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Wednesday, July 15, 2020 » MEDIANEWS GROUP

KOREAN WAR

Not forgetting

What veterans saw during 'forgotten war' remains with them

By Ron Devlin
rdevlin@readingeagle.com
@rondevlinre on Twitter

Edward H. Specht was 21 years old when he found himself at the epicenter of a bitter conflict on the Korean peninsula that has come to be known as America's so-called forgotten war.

Others may have forgotten it, but 90-year-old Ed Specht certainly hasn't.

The things he witnessed on the firing line with an artillery unit of the Army's 7th Infantry Division during that war, which began 70 years ago today, remain fixed in his mind.

He still remembers dodging artillery fire along the 38th Parallel, the latitudinal demarcation line between North and South Korea.

Indeed, as Specht recalls it, his artillery unit was at times north of the 38th Parallel, essentially behind enemy lines.

But Specht's most vivid memories are not of exploding enemy artillery shells but of the agony he witnessed as a chaplain's assistant.

In blackout conditions, with only a sliver of light seeping through the "cat eyes" covering his Jeep's headlights, Specht drove a



Korean war veteran Edward H. Specht, 90, who served in the Army, with his Ambassador for Peace medal outside the Keystone Villa at Douglassville.

chaplain who ministered to wounded and dying in military hospitals.

The images of what he experienced remain locked in his memory.

During a recent telephone interview from his apartment at Keystone Villa at Douglassville, Specht was asked what he thinks of when he looks back to 1952-53, his tour of duty in Korea.

His reply: "I don't look back. I try not to."

Conflict or war

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops invaded South Korea in what would become a three-year conflict.

The U.S. came to the aid of South Korea, led by Syngman Rhee. The Soviet Union and China backed

the communist government of North Korea, led by Kim Il-sung, grandfather of Kim Jong-un, the country's current leader.

President Harry Truman referred to U.S. involvement in Korea as a police action.

The U.S. never declared war, and its involvement was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Pentagon's "Service and Casualties in Major Wars and Conflicts" reports that 33,652 Americans died in battle and another 3,262 died of illness in Korea.

An estimated 3 million to 4 million people, mostly civilians, died during what is often referred to as the Korean conflict.

Conflict or war, it technically has never ended.

While the U.S. and China



Edward H. Specht as an artillery specialist in the Army's 7th Infantry Division during the Korean war.

reached an armistice that stopped the fighting on July 27, 1953, the U.S. retains an estimated 20,000 troops in South Korea.

An ongoing powder keg, North Korea has amassed the fourth largest army in the world. In recent years, it has tested missiles, perhaps

capable of carrying nuclear warheads, powerful enough to possibly reach the shores of the United States.

VETERANS » PAGE 2



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COURTESY OF PAUL A. MILLER

Paul A. Miller was a gunner aboard the Navy cruiser USS Juneau during the Korean war.



BEN HASTY — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Korean war veteran Paul A. Miller in his Hamburg home with photos and medals from his time in the Navy.



COURTESY OF BILL LUTZ

Oley American Legion member Bill Lutz adorns a veteran's grave in Oley-Spangsville Cemetery with an American flag in May 2019 in preparation for Memorial Day.

Veterans

FROM PAGE 1

Continual flare-ups

William Lutz of Oley Township was stationed at Camp Hovey, 15 miles from the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, in 1968-69.

A mortar specialist with the 7th Infantry Di-

vision, Lutz was in country when North Korea's People's Army troops crossed the DMZ in an attempt to assassinate South Korea's president, Park Chung-hee, on Jan. 20, 1968.

A few days later, North Korea seized the USS Pueblo, a Navy intelligence vessel, in what has become known as the "Pueblo incident." One crew member was killed and 82 others

captured.

Lutz, who spent much of his 14-month tour of duty on high alert, recalls numerous incidents in which U.S. and South Korean troops were wounded or killed in skirmishes with the North Koreans.

"Korea wasn't called a war, but there was a lot of action," said Lutz, 72, a retired farmer. "In my mind, it's a never-ending war."

VETERANS » PAGE 3

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BEN HASTY — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Korean war Veteran Edward H. Specht, 90, who served in the Army, with his Ambassador for Peace outside the Keystone Villa at Douglassville.

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BEN HASTY — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Korean war Veteran Edward H. Specht, 90, who served in the Army.

Veterans

FROM PAGE 2

Deep emotional wounds

Doug and Liz Graybill, founders of Vets Making a Difference in Reading, have seen firsthand the lingering emotional scars inflicted by the Korean war.

Graybill, 68, who served with the Marine Corps in Vietnam in 1970-71, said the suffering troops endured in Korea is often underestimated.

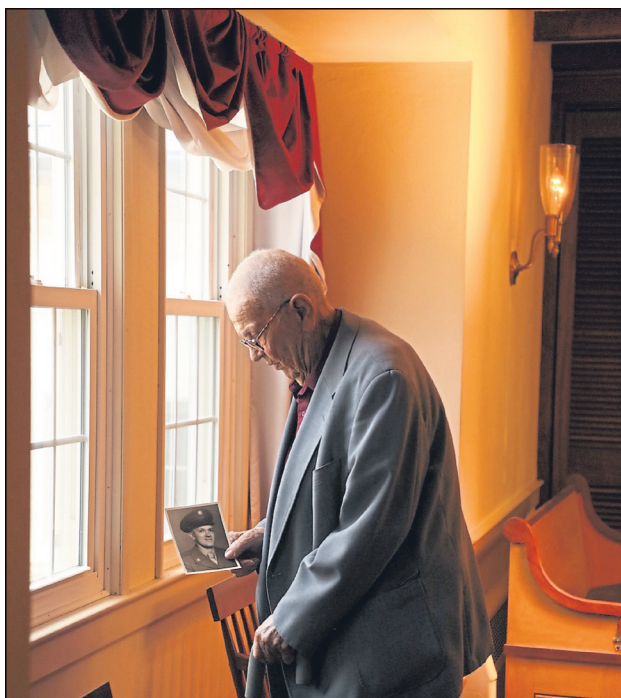
During the month-long Battle of Chosin Reservoir in November and December 1950, for example, temperatures reportedly plummeted to 36 degrees below zero.

"These guys suffered, and they never got the recognition they deserved," said Graybill, whose nonprofit social center provides services to veterans in a rented space at Hope Rescue Mission.

The Graybills recently arranged for the burial of Korean war veteran Raymond W. Wunderly at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in Lebanon County when no one claimed his body.

With the Korean war coming less than five years after the end of World War II, many of its veterans are in their 80s and 90s.

The Russel M. Butterweck Detachment of the Ma-



COURTESY - EDWARD H. SPECHT

Edward H. Specht was 22 years old when he was sent to Korea with the Army's 7th Infantry Division. Now 90 and living in Douglassville, he recounted his experience on the 70th anniversary of the start of the war on June 25, 1950.

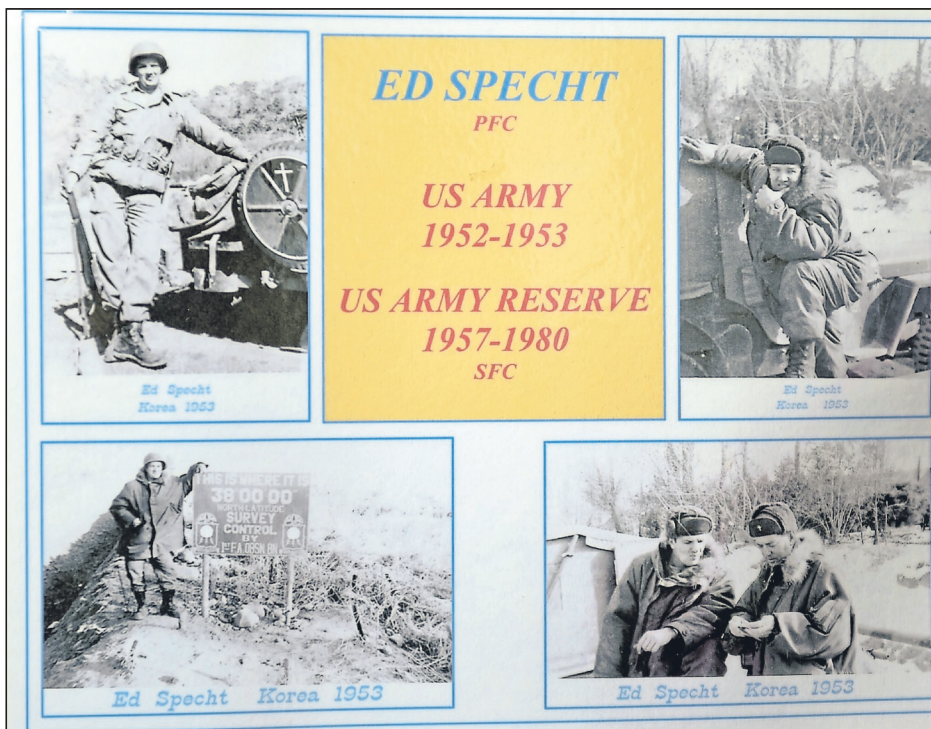
rine Corps League until recently had only three Korean war veterans: Herbert Hummel of Blandon, Albert Beadle of Reading and Robert A. Berns, formerly of Fleetwood. Berns died last year in Lititz.

Korean war veterans Ralph Schaeffer, 89, Grover Weir, 88, and Joseph Gregg, 91, reside at Birdsboro Lodge, a veterans personal care home in Exeter Township. All were stationed at bases in the U.S. during the war.

In recent years, with fewer vets able to attend, the Marine Corps League discontinued annual services at the Korean War Remembrance monument in Reading's City Park to mark the end of the war.

The Combined Veterans Council of Berks County now organizes the service, scheduled for July 27 at the monument.

'Made me into a man'



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EDWARD H. SPECHT

Photos of Edward H. Specht during his Army service in the Korean war.



COURTESY OF EDWARD H. SPECHT

Edward H. Specht as an artillery specialist in the Army's 7th Infantry Division during the Korean war.

When Paul A. Miller of Hamburg quit school and joined the Navy at 17, little did he know that about a year later he'd be present at the start of the Korean war.

Miller was a gunner on the USS Juneau, a Navy cruiser, when they poured over the border, as he puts it, on June 25, 1950.

The Juneau patrolled an area south of the 38th Par-

allel to prevent enemy landings and conducted the first bombardments on June 29 at Bokuko Ko. On July 2, the Juneau sank three enemy torpedo boats near Chumonchin Chan.

"When we pulled out the bodies, they were Chinese troops," recalled Miller, 88, who fed ammo to the ship's 40 mm guns during the attack.

The whole thing happened so fast, Miller said, there was no time to be scared. He just did his job.

Looking back, 70 years later, Miller marvels at how fate placed a kid from little old Hamburg on the precipice of history.

"I was a cocky kid, and it knocked the cockiness out of me," he confides. "It made me into a man."



Hue H., Nurse

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SENIOR LIFE

The Heritage of Green Hills celebrates start of summer with 'snowball' fight

Heritage of Green Hills

To celebrate the summer solstice, residents at the Heritage of Green Hills in Cumru Township, Berks County, engaged in an epic silly summer snowball fight.

Armed with homemade yarn "snowballs," mask-wearing seniors at the healthy life plan community pelted a "crazy penguin" (Well By Design Director Cheryl Anderson dressed in a costume) zooming around on the back of a truck.

Madi LaBelle, a server in the community's food and beverage department, assisted the penguin in throwing snowballs back at the residents.

"While staying safe is our top priority at The Heritage of Green Hills, we understand that having fun is an important part of wellness," Anderson said. "It's great to get outside, get active and get in some healthy laughter, too!"

After the socially-distant mock battle ended, the snowballs were repurposed for use in a treasure hunt. Anderson transformed the balls of yarn into hedgehogs by adding noses and googly eyes, and hid them around the campus for residents to find in the coming days.



COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE OF GREEN HILLS

Cheryl Anderson, dressed as a penguin, and Madi LaBelle, holding the "snowballs," before the "snowball" fight.



COURTESY OF HERITAGE OF GREEN HILLS

Cheryl Anderson, Well by Design Director, takes part in a "snowball" fight in a penguin costume at the Heritage of Green Hills. With her is Madi LaBelle, a food server, who threw the "snowballs" back at the residents.

The Heritage of Green Hills is a healthy life plan community that provides independent living apartments and villas as well as personal care and secure memory care suites for seniors. The community's Well by Design(SM) pro-

gram focuses on 8 Dimensions of Wellness — a body, mind and spirit philosophy that enables residents to lead rich, fulfilling lives. For more information, visit www.HeritageOfGreenHills.com.



COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE OF GREEN HILLS

A hedgehog hidden for the treasure hunt.



COURTESY OF HERITAGE OF GREEN HILLS

The balls of yarn used as "snowballs" are transformed into hedgehogs for residents to search for in a treasure hunt.



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GARDENING

A secret garden

Muhlenberg Township couple creates a backyard hideaway.

By Kathy Folk
kfolk@readingeagle.com
@kfbick on Twitter

In 1983, Martha Richardson and Barry Kyper were both young teachers, living and working in the Muhlenberg School District in Berks County.

They enjoyed the extra connection that gave them with their students.

Then they realized there were times when they were needed to need some privacy. And that's when the magic started to happen at their little corner property in Temple.

A secret garden was born. "In order to create a private area, Barry enclosed the back porch, put in a brick patio and designed and built a fence with two gates," Richardson said. "I've designed the plantings. Each year it gets better. We now have a bubbling fountain with water hyacinth and bamboo growing in it. The Japanese red maple we potted 10 years ago has outgrown its pot several times."

Richardson said she and Kyper spend as much time as they can in their little hideaway, which often surprises guests when they walk through the gate and see it for the first time.

It has been an especially welcoming space during the coronavirus pandemic.

"In the evening we light candles and have solar powered bulbs hanging from the eaves of the garage," she said. "Crickets serenade us. No masks, no social distancing necessary."

COVID-19 made getting the backyard space ready this year more of a challenge, especially when it came to the potted plants that dot the patio.

"We're older and high risk for COVID-19," Richardson said. "Finally Barry

bought some ferns. They were in bad shape, but we've watered and fed them, and they're flourishing. He bought a few flowering plants at a local garden store, and I discovered some wonderful plants sources through Amazon.

"Herbs galore and succulents arrived in perfect condition and have filled our pots. I usually plant a lot of petunias and impatiens, but this year it was too late. Now when I go out to water in the morning, the aroma of thyme, sage, oregano, basil, dill and spearmint greet me."

Both Richardson and Kyper both find working in the garden to be relaxing. They also take a different approach to it.

"The patio plantings reflect the fact that I am basically lazy I," Richardson said. "I plant things that need very little care. And, of course, there's no weeding necessary when you plant in pots. I love succulents — they need almost nothing. I have a lot of pots of succulents that stay outside all winter. In spring I pick off the brown leaves, and green ones come right back up. Herbs, too."

"Barry is more industrious. He plants vegetables in the beds around the garage and the bed in the side yard — always too many tomatoes, but they are delicious. He also plants peppers and celery, and the lettuce he's cutting right now is wonderful."

Richardson said they are particularly happy with the success they've had growing the Japanese maple that's potted on the patio.

There also is a bubbling fountain that contains hyacinth and papyrus.

The couple doesn't ignore the space outside of the patio, either.

"It took years for the bor-

der beds around the house to fill in, but they are lovely now," she said. "The house was built in the first quarter of the last century, and we've tried to bring it back to the original colors of a craftsman-type bungalow. It's a work in progress, most of the work done by Barry."

As most gardeners will tell you, mistakes are part of the process. It was no different for Richardson and Kyper.

Trying to grow shade plants in pots that were exposed to full sun didn't go so well.

The several Labrador retrievers they've had over the years made the hosta bed on the patio their personal playground. They dug it, literally.

The patio is a haven for the couple throughout the seasons, each bringing its own type of wonder.

"We both love spring when we wake up the patio," Richardson said. "Barry plants tulips in the border beds and crocus all over the yard without telling me he's planted them. The early crocuses are delightful. He plants more every year, so the yard is gorgeous. Often, if we've had a late snowfall, the crocuses are blooming when the snow melts off of them."

In the summer, they watch fireflies and listen to the crickets. They also have a bat box and enjoy watching bats fly out of it in the evening.

"Fall is also a lovely time on the patio," Richardson said. "We light a chiminea and wear jackets to watch the early sunsets."

Their advice to would-be gardeners?

"Barry says, 'Get a shovel and dig in,'" Richardson said. "I say: 'Take it easy. Plant what you like, when you like, and leave plenty of time to sit and admire your work.'"



COURTESY OF MARTHA RICHARDSON

Morning glories around the light pole at the end of the front walk to the house. Barry Kyper designed the lamp, which is solar powered.



COURTESY OF MARTHA RICHARDSON

Hostas in the border bed in the front of the Muhlenberg Township home of Martha Richardson and Barry Kyper.

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SENIOR LIFE

Keeping physically and mentally fit eases aging process

Starting or maintaining a regular exercise routine can be a challenge at any age – and it does not get any easier as you get older, according to helpguide.org. You may feel discouraged by health problems, aches and pains, or concerns about injuries or falls. If you have never exercised, you may not know where to begin, or perhaps think you are too old or frail, and can never live up to the standards you set when you were younger. Or maybe you just think that exercise is boring.

While these may seem like good reasons to slow down and take it easy as you age, there are even better reasons to get moving. Exercise has shown to enhance mobility, flexibility and balance; reduce the impact of illnesses and chronic diseases; improve sleep; boost mood and self-confidence; and to do amazing things for the brain.

According to “Why Exercise Protects Your Brain Health and What Kind is Best” in The Cleveland Clinic, recent studies suggest that the activities you do to improve your body also benefit your brain.

“We know that physical exercise, and aerobic exercise in particular, is very beneficial for maintaining brain health, even in people who are at risk for developing dementia and Alzheimer’s disease,” says neuropsychologist Aaron Bonner-Jackson, Ph.D., of The Cleveland Clinic.

“You can make a major difference in how your brain is functioning,” he said.

Staying active is not a science. Just remember that mixing different types or physical activity helps both to keep workouts interesting and improve your overall health. The key is to find activities you enjoy. An article in Harvard Health calls them the four building blocks of fitness.

These are:

Balance - Maintains standing and stability, whether you are stationary or moving around. Examples are yoga, Tai Chi, and posture exercises.

Cardio - Uses large muscle groups in rhythmic motions over a period of time. Examples are walking, stairclimbing, swimming, hiking, cycling, rowing, tennis and dancing

Strength and Power Training - Builds up muscle with repetitive motion using weight or external resistance from body weight, machines, free weights, or elastic bands.

Flexibility - Challenges the ability of your body’s joints to move freely through a full range of motion. This can be done through stationary stretches and stretches that involve movement to keep your muscles and joints supple and less prone to injury.

Getting active is one of the healthiest decisions you can make as you age, but it is important to do it safely. Talk to your doctor to get medical clearance before starting any exercise program. Consider workouts that best fit your lifestyle and health conditions. Listen to your body and make sure you do not hurt yourself or make yourself feel worse. Stop exercising if you feel pain or discomfort. If needed, seek medical attention. Start slowly and build up steadily, especially if you have not been active in a while. Build up your exercise program little by little.

And remember: You can do it!

Promoting Senior Wellness is provided by The Hickman, a Quaker-affiliated licensed personal care home in West Chester. This column was written by Hugh Bleemer, Outreach and Admissions Counselor. For more information, go to www.thehickman.org.



Tai Chi at Wernersville Encore Tai Chi instructor Jan Gyomber teaches a class Oct. 15, 2018, for older adults at the Berks Encore in Wernersville.



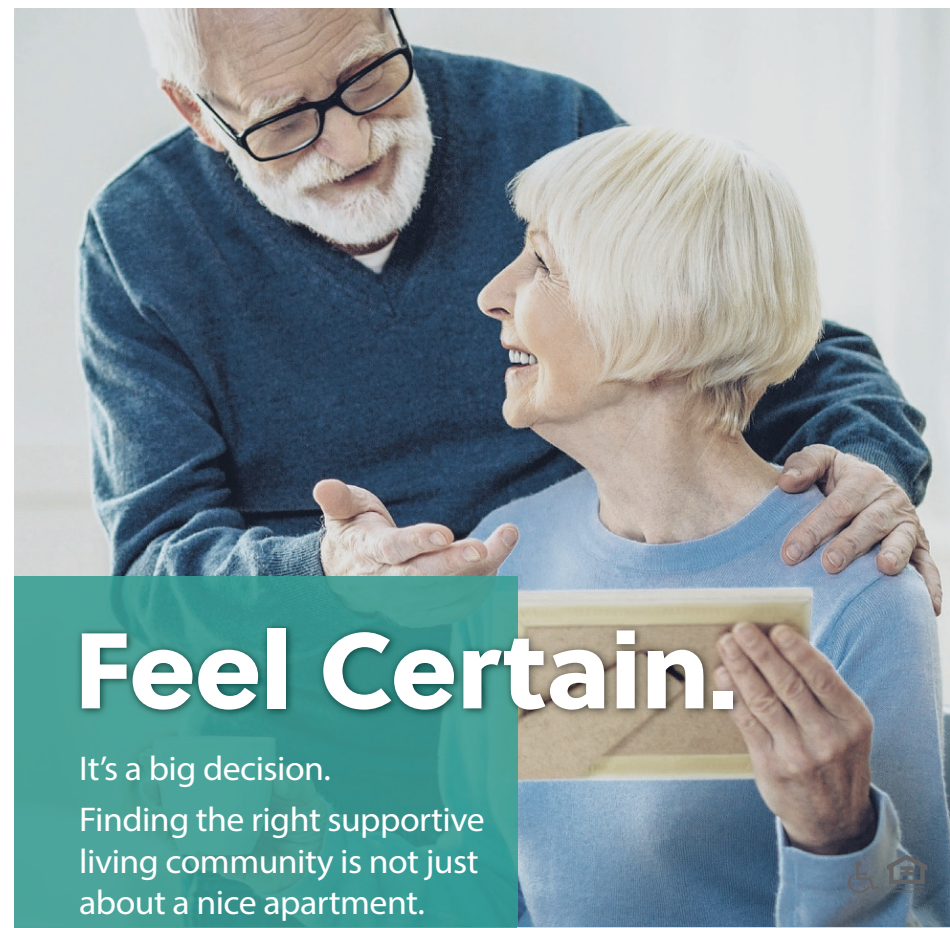
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SENIOR LIFE

Spot of T: Rainbow connection

By Terry Alburger

What is it about rainbows that can bring an instant smile to our faces, often inspiring songs and paintings, and that sends people clamoring for their cellphones and cameras in hopes of capturing the beauty of the moment?

Is it just the fact that they are indeed beautiful, their bright colors resplendent against an oft-darkened sky? What is the attraction?

I believe that the best part of a rainbow is that it usually follows a difficult time, a storm. It signifies that things are looking up, literally.

After rain and thunder and lightning, many times as the sun starts to break through the clouds, you will catch the colorful arc in the sky.

Rainbows are everywhere. As I was thinking of my topic for this week's article, I was literally surrounded by rainbows, in all shapes and forms: a child's song, a painting, T-shirts, in the news these days, and I was even asked to make a rainbow birthday cake for my granddaughter!

I also came across rainbows being referenced in the Bible, in Genesis 9:13: "I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

But more impressive for me are the rainbows that have been present of late in the sky, following some quick-moving and powerful summer storms. I choose to take this as a sign of hope in a troubled world. There will always be rainbows, no matter how overwhelming the storms that surround us.

If you think about a rainbow, the structure, the image, you likely know that it is formed by drop-

lets of water, and through reflection, refraction and dispersion of light, ultimately you see the full spectrum in all its multi-colored splendor.

This parade of colors, which includes red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, seem to form a bridge across the sky, a path to better times.

The proverbial pot of gold, associated with rainbows in Irish lore, has become the subject of many songs, books and film. It has come to symbolize the prizes which await us if we are patient enough to weather our personal storms.

What strikes me about rainbows is the harmony. Each color blends into the next in perfection. Each color is important. It takes all those colors to make a complete rainbow, and all colors matter. None is more or less important than the others. All are vital to the wholeness of the rainbow, and all are beautiful. I wonder, can we learn a thing or two from this marvel of nature?

Things are certainly challenging these days. It is easy to be disheartened and want to shut down from the outside world. My advice is to build your rainbow. Perhaps simple acts of kindness, extensions of generosity and simply trying to understand someone else's point of view can all contribute to building your rainbow and ultimately finding your pot of gold in the end.

If we can all work together, what a wonderful world it would be. Next time you see a rainbow, remember the promise of better times and smile. It's the first step toward building your own rainbow.

Terry Alburger is the life engagement coordinator at Brittany Pointe Estates in Lansdale, Montgomery County.



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SENIOR LIFE

Couple reacquainted with senator they met in '92



William and Carol Rice, pictured above with Sen. Earl Baker in 1992, won a raffle to have lunch with

the senator who represented Chester County from 1988-1995. These raffles were held occasionally, and

the Rices won in 1992 and had this photo taken in the Capitol in Harrisburg. The couple did not see Baker

again until they all moved to Wellington at Hershey's Mill, in West Chester. Carol Rice surprised

Baker with the photo and the letter he sent to them after their Harrisburg visit. Baker says one of the nice

things about the senior living community is getting reacquainted with old friends.

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WINDOW WALKING

There are many good reasons that mall walking is an extremely popular and pleasant pastime, especially among senior citizens. Mall walking builds camaraderie with like-minded individuals and facilitates opportunities to forge new friendships. Many malls open early for mall walkers, and although the shops are closed, some concession kiosks are often open. Walkers enjoy the flat, safe surface on which to amble, the proximity to rest rooms, and the pleasure of a clean water fountain. The location is safe, and in bad weather walkers can enjoy the glamour of window after window of tempting merchandise to buy, revel in the color of creative marketing, and soak in the "sunlight" effect provided by lots of good old electric lights.

With an aging population, it's becoming more important to find ways to make exercise easy, free, and accessible. Malls have started to take interest in being much more proactively involved in public health. Representing a long-time Quaker tradition, BARCLAY FRIENDS in Chester County upholds the dignity and independence of each resident. **With Faith Woodward, Director of Admissions and Marketing at Barclay Friends—to learn more, please call 610-696-5211 or visit our website, http://bf.kendal.org/.**

SENIOR LIFE

Self-determination is changing elderly and disability care in the age of COVID-19

BrandPoint
The threat of COVID-19 in nursing homes and assisted living facilities has led elderly individuals and people with disabilities or underlying health conditions to seek safer administration of their care. For some, the most desirable place to receive ongoing services is in their own homes. According to the CDC, in the age of COVID-19, your home is the safest place to be. Why then should care be any different?

The concept of "aging in place" is not new, but for seniors — and people with disabilities or other long-term care needs — the idea of hiring and managing services to ensure you can remain at home, known as self-directed care, may seem too complex. It doesn't need to be. Understanding your rights, caregiver options and resources can provide the freedom to live life on your terms.

Why choose in-home services?

Self-determination was first recognized in law nearly 30 years ago. Regardless of age or ability, you can choose how to receive, manage and pay for long-term services.

Giving individuals freedom to make care decisions has far-reaching positive impacts. In 1990, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched an 18-state pilot program, finding that individuals with long-term care needs or disabilities experienced better health outcomes with self-directed home or community-based care options. Moreover, one study showed self-direction generating cost savings of 12.4% to 15.5% compared to traditional service arrangements.



Understanding your caregiver options can provide the freedom for seniors to live at home on their own terms.

ments. Proven health benefits have spurred support for self-directed programs nationwide, as self-directing participants are up to 90% more likely to be very satisfied with how they lead their lives.

Is in-home care safe?

Over a fifth of the deaths from COVID-19 in the United States are tied to

nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, with families becoming increasingly reluctant about their elderly loved ones going to nursing facilities. Home-based care can provide safe, stable and accessible services.

When conducted using precautions advised by health authorities, receiving support that allows you to remain in your

home is safer because it limits exposure that may otherwise occur in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Additionally, self-directed models have demonstrated little service disruption during state-mandated shutdowns while nursing homes and long-term care facilities are struggling to ensure adequate coverage. Self-direction has also

been shown to provide significant flexibility as individuals with disabilities can switch between agency-delivered and self-directed services at any time, while maintaining control of the budget to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE), a cellphone and an internet connection to facilitate telehealth. Further, with self-direction, you control associa-

tions with people outside of your household. This includes the potential to hire a qualified household member to assume the support role to further limit external contact.

How do you hire a family member or friend?

Today, more than one million Medicaid beneficiaries choose self-directed in-home and community-based services.

If you or a loved one have a trusted friend or family member who is qualified to provide in-home or community-based care, start by contacting the local health department or Medicaid office to determine Medicaid eligibility and assess the services needed. Once an assessment is completed, you or your loved one can inquire about self-directing services and proceed with hiring.

When self-directing services, the person receiving the services becomes a caregiver's direct employer. Enlisting a financial intermediary can help you ensure all administrative tasks, payroll and taxes are handled seamlessly. GT Independence, for instance, helps approximately 25,000 individuals in 11 states to manage in-home and community-based services through easy-to-use, accessible, online and mobile services that are 100% HIPAA compliant, allowing caregivers to focus on what really matters: the individual.

For valuable resources about integrating self-directed options into a personal care plan, visit Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD) or National Gateway to Self-Determination (NGSD).

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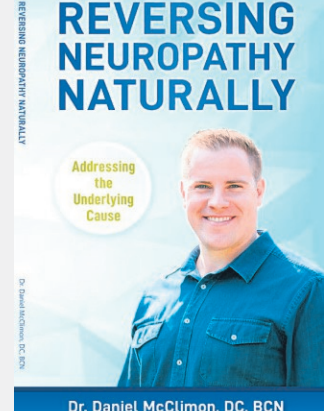
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SENIOR LIFE

Not Forgotten: Mahlon L. Fink leaves a legacy of love and patriotism

By Holly Herman
MediaNews Group

As time went by, Mahlon began to share his experiences as a U.S. Marine with his family and friends.

About 20 years ago, his son said, Mahlon began giving speeches, providing details of his life as a U.S. Marine for students in local schools and numerous civic organizations. He shared how he was wounded by shrapnel from an explosion in the war.

"He was recovering from his wounds when the war ended," Jeffrey shared during an interview this week in his Robeson Township home. "The war ended. He thought he was going to die."

Mahlon's legacy as a war hero will live on through his son Jeffrey; grandson, Bradley; and great-grandson, Ethan, all three U.S. Army veterans, and others in the community who were fortunate to hear his speeches.

The three are expected to participate in the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend this summer.

"My father-in-law was a patriot," said Kathy Fink, 69, Jeffrey's wife. "My father-in-law did what he was supposed to do."

Dale G. Derr, director of Berks County veteran affairs, said Mahlon was enthusiastically involved in a lot of community activities.

"I was inspired by him," Derr said. "When he would read a poem or a prayer it was truly inspirational. He was an educator. He made sure people would know about the past."

When Mahlon returned home from war, he devoted his life to June.

His affection for his wife was unconditional.

"What comes to my mind about the character of my grandfather is faithful," said Wendy Boyd, 42, of Shillington. "He was an amazing husband. He fell in love with my grandmother, and he had taken care of her, and fell in love with her all over again."

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COURTESY OF WENDY BOYD

The Fink family in the 1950s outside their brick home in Cumru Township. Mahlon, his wife, June, and children, Jeffrey and Kathleen shared lots of good times, sledding, bowling, playing games and more. Mahlon passed away on Feb. 27, 2019, at age 93.

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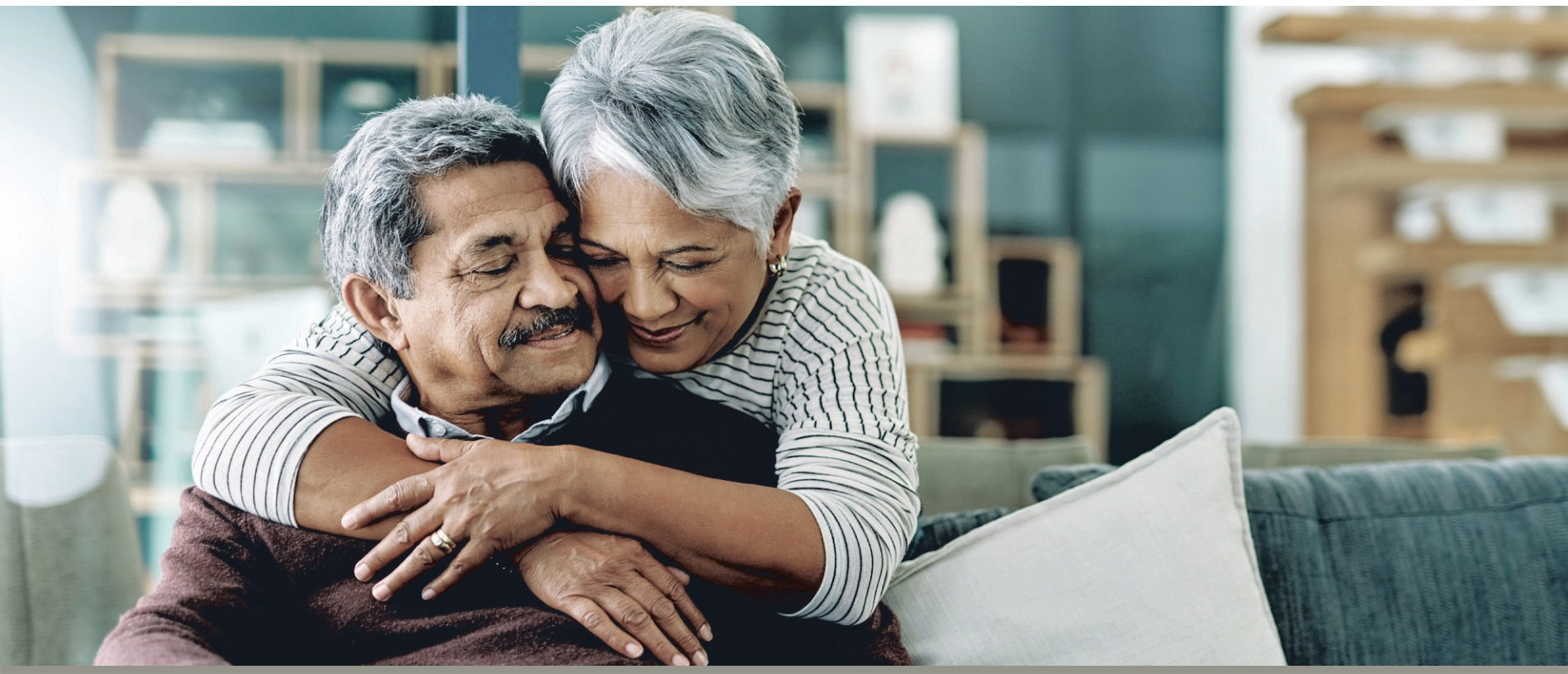
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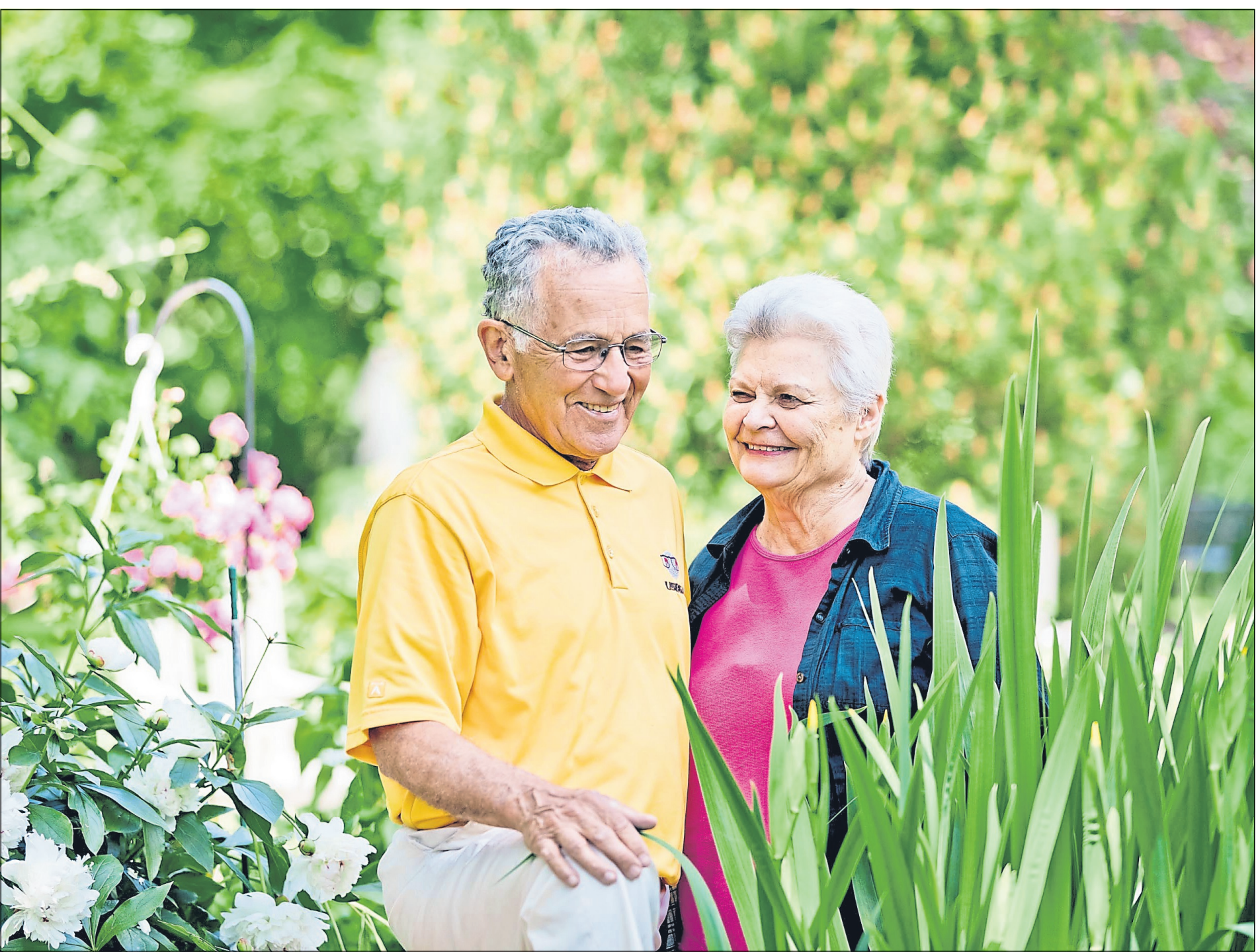


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SENIOR LIFE

Retired psychologist weighs in on why senior living communities are essential



COURTESY OF PARIS STERRERT

Paris and Joan Sterrett, residents at the Mansion at Rosemont, a HumanGood Community.

By Paris Sterrett

My wife if 50 years, Joan, and I, like most people, have

found life challenging over the past few months. However, because we live at a senior living community, it's

actually been less challenging than living in our former house.

As a retired counseling

psychologist in the Philadelphia area, I have reflected on the physical and emotional struggles, as well as the loss of lives due to this virus.

I am grateful for all of the medical professionals working tirelessly each and every day and am especially grateful knowing that just outside the door of our cottage are dozens of individuals who care deeply about our needs and interests, and treat us like family.

Yet every day I read a new depressing headline about the coronavirus as it relates to senior living communities and especially nursing homes. My frustration continues to increase at the fact that senior living communities like ours are being lumped into the same category as nursing homes that are taking care of our most vulnerable population.

In March 2019, my wife and I made the decision to migrate just a short 6.9 miles from Narberth to Rosemont, Montgomery County, where we found our new home at The Mansion at Rosemont. It was

one of the best decisions we ever made.

This community gives us the opportunity to continue enjoying everything we love to do, with the option to move to the personal care part of the community if our needs ever change.

In the midst of the pandemic, we have continued to stay busy despite practicing self-quarantining. I will admit, I miss socializing in the dining room and seeing our friends over a game of cards, but we, like most people, are safer at home than getting out and about and taking part in the many things we typically enjoy.

My wife is still keeping up with her exercise regimen with other residents — of course safely distanced — staying involved with her on-campus volunteer work as well as with her many local volunteer efforts including Habitat for Humanity.

I have been keeping my hands dirty in our beautiful raised gardens on the property, rehearsing for the lead part in “Macbeth” and trying to find small ways to

bring joy to the other residents, such as distributing American flags to all of the residents on Memorial Day.

At the end of the day, I find great comfort in knowing that my efforts to stay engaged, combined with the fact that there is an entire community we know are always present even if we don't see everyone all of the time, is reassuring.

For example, knowing a team of staff at every level is going above and beyond for us is exceptional. And of course knowing there are care professionals on-site “just in case” is beyond comforting.

In my 78 years, I have never witnessed a global health crisis like this, so my request is that we continue to focus on the positives of what senior living communities provide to older adults like us who are “62 and better.”

And take heart that the dedicated professionals working in these senior living campuses are doing everything they can to create a safe and engaging environment, protecting the residents they have come to love like their own family.



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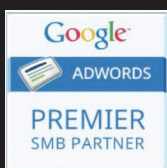


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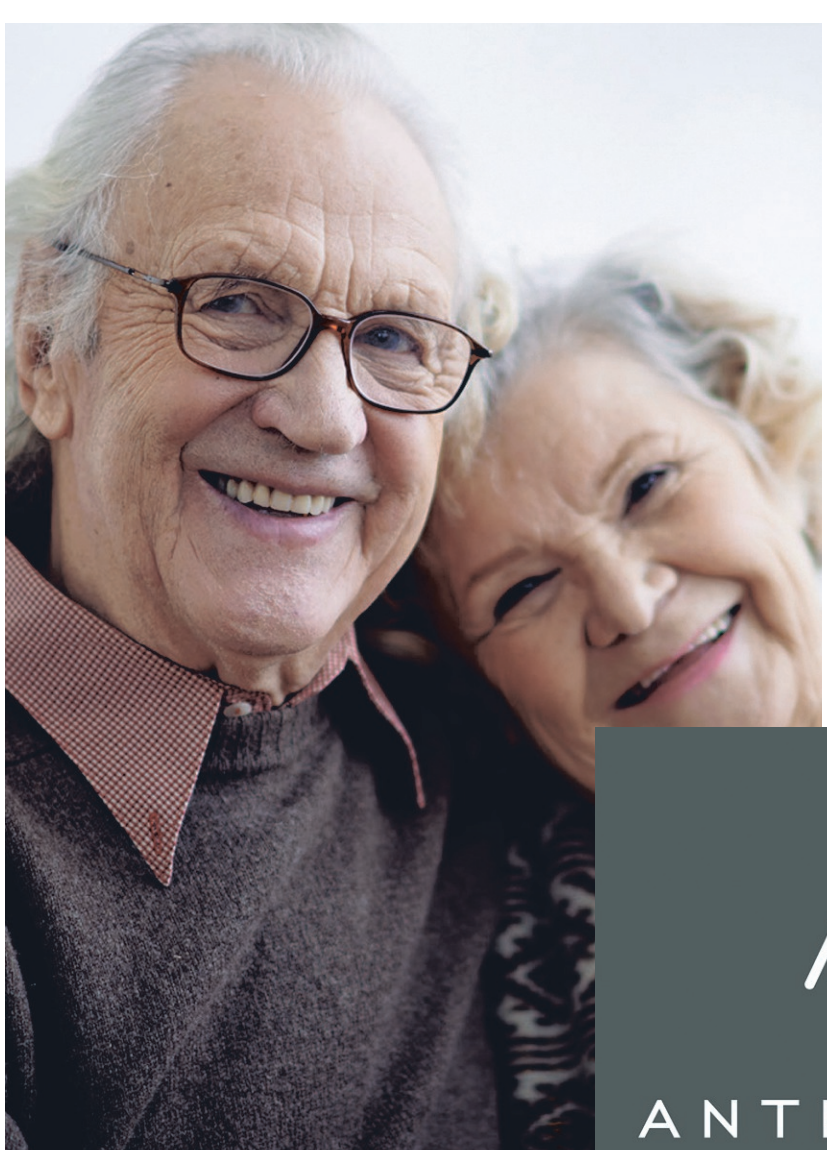
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