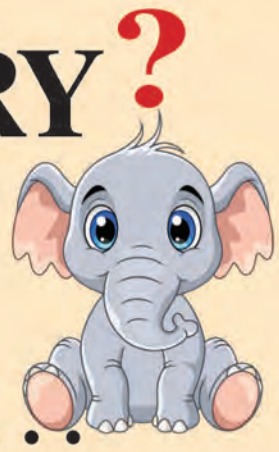
Life is full of stress
Invent some happiness
Find one little joy
In each passing day

Imagine a world
The way it should be
Where people are
Happy, intelligent and free

If you never see it that way
How will it happen
For us someday?

By Elyse Van Breemen

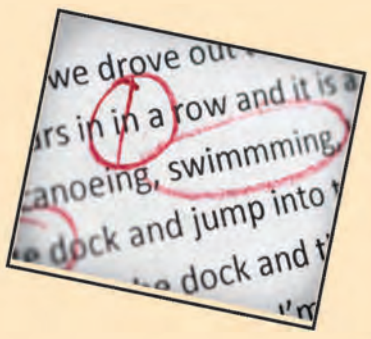
IF MEMORY SERVES ME WELL...?



by Jean Mlincek

Right about now, I wish I were an elephant. Why? Because an elephant never forgets – or so a TV commercial says. Me? I'm starting to forget what I forgot, like car keys, or why I went into the kitchen. Or where the heck are the glasses that are sitting on top of my head.

I consulted Google. It said the saying was an exaggeration. Supposedly, they can forget or "misremember." Huh?? However, they have the best memory in the animal kingdom. I no longer desire to be an elephant with huge floppy ears. I have enough trouble dealing with a big nose.



Hmm. Where was I? Oh, yes. I was concerned about my memory loss. Most of us, young and old, might have a brief moment of memory loss, but some of us fear not remembering how to spell a word or two (surprise/surprize) means we are on the verge of Alzheimer's or dementia – two highly publicized and feared memory issues today. I wonder sometimes if all of this attention on Alzheimer's and dementia don't exacerbate our fears – unnecessarily.

I think 30. I started logging all the words I couldn't spell when texting. It was scary. But…when I simply enjoyed my correspondence, it did not cause me to stagger at the thought of needing memory care. I mean, even my 93-year-old grandma never said, "Oh Lord, I couldn't remember how to spell 59 words today" and she knew where everything was – including her false teeth. Sure, she did suffer memory loss towards the end, but none of us stressed over it. Truth is, we all forget. It is part of the aging process.

I am not making light of dementia or Alzheimer's – a dread diagnosis for anyone, but I think we need focus on the fact that our memory has "served us well" over many decades.

As a teen, I babysat an 8-year-old who could rattle off baseball data that was out of the park. He was able to tell me, from memory, every stat for every player on a given team – including runs batted in, batting average, homeruns, hits, stolen bases, etc.

We memorized phone numbers of family and friends vs. relying on cell phones. We were able to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Gettysburg Address without drawing a blank. We knew our social security number and driver's license number – all without looking. We created memories that have stayed with us for more than half a century. Moms never forgot when dear hubby forgot wedding anniversaries. (Perhaps not a good thing?)

Most of my generation can tell you the name of all their teachers from elementary school through high school and memorable events associated with them. These bits of memory were not clutter. No, if memory serves me well – and it does – they are the best things in our lives and add joy to today's mundane world.

Jean Mlincek is a freelance writer residing in St. Petersburg, FL

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Less Mercury in Flu Shot Than in Can of Tuna

DEAR DR. ROACH: How much mercury is safe? *A.C.*

ANSWER: The chemical element mercury exists in three forms: elemen-tal mercury, which is the kind in ther-mometers; inorganic mercury, espe-cially mercuric chloride; and organic mercury, including methyl and ethyl mercury. All of these have toxicities, but the types of toxicities are different for each, and the safe level depends on which type it is.

Elemental mercury is dangerous pri-marily when it is inhaled, which occurs mainly in occupational settings. Acci-dental swallowing of the small amount of mercury in a thermometer has very low toxicity, but I still don't recom-mend it. Inorganic mercury is seldom a problem, as it is almost never used these days in the U.S. and Canada. Most products containing this form of mercury have been banned. Methyl mercury is the major concern for consumers, as this is found in fish. It accumulates in the environment, and tends to be worst in larger fish, which eat the smaller fish and over their life-time accumulate the methyl mercury, which was formerly used as a fungicide. The Environmental Protection Agency warns an average-size person not to exceed 70 mcg per day of meth-yl mercury: Below this dose, toxicity is unlikely. This translates to two to three servings of fish per week, but no more than one serving of highest-risk fish for methyl mercury per week. High-risk sources include most tuna, halibut and snapper.

Ethyl mercury is significantly less toxic than methyl mercury, as it is removed from the body more quickly.

There is no EPA recommendation for ethyl mercury levels. Ethyl mercu-ry has been used as a preservative in vaccines, but it has been removed from all childhood and most adult vaccines. It is still used in some flu vaccines — the ones in multidose vials: Single-use vials do not need a preservative. The amount of ethyl mercury in a flu shot is less than the more dangerous methyl mercury found in a can of tu

Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your work requires increased effort during the next few days. But it all will pay off down the line. Things ease up in time for weekend fun with family and/or friends.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your genuine concern for others could prompt you to promise more than you can deliver. It's best to modify your plans now before you wind up over-committed later.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A situation that seems simple at first glance needs a more thorough assess-ment before you give it your OK. Dig deeper for information that might be hidden from view.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Careful: Right now, things might not be quite what they appear. Even the intuitive Crab could misread the signs. Get some solid facts before you act on your suspicions.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Your energy levels are high, allowing you to complete those unfinished tasks before you decide to take on a new project. A social invitation could come from an unlikely source.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) You might think you're helping, but unless you're asked for a critique, don't give it. If you are asked, watch what you say. Your words should be helpful, not hurtful.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your attempt at mediating dis-putes might meet some opposition at first. But once you're shown to be fair and impartial, resistance soon gives way to cooperation.

SCORPIO (October 23 to Novem-ber 21) Go ahead. Reward yourself for helping settle a disturbing workplace situation. On another note: A person-al relationship might be moving to a higher level.

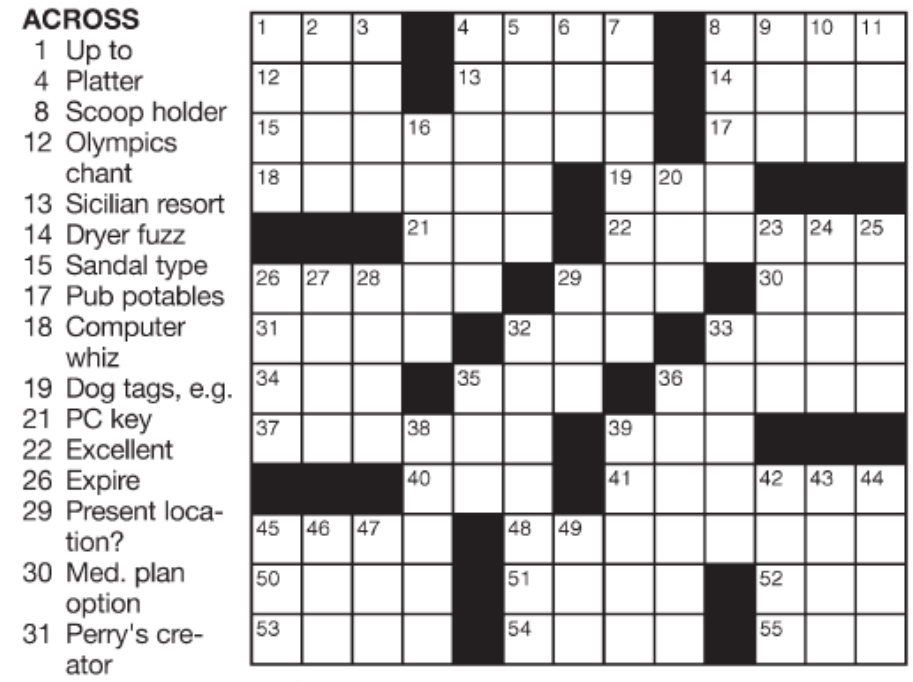
SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A sudden change of heart by a colleague might create some momentary uncertainty. But stay with your original decision and, if necessary, defend it.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Rely on a combination of your sharp instincts along with some really intense information gath-ering to help you make a possibly life-changing decision.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to Febru-ary 18) Instead of worrying if that new person in your life will stay or leave, spend all that energy on strengthen-ing your relationship so it becomes walkout-resistant.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A sudden financial dry spell could reduce your cash flow to a trickle. But by conserving more and spending less, you'll get through the crunch in good shape.

BORN THIS WEEK: Your ability to keep secrets makes you the perfect confidante for friends, family and co-workers.



ACROSS
1 Up to
4 Platter
8 Scoop holder
12 Olympics chant
13 Sicilian resort
14 Dryer fuzz
15 Sandal type
17 Pub potables
18 Computer whiz
19 Dog tags, e.g.
21 PC key
22 Excellent
26 Expire
29 Present location?
30 Med. plan option
31 Perry's creator
32 — Aviv
33 Hotel worker
34 From — Z
35 "Science Guy" Bill
36 Segments
37 Kanye West's music
39 Moonshine vessel
40 Japanese sash
41 Narcotic
45 Volition
48 Sound of hoofbeats
50 Tom Joad, for one
51 First-rate
52 Onassis nickname
53 Marries
54 A deadly sin
55 Moment

DOWN
1 Clump of grass
2 Capri, e.g.
3 Secular
4 Sully
5 Cove
6 — -Cat
7 Domed building in Washington D.C.
8 Purse fastener
9 Tin Man's need
10 SSW opposite
11 UFO crew
16 Stage
20 Ten, in Dijon
23 "— she blows!"
24 Skip
25 Spacecraft compartments
26 Wife of Jacob
27 Intro studio class
28 Fall into a soft chair
29 Spelldown
32 Not out of the ordinary
33 Wizardry
35 San Francisco's — Hill
36 Thing on a string
38 Bagel features
39 Unites
42 Regrettably
43 Rent
44 Grand tale
45 Dazzle
46 White House nickname
47 Cover
49 Baseball's Gehrig

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. MEASUREMENTS: How many dry quarts are in a peck?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What's the name of the island where the Statue of Liberty stands?
3. MUSIC: Which composer is known as "The Waltz King"?
4. GEOMETRY: What is a three-sided polygon called?
5. ASTRONOMY: What is it called when three celestial bodies are arranged in a straight line?
6. TELEVISION: How many Huxtable children were in the long-running "The Cosby Show"?
7. MOVIES: What's the name of the town in the "Halloween" horror movie series?
8. SCIENCE: What does the acronym FM stand for?
9. LITERATURE: Which famous nov-el begins with the line, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way"?
10. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What color is alabaster?

Answers

1. Eight
2. Liberty Island
3. Johann Strauss II
4. A triangle
5. Syzygy
6. Five
7. Haddonfield, Illinois
8. Frequency modulation
9. "Anna Karenina"
10. White

— Weekly SUDOKU —

Answer

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

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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

Cats Can Hide Illness Symptoms, So Be Aware

DEAR PAW'S CORNER My cat Sisko became very unaffectionate a few days ago. He hid under the bed or crouched in the corner of the living room and refused to cuddle. Then I noticed when he sat in the litter box that he meowed as if he was in distress. I called the veterinarian,and they had me bring him right in.

Turns out that Sisko had a urinary tract infection He's doing fine now, but I wanted to tell my story so that other readers will know that a sud-den behavior change in their cat could be a medical problem. urt W., Parsippany, New Jersey

DEAR KURT: Thank you for shar-ing! You did absolutely the right thing: You noticed a sudden change in your cat's behavior, kept a closer eye on his activities and litter habits, and contacted the vet's office to share your obser-vations and get advice.

Cats are very secretive about their health. It's an instinctive behavior that helped their ancestors hide from pred-ators. So it is common for owners not to notice when their cat is experienc-ing pain, such as a sore tooth or an ill-ness like a urinary tract infection.

While the occasional hairball epi-sode isn't a cause for concern, there are some symptoms that should prompt a call to the vet for an appointment.

— Your cat acts withdrawn, sits hunched over, refuses to play or be petted.

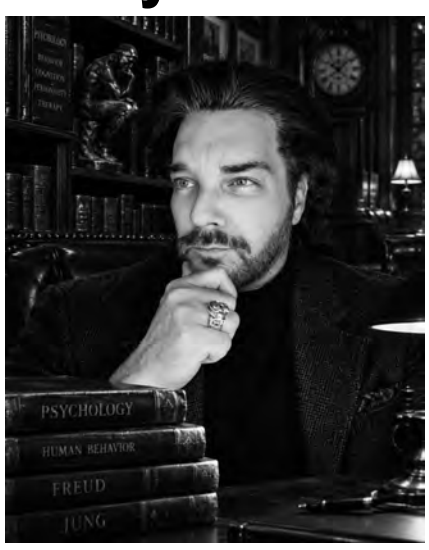
— Eating or drinking habits change.

— Litter box behavior changes: meowing, missing the box or notice-able diarrhea.

— Grooming problems develop, or they have clumpy fur or irritated skin.

— Physical symptoms: eye or ear discharge, strange breathing, unusual vomiting, lethargy or drooling.

Why I Don't Argue Anymore



"The average American adult reads at about a seventh-grade level, which is why newspapers and magazines are written for it. Reading level isn't intelligence, and plenty of sharp, wise people read plainly. But the statistic points to something I've seen for myself: for many people, intellectual growth stops somewhere along the way, no matter how many years they spent in school. Schooling gives people credentials.

It doesn't guarantee curiosity, discernment, or the willingness to question their own conclusions.

The result is that adults often carry the emotional maturity of adolescents. It shows in arguments without reason, in online comments, and in the childishness, tantrums, and violence we see everywhere. We recognize that behavior in a 13-year-old and extend patience. When we see the same behavior in someone who is 30, 40, or 60, we explain it away, when it is the same thing with greater consequences.

This matters because so many of us let other people's opinions dictate our lives. If you hand your self-worth to someone who stopped growing at 14, you've given it to the wrong person.

I rarely argue anymore. When I was younger, I saw the childishness and felt a need to correct it. Not now. If someone wants to hold forth on beliefs they've never examined, I let them. At my age, why would I argue with a 14-year-old?

Does this apply to everyone? No. Wherever there is an average, there are people at both ends of the curve. Some never stop learning and keep sharpening their judgment their whole lives. Others fall well below even the adolescent level, with less reasoning, less self-awareness, and less restraint than a typical 14-year-old. A wise person knows how to sort it all out: where to take advice, from whom to accept correction, and whom to ignore."

Wiley Lowe - Daytona Beach

Hometown Football Legends Unite Gators and Seminoles Fans to Support Manatee County's Future Leaders Organized by Adrian McPherson and Reggie Davis, the rivalry football celebration will benefit the nonprofit academy founded for local students.

BRADENTON/SARASOTA, FL, — Former legendary football players Adrian McPherson and Reggie Davis are bringing The Legacy Weekend Tailgate & Watch Party to Manatee County on Friday, November 27, 2026. The inaugural community event at Sutton Park in Palmetto will bring Florida Gators and Florida State Seminoles fans together for a day of football, food, and family activities with a purpose that reaches beyond the game.

McPherson, a Southeast High School standout who then played at Florida State University in the NFL and Arena Football League, and Davis, a Southeast High School and University of Florida player, are the organizers of The Legacy Weekend Tailgate & Watch Party. They are bringing the event to the community where their own journeys began as another way to give back.

McPherson founded RI5E Leadership and Sports Academy, a nonprofit that develops students through academics, athletics, and leadership development. Its goal is to help young people become confident, civic-minded future leaders on and off the field. Proceeds from The Legacy Weekend will benefit RI5E.

For McPherson and Davis, the event connects the excitement of Florida's longstanding football rivalry with the responsibility they feel toward the local community and its next generation. Legacy Weekend gives families and fans a chance to celebrate together while supporting opportunities for local students.

The event will feature the University of Florida vs Florida State football game on the big screen, food trucks, activities for fans and families, and opportunities to meet former players. Fans of both teams and all ages are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Event details:

What: Legacy Weekend Tailgate & Watch Party

When: 2pm, Friday, November 27, 2026

Where: Sutton Park, Palmetto, Florida (1006 6th Street West, Palmetto, FL 34221)

Event Details: www.thelegacyweekend.net

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/thelegacyweekend

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/thelegacyweekend

About RI5E Leadership Sports Academy

Founded by Adrian McPherson, RI5E Leadership & Sports Academy empowers youth and young adults through leadership development, academic support, financial literacy, workforce preparation, mentorship, athletics, and exposure to educational and career opportunities. Learn more at ri5elsa.org.

Senior Friendship Centers

Cont from page 1 **Senior Friendship Centers**

"We're thrilled that Senior Friendship Centers is the first senior center in the U.S. to join Longevity Club," said Marc Middleton, Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and founder and CEO of Growing Bolder. "SFC is a national leader in empowering older adults to live active, healthy, and joyful lives. Longevity Club builds on that mission by helping members see aging in a new light—not as a time of loss and limitation, but as an opportunity for passion, purpose, and possibility."

For more than two decades, Growing Bolder has shared stories of people embracing life's possibilities regardless of age or circumstances. Middleton calls this the "Someone Like Me Effect," which is the idea that seeing someone of a similar age or background pursue something once thought impossible can inspire others to reconsider what is possible in their own lives.

"When it comes to growing older, you can create the experience however you want — as a burden or as a joy," said Virginia Stephens, a gerontologist and Senior Friendship Centers volunteer. "That's why I'm excited about the Longevity Club. I believe the education and experiences it offers can help us live healthier, more balanced and joyful lives as we age."

The new club builds on Senior Friendship Centers' existing programs in lifelong learning, wellness, and social connection, offering participants another opportunity to stay curious, form friendships, pursue meaningful interests, and find purpose in everyday life.

As Middleton emphasized during a recent Sarasota appearance, purpose does not have to mean extraordinary achievements. It can be as simple as trying something new, meeting a friend for breakfast, or having something to look forward to tomorrow.

HOW TO JOIN: Longevity Club will meet every second Monday of the month at 1:30 p.m., beginning November 9, 2026, in Room C at Senior Friendship Centers' Sarasota campus, 1888 Brother Geenen Way, Sarasota, FL 34236.

Interested participants may sign up at the Sarasota campus front desk or contact Erika at (941) 556-3265.

For more information about Senior Friendship Centers, visit www.friendshipcenters.org or call (941) 955-2122.

For media inquiries, please contact jvelarde@friendshipcenters.org or tcardwell@friendshipcenters.org

Continued from page 1

About The Pops Orchestra of Bradenton & Sarasota

Since its founding in 1975, The Pops Orchestra of Bradenton & Sarasota has produced critically acclaimed musical attractions for enthusiastic audiences of all ages. As one of the top performing arts groups in a unique, culturally rich community, The Pops Orchestra attracts full-time residents, Suncoast Snowbirds, and vacationers to its concerts, proving to be a cultural and economic asset to the Great Bradenton and Sarasota communities. Directed by the dynamic conductor Robyn Bell, the 65-piece orchestra consists of many of the community's finest professional musicians, community music makers, music educators, and high school and college music students, reflecting the diversity of its audience and patrons. The annual concert season features a diverse range of musical genres, including patriotic, Broadway, Hollywood, jazz, big band, jukebox, Motown, and holiday selections. In addition, The Pops Orchestra performs community concerts to honor veterans, welcome international sporting events, and feature outstanding local young musicians through its annual summer camp. The Pops partners with other are aarts organizations to provide concerts for special occasions in the Suncoast region. Local and national guest artists frequently join The Pops Orchestra, bringing additional energy and excitement to the stage. Each concert season is designed to entertain, invigorate, and project The Pops Orchestra's passion and enthusiasm for popular-style music, featuring something for everyone. ThePopsOrchestra.org

About The Exchange

The Exchange is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization with a central purpose of supporting and enriching a variety of programs for local cultural organizations. Funds for this purpose are realized through a consignment operation in which merchandise is accepted either for donation or for consignment to be sold in its store. Grants and scholarships derived from the earnings of this store are used to enrich and strengthen arts-related programs and to encourage creativity in organizations and individuals throughout the community. Visit www.sarasotawex.com.

For more information, contact Elyza Wylder-Wilcox at Elyza@ThePopsOrchestra.org or 404-218-2478

Spirit Of MANATEE
MANATEE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Manatee Community Foundation Opens Nominations for 2027 Spirit of Manatee Awards

Community invited to recognize individuals and organizations making a lasting difference in Manatee

Manatee Community Foundation (MCF) is now accepting nominations for the 2027 Spirit of Manatee Awards, an annual celebration honoring the individuals, businesses, and organizations whose generosity, leadership, and commitment to service strengthen the Manatee community.

Local nonprofit organizations are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals and organizations whose contributions have made a meaningful impact. The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, December 4, 2026.

"The Spirit of Manatee Awards provide an opportunity to shine a light on the people and organizations who give so much of themselves to make our community stronger," said Yolanda Mancha, Interim CEO of Manatee Community Foundation. "Every day, individuals and organizations are making a difference, often without seeking recognition. These awards allow us to celebrate their generosity, dedication, and the lasting impact of their service."

Nominations are being accepted in five categories:

- Young Spirit Award: Recognizes an outstanding young person under 21 who demonstrates a commitment to volunteerism and service.
- Community Spirit Award: Honors a business, foundation, or service club making a meaningful impact through community support.
- Charles Clapsaddle Community Spotlight Award: Celebrates a nonprofit professional whose work strengthens the community.
- Leadership Spirit Award: Recognizes an individual or couple demonstrating exceptional generosity and community leadership.
- Mary E. Parker Lifetime Spirit Award: Honors an individual or couple whose lifelong commitment to philanthropy and service has made a lasting difference.

Award recipients will be recognized during the 2027 Spirit of Manatee Award Luncheon on Wednesday, March 3, 2027, at 11:30 a.m., at the Bradenton Area Convention Center, located at 1 Haben Blvd. in Palmetto.

The annual luncheon brings together community leaders, nonprofit partners, philanthropists, and supporters to celebrate the spirit of giving that makes Manatee a special place to call home.

Nonprofit organizations interested in submitting a nomination are encouraged to complete the nomination form before the December 4 deadline. Additional information, nomination forms, and a list of past award recipients are available at https://manateecf.org/nonprofits/spirit-of-manatee/.

The 2027 Spirit of Manatee Award Luncheon is proudly supported by Presenting Sponsor Milestone Financial Group at Morgan Stanley and Media Sponsor Bradenton Magazine.

About Manatee Community Foundation

Manatee Community Foundation connects the generosity of donors with the needs of the community to build a better Manatee County. For more than 25 years, the Foundation has been a trusted partner in philanthropy — bringing together individuals, nonprofits, businesses, and local leaders to address complex challenges and create lasting impact. Through strategic grantmaking, community leadership, and meaningful partnerships, Manatee Community Foundation strengthens connections and resources to help our community prosper. For more information, visit ManateeCF.org.

Everyday Hero Linda Burhans uses personal experience to support caregivers

Rick Elmhorst

Linda Burhans, a Pinellas County caregiver advocate, is using her experience caring for her mother to help others who are caring for parents, spouses and loved ones full time.

Burhans cared for her mother, Jo, during the last 18 months of her life as Jo faced stage four colon cancer.

“I was always in love with my mother, and I wanted to do the best for my mother,” Burhans said.

After her mother died, Burhans wrote a book about the experience called “Good Night and God Bless.”

Burhans now leads a monthly support group for caregivers, where participants share advice and talk about how to find resources.

She said caregivers often need both practical help and emotional support.

“Caregiving is not easy, and it takes a village,” Burhans said. “If I can help in any way with resources or just a shoulder, it’s so important.” Burhans said people began reaching out to her after her book was published.

“I just get telephone calls. Help, I don’t know what to do. Or can I come talk to you for a half hour?” she said.

In addition to the support group, Burhans hosts live-streaming conferences and a weekly talk show for caregivers on Tan Talk radio. One recent show featured an organizing expert discussing decluttering, including for people who may be downsizing or moving into a community.

Burhans calls herself “The Gal Who Cares for Caregivers with Love, Laughter and Lessons Learned.”

She said one of her main goals is helping caregivers understand they are not alone.

“Many times when you are in a caregiving experience, all of a sudden your friends and sometimes family, even your church people, go away because they don’t handle it that well,” Burhans said.Helen Woznick, a support group member, said caregivers often neglect their own needs while helping someone else.

They put their needs on the back burner,” Woznick said. “And it’s important that you have selfcare, and it’s not being selfish.” Burhans said her advocacy began with her love for her mother, and that connection remains central to her work.
“And now she’s in heaven, and I’m still talking about her, and she loves that,” Burhans said.

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VETERANS ★ POST ★

Stolen Valor, Stolen Benefits

How, one wonders, does something like this happen? How does a civilian collect $146,000 in VA benefits for allegedly having been wounded and held a prisoner of war in Iraq when he's never even served in the military?

It's one thing to walk around with fake military medals pinned to your chest or to tell tall tales in a bar, but how does all the rest slip by? And for so long?

The story: A civilian has been charged with taking education, health and disability benefits after he claimed to be a Marine who was wounded in combat and held as a prisoner of war in Iraq. He claimed to have been wounded in an IED (improvised explosive device) attack and was then captured. He claimed he'd been awarded the Purple Heart, Prisoner of War medal and several others.

To apply for all those benefits and cash, he would have needed a DD214 as well as other paperwork. To keep from delaying the handing out of benefits and cash, the VA lets veterans use their own documents when they sub-mit applications.

Sometimes people lie and turn in fake documents. Over time he turned in a pile of those fake documents, including the DD214 and certificates for his stack of alleged medals.

But that's where this criminal's story should have fallen apart. I can see accepting a veteran's initial documentsto get him started on the bene-fits, but to let the fraud go on for five long years? Surely someone could have looked up the details to verify the Purple Heart and prisoner of war status? Did no one bother to check to see if he'd even been in the military?

Eventually the criminal got greedy and applied for educational benefits on top of the cash he received each month for his alleged physical injuries, receiving monthly subsistence paymentsand payments to the university. If that wasn't enough, he then applied for an increase in the disability payments. How is it no one spotted this fraud long ago?

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Walking Is Beneficial

We need to move more. They call it an inactive lifestyle when we get very little exercise and do a lot of sitting. Whether we're sitting in front of a computer, or watching TV, or even riding in a car for long hours, sitting is sitting, and too much of it isn't good for us.

Here are just a few medical problems that can come from too much sitting around: diabetes, high blood pressure and osteoporosis. And stroke and high cholesterol and the list goes on.

Are you ready to get moving yet? It's easy to start. Walking can be one of the most beneficial forms of exercise, and the benefits can be life changing: stronger bones and muscles, lower blood sugar, improved quality of sleep and much more.

Ask your doctor how many steps you need to take each day and how many minutes of exercise you need per week because believe it or not there is a risk of too much exercise. The often-quoted 150 minutes of exercise per week or 10,000 steps per day might not apply to you.

If you doctor adheres to the stan-dard advice (thousands of steps per day), fear not. The internet is loaded with suggestions and videos aimed at seniors, and it's a good place to start for walking ideas.

If you live in a building with an elevator, stop it one floor below where you normally get off. Walk up the rest of the way.

If you have a big box store near you, use the aisles as your personal track, or make a circuit of the store once or twice.

Leave your car at the other end of a parking lot.
If you're just now beginning a walk-ing program, start small but set attainable goals. And as always, when you exercise, stay hydrated!

By Carolyn Shockey

This is the month traditionally set aside to give thanks, but think how dif-ferent life would be if giving thanks was a daily practice. Why does it seem so much easier to focus on all the negativity? Gratitude is an attitude and an ac-ceptance; that is just as easy to do, but we need to think in a more positive way for it to work. Certainly, life is not easy. No matter who we are, we get our share of heartbreak and bad luck. Often, they are unavoidable. Yet if we look at those situations as learning or self-improvement lessons and pay attention, we may be able to see something positive as we look back. That has been the case with the black clouds in my life. I've been able to see the good that came from those experiences, although I couldn't see it at the time. I am now more able to see my disasters as experiences lead-ing to good somewhere down the line. It is much easier to except the downs knowing that this too shall pass, and it always does.

Being grateful multiplies. The more we are grateful, the more we have to be thankful for. That I can still put my feet on the floor in the morning, even though it's painful, is something to be grateful for. It helps get us through the day when we accept the process of aging and are grateful for what we have, choosing not to focus on the downers.

If we force ourselves to become grateful, it will help us stop trying to control outcomes. It is the key to unlocking positive energy in life. For many years, I've been consciously doing a "thank you" every time I go to the store parking lot, and it seems like I'm always able to find a spot close to the store, which is wonderful, because walking long-distances is a struggle these days.

Look at gratitude as putting a plug into a wall outlet, getting energized through connecting to our source and all that is available to us.

Gratitude turns what we have into more. It helps us make sense of our past and brings us peace and vision for tomorrow. All we need to do is to start today, to be grateful for who we are and what we have. It may help to make a gratitude list to realize there is a lot to be grateful for. It encourages us to see our cups as half full and not half empty.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

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Detail of sculpture of Aztec god 'Quetzalcoatl'

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
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By Javier Morales
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in Florida

This past October 12th was National Savings Day. This day serves as an important reminder to plan for your financial future.

Social Security is a vital part of any financial plan. We have online tools to help you understand your potential Social Security benefits and how they fit into your financial future.

You should periodically review your Social Security Statement using your personal my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Your Statement is an easy-to-read summary of the estimated benefits you and your family could receive, including potential retirement, disability, and survivors benefits.

Our Plan for Retirement tool in your personal my Social Security account allows you to check various benefit estimate scenarios. You can compare the effect different future earnings and retirement benefit start dates have on your future benefit amount.

Please let friends and family know they can take steps to improve their financial knowledge by signing in to their secure my Social Security account. If they don't have an account, they can easily create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

BRIAN E. CORLEY
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS, PASCO COUNTY

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2026 General Election
November 3, 2026

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LAYOUT 2: WALK-IN SHOWER

MAXIMUM INCOME LIMITS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE:	1	2	3
INCOME LIMIT AT 60% AMI	$48,180	$55,020	$61,920

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*Income restrictions apply. Applicants must qualify under affordable housing program guidelines. Rent levels vary based on household income and eligibility requirements.

LAYOUT 1: TUB & SHOWER

MAXIMUM INCOME LIMITS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE:	1	2	3
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