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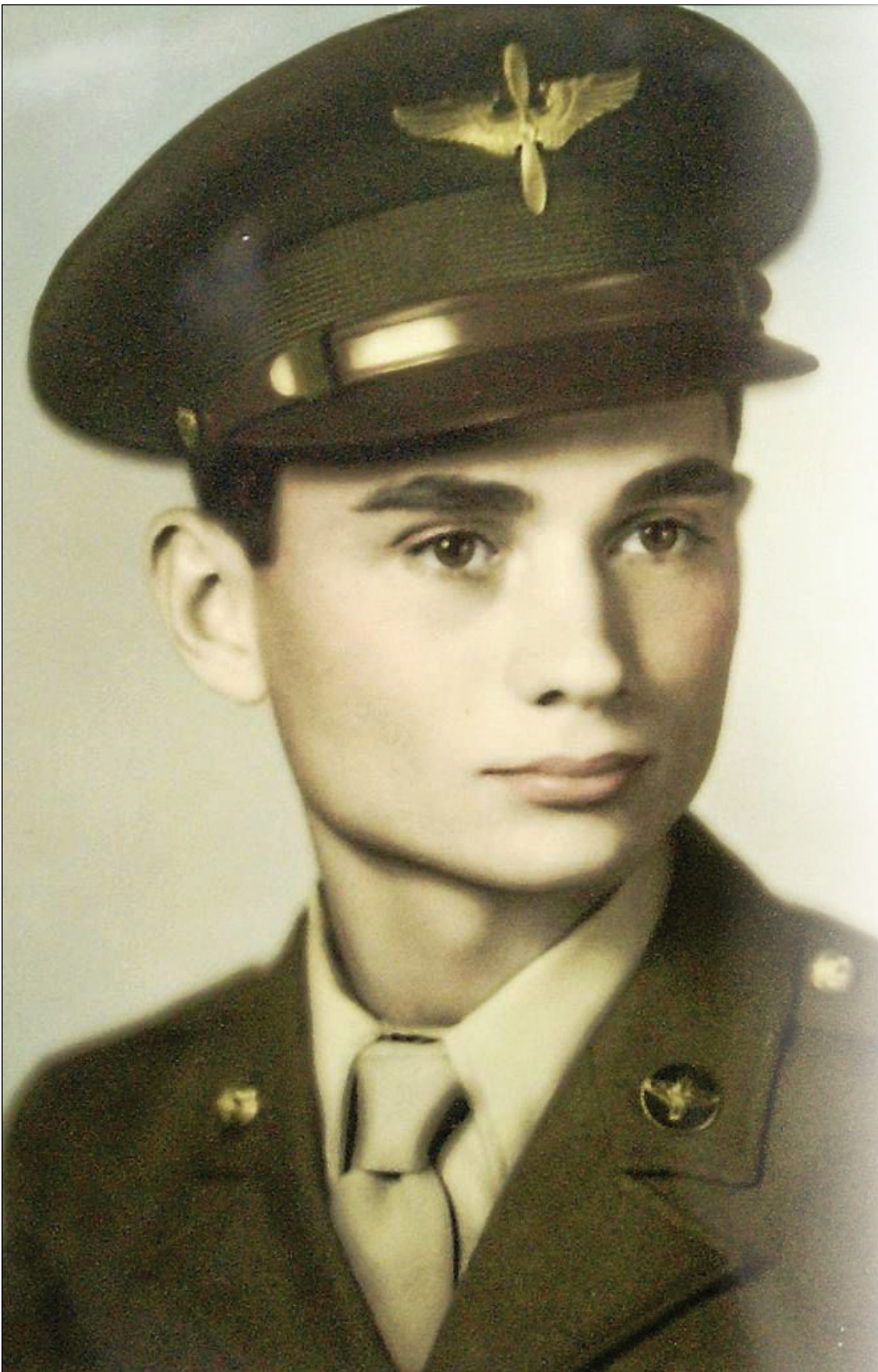


PHOTO COURTESY OF THERESA SELL

75 YEARS AGO

# THE LAST CASUALTY



MEDIANEWS GROUP FILE PHOTO

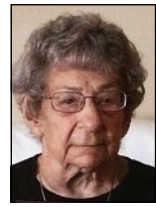
The headstone of Anthony J. Marchione in the old St. Aloysius Cemetery on High Street. Marchione was the last American to die in World War II.

## Sister recalls Pottstown airman who was the last American to die in World War II

By Evan Brandt  
ebrandt@21st-centurymedia.com  
@PottstownNews on Twitter

**POTTSTOWN** » For Theresa Sell, that day 75 years ago “feels like it was yesterday.”

That day was Aug. 18, 1945, and Japan had surrendered to the United States three days earlier, effectively ending World War II.



Sell

Sell, then Theresa Marchione, had celebrated “out in the street with all the neighbors” when the surrender was announced. It meant the war was over and her brother Anthony would be returning to the family home in the 500 block of King Street.

But war does not always play by the rules.

So it was that when Anthony Marchione finally came home from war, it was to be buried.

A gunner and photographer’s assistant with the Yotan-based 20th

LAST » PAGE 2



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# Last

FROM PAGE 1

Reconnaissance Squadron, Marchione had survived several combat missions. On the day he died, he aboard a B-32 aircraft that was attacked by Japanese fighters, despite the earlier surrender, as it took photographs over Tokyo.

He was struck in the chest by a 20 mm cannon round and earned the regretful honor of being the last man to die in World War II.

It was six days after his 20th birthday.

"He was such a good person," his sister Theresa, two years his junior, recalled recently in her home in Pottstown's North End. "He used to scrub the floor for my mother so she wouldn't have to."

Marchione graduated from Pottstown High School in 1943 and played the trumpet in the band.

His sister Theresa graduated a year later and woke up the day after her prom to discover that the Allies had landed in Normandy in the largest amphibious invasion in history, better known as D-Day.

Marchione, Theresa and sister Geraldine, five years younger, were the children of Ralph and Emelia Marchione, both Italian immigrants.

"My father was a shoemaker, and he had shops in the 400 block of High Street and on South Franklin Street," Sell said.

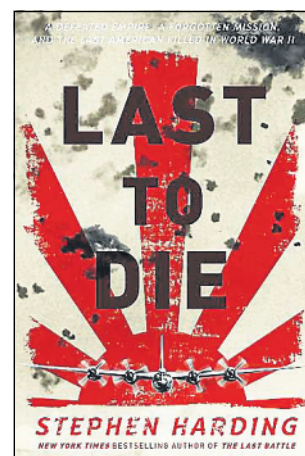
"We lived in the center of town, so we walked pretty much everywhere. And we went to the old Jefferson School on Beech Street and the junior high and we walked to them as well. It was a long way, but we didn't think much about it in those days," she recalled.

"Most of our childhood, we spent swimming in the Manatawny or playing in the playground or in the alley," said Sell.

When war came, Marchione joined the Army Air Corps on Nov. 20, 1943, with an eye toward becoming



The 20th Reconnaissance Squadron in front of their B-32 aircraft. Anthony Marchione, kneeling second from the right, was the last man to die in World War II.



factor in the final days of World War II.

His death three days after the Japanese had surrendered made for difficult decisions for the American command. The attacks faced by Marchione and his comrades, as well as others on the day before, forced generals to decide whether to treat them as unfortunate attacks by a few die-hard pilots unwilling to accept the ceasefire, or an indication that the war was not over.

General Douglas MacArthur eventually chose not to retaliate, preventing the possibility of prolonged war and far more casualties.

"Nobody wants to be the last person killed in any conflict and Tony's death would have been a footnote in history had it not been for the fact that his death came very close to restarting a war that most people assumed was already over," Harding told The Mercury.

It took four years for Marchione's body to be returned home to Pottstown and he is buried in the old St. Aloysius Cemetery on High Street.

"I went back to work and when I met people in the street, I would get upset if they talked about Tony, but if they didn't talk about him I got upset too," she said.

Now 93, Sell said her brother's needless death still affects her.

Generally, the family marked Marchione's passing every year on the day he was buried, but Sell does not look forward to Aug. 18.

"It still feels like it was yesterday," she said.

ing a pilot, but the Army had other ideas and decided he should be a gunner and photographer.

While overseas "he wrote us tons of letters. He was a very good letter writer," said Sell, known to most as Terry.

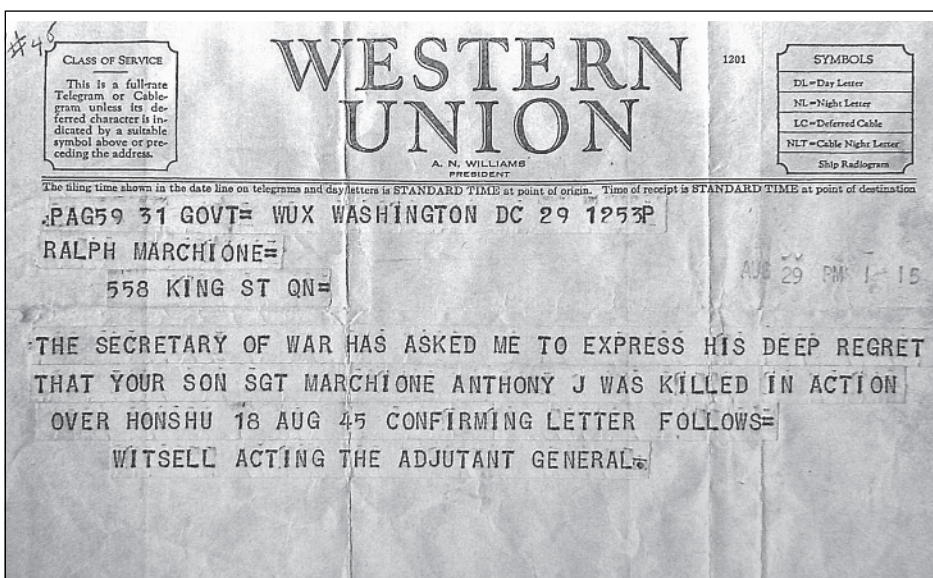
But it was a telegram that brought news of Marchione's death.

Sell was working as a bookkeeper for a machine parts plant in the South Pottstown portion of North Coventry, when a co-worker came looking for her and told her the boss wanted to see her.

"I thought I was going to be reprimanded for taking a break," said Sell. Instead, "someone drove me home, I can't recall who it was, and when we got home all the neighbors were crowded around the house and I could hear my mother screaming."

Her sister Geraldine, still in high school, was swimming at Sunnybrook Pool "and one of the neighbors went to get her," said Sell. Now Geraldine Young, Sell's sister lives in Fleetwood, Berks County.

Marchione's death is



The telegram received from the Secretary of War telling the Marchiones of their son's death.

the subject of a book titled "Last to Die," by military historian Stephen Harding, published five years ago.

In it he recounted the details of Marchione's mission.

He was aboard one of several B-32s sent to fly over Tokyo as part of a photo team. When two of the planes were forced to return to Okinawa because of serious engine oil leaks, de-

fensive firepower was cut in half and the two remaining B-32s had to prolong their time over Japan in order to photograph targets. Eventually, Marchione's plane was met by Japanese pilots.

In the book Harding wrote: "The Japanese pilots who took to the air on Aug. 18, whether from Atsugi or Oppama, had no intention of simply shepherding the American aircraft out of

Japanese airspace. Their purpose was far more direct: they were fighter pilots, and they were on the hunt."

"The Japanese pilots ignored the order to cease-fire, it was very, very sad," said Sell.

In an interview with The Mercury after the publication of his book, Harding explained that Marchione's death was a significant

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WWII VETERAN

# 'A REMARKABLE LIFE'

From left, WWII Weekend special guest Carl Constein, Gov. Tom Corbett, and Alexander Mello talk inside of "Tinker Belle," a Curtiss C-46, during World War II Weekend at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum in Bern Township.



## Pilot who flew over the Himalayan Mountains numerous times turns 100

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

Carl Constein, a Fleetwood lad, was fresh out of Kutztown State Teachers College in 1942 when Uncle Sam called him to serve in World War II.

Instead of teaching high school English, Constein embarked on three-year adventure that left an indelible imprint on his life and character.

As an Army Air Corps pilot, Constein flew 96 missions at the controls of a C-46 transport, ferrying 55-gallon drums of gasoline "over the hump" from India to China.

The hump, of course, is the Himalayan Mountains, home to 29,029-foot Mount Everest, the world's highest peak.

Constein, who's written two books about his WWII experience, turned 100 years old on Tuesday.

State Rep. Mark M. Gillen presented Constein with a commendation from the

state House of Representatives.

A collection of Constein's WWII memorabilia is on display at the Berks Military History Museum, Mhnton, of which Gillen is president.

"Carl Constein has led a remarkable life that people still find fascinating today," Gillen said. "Visitors to the museum yearn to hear his story and are spellbound when viewing his collection."

In a brief telephone chat from his apartment at Phoebe Village near Wernersville, Constein revisited his military service at the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.

It was the unpredictable weather more than enemy aircraft, he recalled, that was the greatest challenge in flying over the mountain range.

"It took four hours going over," he said, "and five hours coming back because of the prevailing westerly winds."

Loaded to the hilt with drums of highly flammable gasoline, the twin-engine C-46 Curtiss transports were in constant danger as they lifted off an airstrip in Chabua, India.

"You'd see a big cloud of black smoke," Constein recalled, "and you knew one of the planes in front of you had crashed."

Constein, who could have

avoided military service because he was working at a plant in Fleetwood that made mattresses for the Navy, said he embraced the chance to serve his country.

"When my time came to serve, I put my job aside and went willingly," he said. "I was eager to get in. Everybody else my age was serving."

Constein, who's been in lockdown at Phoebe since March, observed his 100th birthday quietly in his apartment.

Ann Constein, his daughter, said he was treated to his favorite dessert: peach pie and vanilla ice cream.

Constein said he's gotten numerous birthday cards.

The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum sent out a bulletin asking members to send Constein 100 birthday cards for his 100th birthday. Constein has enjoyed celebrity status at World War II Weekend, which is sponsored by the museum on the grounds of Reading Regional Airport.

In 2014, when he was 93 years old, he flew a mission aboard "Tinker Belle," a WWII C-46 transport, as part of World War II Weekend.

Constein said he has a little trouble getting around, but is in generally good health for his age. He had no trouble recalling details of his military service in the 1940s.



COURTESY OF THE BERKS MILITARY HISTORY MUSEUM

Carl Constein, who flew 96 missions over the Himalayan Mountains during World War II, with state Rep. Mark M. Gillen recently at the Berks Military History Museum in Mhnton. Constein, a retired Wilson superintendent of schools, turned 100 years old on Aug. 18, 2020.

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PROMOTING SENIOR WELLNESS

# Helpful apps for seniors



There are lots of helpful apps available for seniors to download.

By Charles "Ebbie" Alfree III

Every year since 2017, I have written an article about apps that provide assistance and entertainment for seniors. I am always amazed how developers create new technology to make daily life easier for older adults.

For 2020, I tried to find a handful of helpful apps including ones that would be beneficial during this unprecedented time. Here is the list:

### 1Password

Are you tired of trying to remember multiple usernames and passwords? 1Password securely stores this information behind the one password you will need to remember to open

this app. The app also has the ability to house credit card, bank account, and passport numbers.

### Elevate

Want to keep your mind sharp? Elevate has over 35 games to help improve memory, the ability to focus, increase speed of processing and more. This brain training app tracks your performance, provides you personalized daily workouts, and a workout calendar to keep you motivated.

### GoodRx

Are you tired of spending hundreds of dollars on prescriptions? This app may be your solution. GoodRx helps you find the best prices for prescrip-

tions and provides pharmacy discounts and coupons. Many of the coupons are stored in the app, so you don't have the worry of printing and potentially leaving them at home.

### Houseparty

Although you may be quarantining at home, that does not mean you need to miss the party! This social network app allows you to spend virtual time with family and friends. While you're visiting your loved ones, you can also play a game offered through the app. Games include Uno, Magic 8 Ball, trivia, and more.

### inkl

Stay current on all the news that is important

to you. This app has over 100 leading world newspapers and magazines from which you can choose to read. Their trained journalists curate the day's biggest lead stories for you. In addition, inkl provides every side of a story so you can make your own opinion and will develop a feed including stories that personally interest you.

### Instacart

If you do not want to go to a crowded grocery store, use this app to order your groceries and have them delivered to your house. Instacart works with over 20,000 North American stores, so you will be able to order your favorite foods, as well as find exclusive deals, coupons and more.

### K Health | Telehealth

Are you not feeling well, but do not feel comfortable leaving your house because of the pandemic? This app can assist you. K Health uses a digitized care system to help you understand your symptoms and find treatment options. The app also allows you to chat with a doctor if needed.

### LibriVox

Listen to an audio book for free. LibriVox has over 50,000 audio books, from best sellers to classics in more than 30 languages in its virtual library. Since the books are free, you can listen to your favorites more than once.

Before downloading these or any other apps,

do a little more research on them to ensure they meet your needs and comfort level. It is also good to understand their payment structures. A lot of apps are free, but the ones that are not typically have a one-time fee or a monthly or annual charge. You will want to know this information before you download any app.

Promoting Senior Wellness is provided by The Hickman, a Quaker-affiliated licensed personal care home in West Chester. Charles "Ebbie" Alfree III is director of advancement. The Hickman does not endorse and is not affiliated with the companies and apps mentioned in this article.

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with Faith C. Woodward  
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### KNOCK IT OUT OF THE BOX

Shuffleboard is an extremely popular sport for older adults, and it's getting more so by the day. Those who enjoy team activities gravitate to it, and anyone who can pick up a stick and hit a puck can play. It's easy to learn the rules of play and how to keep score. It is played both inside and out, and many senior community centers have shuffleboard courts. The courts can be asphalt or wood, and there is very little equipment needed. There are competitions on both local and national levels, and traveling to them just adds to the fun and camaraderie. Some competition hosts even award trophies and medals. Shuffleboard is good exercise and involves nothing too strenuous. Shuffleboard got its start in a pubs and palaces in 15th century England. Since its inception, the objects used to play were switched out to suit the time and place. The game has endured many name changes since it evolved, but shuffleboard rules have mostly remained the same. BARCLAY FRIENDS provides skilled nursing and rehabilitation care. To learn more, please call 610-696-5211. We invite you to visit our community.

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WEST CHESTER

# 'SERVICE ABOVE SELF'



From left are: Michelle Venema, president of Rotary Club of West Chester; Melissa Baxter, Rotarian, and daughter Ellie Baxter; and Jeannie McGinn, Rotarian, CWP Volunteer Liaison, taking a break while helping CWP move to new warehouse.

## Rotary Club members help seniors amid pandemic

By Bill Rettew  
 brettew@21st-centurymedia.com  
 @wcdailylocal on Twitter

**WEST CHESTER »** Despite the pandemic, volunteers are still helping others.

As part of the Service Above Self program, 20 West Chester Rotary members reached out by phone to approximately 1,000 seniors who are 85 years and older.

Friendly Rotary members asked how the seniors were feeling in general, whether they had enough food and medication and if they had any symptoms.

"Sometimes we forget how many people are not aware of how intense this pandemic really is," said Wendy Leeper, Passport Rotary Club member and director of the Chester



Christine Wildauer, Rotary Club of West Chester, who makes calls to seniors from her floral shop.

County Bar Association. Leeper said the lifeline was a chance to have somebody check on those stuck at home, and sometimes home alone.

"They are shut in and not allowed to go anywhere," Leeper said. "To stay safe they had to stay in."

Every effort we make might help somebody in some way."

Leeper's husband Dwight Leeper spearheaded the drive, along with Ches-

ter County contact Rob Malone.

Thursday Lunch Club Rotary member Christine Wildauer stopped at Boston Market and a supermarket to bring a senior food.

"I need food," the wheelchair-bound senior told Wildauer. "I'll take anything."

Wildauer laughed when she said the situation wasn't as dire as she had at first thought. When the Rotary member showed up at the



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Wendy Leeper, West Chester Rotary Passport Club, who makes call to seniors.

house, the senior's daughter said that her mother was well fed.

"I'm sure there are people out there who don't have family and I worry," Wildauer said. "It's not an easy task to take care of the elderly."

The Community Warehouse Project supplies furniture and household goods to those who can't afford them.

Melissa Baxter and her

12-year-old daughter Ellie were part of a 14-member team that helped the non-profit move to a new warehouse over a two-day period. Everyone wore masks and social distanced.

Melissa Baxter talked about life during the pandemic.

"The needs don't change, the world doesn't stop," she said. "You never know what somebody will be going through."

"At the end of the day if you can give something back, even something small, it makes you feel good."

"You don't know what people are going through."

Ellie Baxter enjoyed working side-by-side with her mother.

"I feel like I made a difference and it felt good," Ellie Baxter said. "She does so much to make a difference. I'm inspired by that."



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CORONAVIRUS

# 65 vehicles join parade outside the Lutheran Home at Topton



Family, friends and community members helped cheer residents of the Lutheran Home at Topton with a car parade.



COURTESY OF THE LUTHERAN HOME AT TOPTON

Family, friends and community members helped cheer residents of the Lutheran Home at Topton with a car parade Wednesday. About eight emergency vehicles and 65 privately owned vehicles took part.

**By Michelle Lynch**  
 mlynch@readingeagle.com  
 @BerksMichelle on Twitter

There was honking, cheering and waving Wednesday outside the Lutheran Home at Topton.

Residents watched from windows as a parade of fire trucks, ambulances and about 65 privately owned vehicles snaked around the campus of the home, run by Diakon Senior Living Services.

"(It was) a wonderful celebration," said Debra Gogno, director of the home. "The support from the community, families, residents and staff was priceless."

For many residents, the past five months have been difficult. The home is restricting visitors to minimize the residents' exposure to the coronavirus.

The virtual visits and window waves just aren't the same, said the Rev. Colleen Kristula, chaplain of the senior living facility.

"We've been shut down to visitors since March 12, and our residents are so missing their families," Kristula said.

To help brighten their spirits and those of the staff, Kristula reached out to the Brandywine Heights School District, area churches and others for help organizing the event.

The response was overwhelming, she said.

"This is a wonderful community here," Kristula said. "Everyone was just aching to do something for residents."

Eight emergency vehicles led the parade, followed by cars, trucks and



Emily Pietrowski, a member of the Brandywine Heights Rec Cheerleading organization, holds up a sign during a car parade Wednesday at the Lutheran Home at Topton. Members of the organization helped make the event a success.

vans filled with the residents' families and members of the community.

"At first we thought there were not a lot of participants, until we turned the

corner and saw all the cars extended down Home Avenue," said Sharon Merolli

of Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County.

Merolli's mother, Theresa Merolli, is a resident of the home.

Arriving early, Sharon; her twin sister, Shirl Lutterschmidt of Kutztown; and Shirl's sister-in-law, Cathy Lutterschmidt, snagged a prime spot right behind the firetrucks.

Participants included members of the Topton ambulance and fire departments, the Trexlertown Fire Company in Upper Macungie Township, Lehigh County, and the Brandywine Heights Rec Cheerleading organization.

From her seat in the back of the car, Merolli looked up at the watching residents.

"I could see people waving at my mom's dining room window, and I waved back," she said.

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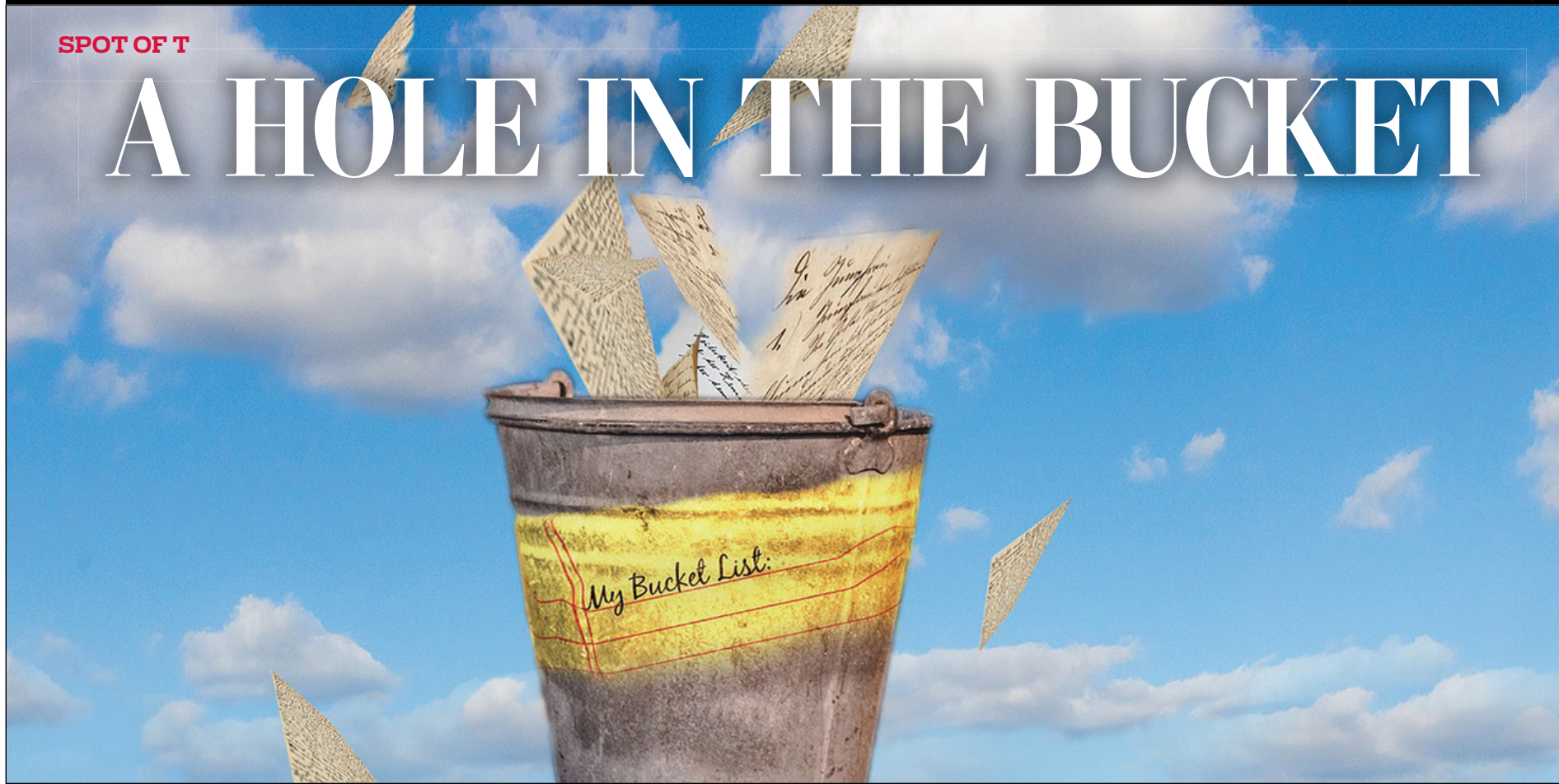
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SPOT OF T

# A HOLE IN THE BUCKET



NEEDPIX.COM

By Terry Alburger

Most people have one ... a bucket list. You know, all those things that you would like to do before the final curtain closes on your life.

It is an interesting concept to me, to quantify all your hopes and dreams into one list. As the self-proclaimed "List Queen," I must admit, I jumped on the bucket list train pretty early on.

When I was a bit younger and not quite so bogged down in the world of responsibility, I did manage to check a few things off this proverbial list. The interesting thing is that the list tends to remain the same size, or even grow longer! As nature abhors a vacuum, so the bucket list abhors blank lines, it seems.

Oh, sure, as I get a little older, I have pared down that list a bit. What are those things that would really enhance my life, that would satisfy deep longings

in my heart and would feed my soul?

Certainly, there are places that I want to visit, there are personal goals that I long to attain, and there are people whose lives I hope to connect with mine. I have also become a bit more of a realist and a little less of a dreamer. But is this good?

A perfect for instance: when the lottery reaches record amounts of money, it seems the entire population gets lost in lottery fever. I don't normally play, but for the cost of a \$2 ticket, I have bought a slice of a dream.

It's temporary, of course, but for a few days, I play the "what if" game and imagine all the wonderful things I could do with 3.4 bazillion dollars, and the items I could check off my all-important list.

It's a dream. But it's a fun dream, and it brings smiles for a few days. I can honestly say I'm batting 1,000. I am consistent in the

amount I have won in the lotteries! Perhaps next time I'll take that \$2 and buy myself a cup of coffee instead!

So, the bucket list exists. No, not on paper, but in my heart. But in 2020, I hit a huge snag — the same snag that has gripped all of us: COVID-19.

So basically, my bucket has sprung a leak. There's a hole in my bucket now. But you know what? Holes can be patched. Dreams can be kept. There is a future.

COVID-19 is but a roadblock in our paths. So, stay the course, my friends. Keep your eyes focused on your future — the one where you can get back to enjoying life. It will come.

You too will fix that bucket and get to enjoy those things for which you have hoped and dreamed. Hold on to that bucket! It may be weathered and beaten, but it still contains better days.

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GARDENING

# It's a beautiful day in the NEIGHBORHOOD

A neighborhood of more than 30 townhouses and cottages on the northern end of Flying Hills has been pulled together by a common love of gardening.

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

A neighborhood of more than 30 townhouses and cottages on the northern end of Flying Hills has been pulled together by a common love of gardening.

So although it's not a community garden in the traditional sense, it certainly has given the residents something they can all feel part of and enjoy.

During the coronavirus lockdown, many of the neighbors had more time to spend on gardening and to walk around and enjoy everyone's efforts.

The gardens contain many varieties of plants, some of them original to the landscaping of the development, which was built in the mid-1980s.

"Plants that were original to the neighborhood are daylilies, hostas, boxwoods, flowering cherries and dogwoods, gold cypresses and grasses," said Ellen Gallagher, 79, who moved to the neighborhood in 2014. "But there are many varieties



COURTESY OF TIM DEWALT

Residents of the Pine Woods Court neighborhood in Flying Hills share a love for gardening.

of shrubs, perennials and annuals that have found a home here over the last 30 years."

Dan Reese, 70, has lived in the neighborhood for 33 years. He said he's always enjoyed gardening, but

as so often happens, the abundance of daylilies in the landscape wasn't originally in the plans.

"We decided to try them as a ground cover when the drainage ditch behind our home was turned into rock

by the builder after heavy rains," Reese said. "The flowers survived in the heavy flow of water when it rained, so we just kept dividing them and planting them in the rocks for 30 years.

"All the flowers came from three small groups that were planted in the front of the house by the builder. We have never purchased any daylilies, just kept dividing and replanting what was there. It took

a great deal of work, since we were planting in sharp rocks where we could find some dirt.

"We no longer have to look at rocks, and the result of the hard work is lovely.

NEIGHBORS » PAGE 8

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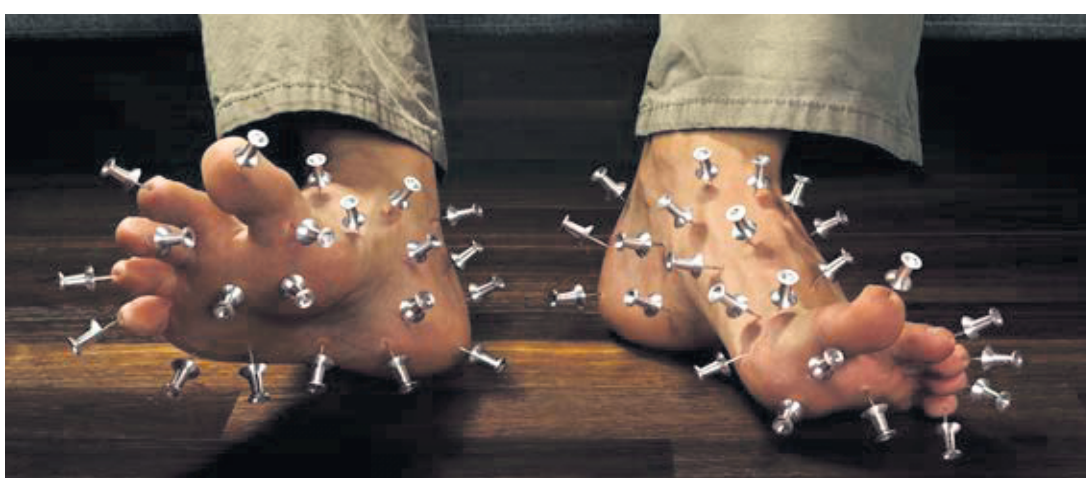
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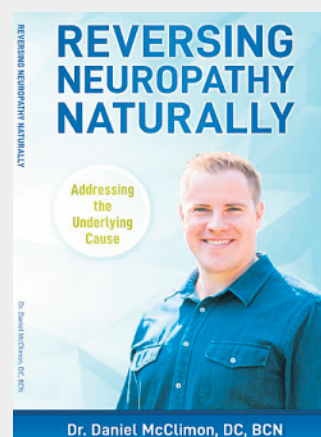


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COURTESY OF ELLEN GALLAGHER

A swath of daylilies meanders down a hillside and behind the cottages. They are all descended from a few original plants that Dan Reese has divided and replanted over the years.

## Neighbors

FROM PAGE 1

Daylilies are a great ground cover, as they spread quite easily, grow anywhere and take very little care."

Gallagher said that in addition to the beds that border the homes and hill-sides, there are kitchen courtyards and decks that bring additional color viewed from the inside of each home or while walking in the neighborhood.

"Whether it was the hyacinths, daffodils, hellebores or bluebells in spring, or the seasonal perennials that followed, they all brought color and joy to our days," Gallagher said. "And there are many annual supplements."

Tim Dewalt, 60, also a longtime gardener, has

lived in the neighborhood for 16 years.

Though each property is maintained by its owner, there is a common feel to all of them.

"Together they create an overall landscape, one garden purposely meanders into another," Dewalt said. "Our homes back up to the woods, which creates wonderful areas for shade gardening — ferns, hostas, hellebores — commonly known as Lenten rose. The opposite side of the home primarily basks in sun all day."

Dewalt also acknowledged the four-season appeal of the gardens. There are bulbs in the spring — daffodils, tulips, hyacinths — and when summer comes, you can see favorites such as astilbes and zinnias.

"Through fall there are chrysanthemums, grasses

and pumpkins," Dewalt said, "and holly, heavenly bamboo, ornamental grasses and evergreens in the winter."

The neighbors enjoy sharing tips, getting the latest news on where good plant buys can be found and learning from each other. They water each other's gardens when someone is on vacation.

"Gardening leads to conversations, friendships, caring about each other and pride in our neighborhood," Dewalt said. "We admire each others gardens on our daily walks."

Gallagher said when she thought about her neighborhood's gardens, the phrase "It takes a village" came to mind.

"In our case it could be called, 'It takes a neighborhood,'" she said. "Or, 'It makes a neighborhood.'"



Early sunlight highlights the greenery of a front yard.



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WYOMISSING

# ‘Remarkable’ centenarian is honored with a parade

By Michelle Lynch  
mlynch@readingeagle.com  
@BerksMichelle on Twitter

If it hadn't been for the car parade that drove past Edith Jarsocrak's house, her 100th birthday Thursday might have seemed the same as any other day.

The Wyomissing centenarian spent the morning cleaning as usual.

When asked what she planned for the rest of her special day, Jarsocrak answered, "Oh, I don't know; I already cleaned two bathrooms," her niece Pat Moser said.

Moser called her aunt "remarkable," noting that though Jarsocrak lives with her son, Ted Jarsocrak, she still does most of her own

**When asked what she planned for the rest of her special day, she answered, "Oh, I don't know; I already cleaned two bathrooms,"**

— Edith Jarsocrak

cleaning and cooking.

Ted Jarsocrak said his mother likes to keep active, but has mostly stayed home since the outbreak of the coronavirus locally.

"She keeps in touch with family and friends through phone calls," he said, adding that Moser and his mother chat at least once a week.

The family had planned a big picnic with friends and

extended family, he said, but canceled it due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The car parade helped to make their small family celebration more festive, he said.

About 10 decorated vehicles, escorted by a Wyomissing police car, drove by Edith Jarsocrak's home to mark the milestone. Casting off her earlier Cinder-

ella role, she acted the part of queen for the day.

Enthroned in a lawn chair with a paper tiara on her head, she smiled and waved as friends and family tooted horns and called out good wishes.

"Mostly, she was just surprised by all the attention," Ted Jarsocrak said of his mother. "She enjoyed it."

Edith Jarsocrak's 100th birthday picnic was canceled due to the coronavirus, but a car parade outside her Wyomissing home helped make the milestone festive. COURTESY OF PAT MOSER



VIRGINVILLE GRANGE

## Book celebrates group's 100th anniversary

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



Merkel

Norman O. Merkel and the Virginville Grange have a lot in common.

For one thing, he's the grange's oldest member.

Another is that they were both born in the same year — 1920.

Merkel celebrated his 100th birthday in May. The grange wasn't as lucky.

Because of the COVID-19 crisis, the grange has put off its 100th birthday party until 2021.

Originally set for April 25, it was postponed until Aug. 29. Now, that's off, and the celebration banquet, the highlight of the centennial anniversary, will be held at an as yet undetermined date next year.

The Grange 100th Anniversary committee, however, has decided not to wait until next year to release its 100th anniversary commemorative book.

"Virginville Grange Centennial Book," a 180-page glossy softcover, will be released at a book launch Aug. 16 from 3 to 6 p.m. during a drive-thru at the organization's Virginville lodge.

Grange members and banquet ticket holders are entitled to a copy free of charge and non-members can purchase a copy for \$15. The book can be purchased by mail for \$25.

With more than 100 photographs and a 40-page timeline, the anniversary publication celebrates American values and home-



100 YEARS Virginville Grange 1920 - 2020 Celebrating a Century of Achievements



COURTESY OF VIRGINVILLE GRANGE

town roots.

The centennial anniversary committee dedicated the book to Merkel, a retired Windsor Township farmer who has been a grange member for 86 years.

Virginville Grange No. 1832 is an integral part of the history of the Richmond Township village, once the site of a Native American trading post and former railroad hub in northeastern Berks County.

After a meeting at Fred and Mary Dreibelbis' farm, the Virginville Grange was chartered on Feb. 24, 1920. In 1922, it began exhibiting at the Kutztown and Reading fairs.

In 1924, the grange entered the Eastern States Farmers Exchange, which allows members to receive discounts on bulk orders of feed and supplies. In 1941, when William A. Sunday has a fire at his Greenwich Township farm, the grange community outreach pro-

gram was begun. It continues today.

In 1950, the grange purchased the Virginville Hotel and an adjoining property. It sold the hotel, but the adjoining property remains its headquarters.

Over the years, the grange has played a leadership role in community affairs, organized youth activities, raised funds for charitable causes and kicked off its calendar year with a popular Soup Night gathering in January.

"The strength and vitality of an organization can be measured by the participation of its members in its activities and programs," the anniversary book's introduction says. "During 2019, an astonishing 10,000 hours of volunteer service were documented."

For more information, contact the grange at 570-294-5516, email VirginvilleGrange1832@gmail.com or visit VirginvilleGrange#1832 on Facebook.

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SENIOR LIFE

# Daylesford Crossing marks fifth anniversary

Daylesford Crossing, SageLife's sophisticated senior living and personal care community in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, recently marked its fifth anniversary by honoring residents and staff.



COURTESY OF SAGELIFE

Grace Lahiff was recognized at Daylesford Crossing's fifth anniversary party. Lahiff is one of a group of founding residents of SageLife's sophisticated senior living and personal care community in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, having lived there since it opened its doors in 2015.



Daylesford Crossing Vice President of Operations Kim Smith, left, and Executive Director Lydia Gemmer) celebrate the sophisticated senior living and personal care community's fifth anniversary. Hors d'oeuvres and a surf and turf meal were served. SageLife President Kelly Andress (not pictured) gave a champagne toast honoring the founding residents who have lived there since Daylesford's Crossing opened in 2015 and all of the current residents and staff.

SENIOR LIFE

# Understanding your options for senior living



By Kathy Ardekani

When looking at senior living options, people often use the terms assisted living and personal care interchangeably.

But in Pennsylvania, there is a legal distinction between the two, and the state issues different licenses. Assisted living is identified as a step up in complexity of care from personal care, but does not reach the level of skilled nursing.

**Types of care**

When exploring the best living situation for you or a loved one, it's important to understand the types of care available.

Home care, both medical and non-medical, is provided on a scheduled basis in your home. The fee structure is usually by the hour or in a package of services.

Personal care communities (PC) provide supportive care for seniors who need assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs are routine activities people do every day, with six basic examples being eating, bathing, getting dressed, toileting, transferring (from chair to bed, for example) and continence. Assistance is also available for medication management, socialization and healthcare oversight.

Assisted living communities (AL) provide all the services offered by personal care communities, with additional, stringent staffing guidelines — including round-the-clock LPN/RN staffing and extensive training requirements.

This allows communities to care for residents with more complex needs, including medical care, enabling residents to age in place. Regulations also provide specifications for the physical spaces in the community and the services offered.

Skilled nursing facilities (SNF) often provide rehabilitation stays following a hospitalization or other

health event. Nursing facilities are also suited for long-term residency for people with chronic, highly complex medical conditions that require procedures or care that can only be carried out by specially trained nurses. The monthly fee for skilled nursing can be extremely high. In some facilities, the cost can be subsidized by Medicaid for financially qualified residents.

**Benefits of assisted living**

If you choose personal care, and your care needs become complex, your choices may be to move to a skilled nursing facility or to add private, hourly skilled nursing services (if available).

If you opt for assisted living, you are often able to age in place, even if your care needs increase in complexity. Your support plan is customized and assessed often to ensure you receive the care you need.

And, unlike at a skilled nursing facility, the lifestyle of assisted communities is oriented toward engagement and the environment is non-medical.

About Echo Lake: Kathy Ardekani is executive director of Echo Lake, a SageLife community in East Whiteland Township, Chester County, which offers a sophisticated take on retirement living — and the continuum of care afforded by a community with on-campus assisted living where your voice is central to everything included in your support plan. With fine dining options, a rooftop pub, club rooms, a state-of-the-art fitness and wellness center, sports simulation lounge, proximity to extensive walking trails, housekeeping, and an around-the-clock concierge, life at Echo Lake reflects SageLife's disruption of the negative paradigms around aging, outdated mindsets that have been barriers to recognizing senior living as an aspirational move. Community living is the best way to fully realize the potential of our senior years, and the wisest choice for aging well. To learn more about Echo Lake, and how the community customizes its services by providing the care that's needed, when it's needed, visit [www.livingatecholake.com](http://www.livingatecholake.com). In-person tours are now available by appointment. Call 484-568-4777.

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## SENIOR LIFE

# Couple is happy they didn't wait to move to Maris Grove

By Dorrie Anshel

Spring is typically the best time to sell your home, and this past season was no exception. Low interest rates enticed buyers, creating opportunities for quick sales at high prices. Even COVID-19 couldn't turn away those motivated buyers.

Despite the restrictions on in-person home sales, the real estate market remained strong, prompting many seniors to sell. Michael and Judy Burgstein, residents of Maris Grove, the Erickson Living-managed senior living community in Concord Township, Delaware County, were among them. The Kennett Square house they enjoyed for 40 years sold in just 36 hours.

"We didn't choose the timing, but we had to move, COVID-19 or not," Judy said.

To expedite the process, the couple used Wayforth, Maris Grove's preferred downsizing, packing and moving specialist.

"They packed us up on April 13 and moved us to Maris Grove on April 14," she said. "They wore masks and took every safety precaution. They did a good job for us."

The Burgsteins chose Maris Grove because they wanted to remain in the area and had friends already living in the community.

"Mike was with DuPont for a thousand years, and I was the general manager of 23 offices for one of Philadelphia's largest travel agencies," Judy said. "We visited Maris Grove, saw the active lifestyle, and thought it seemed like a really good place to live."



Michael and Judy Burgstein are glad they moved to Maris Grove during COVID-19: "We're very happy to be living in a beautiful home, all on one floor, in such a lovely community."

COURTESY OF MARIS GROVE

## A safe new place

Of course, things were much quieter when the Burgsteins moved in. The governor had imposed the stay-home order, so the campus activities transitioned to mostly televised or physically distant versions.

Still, the couple appreciated everything Maris Grove did to keep everyone safe, especially the meal delivery and concierge service.

"It's a very safe place to be," Judy said. "We're concerned about the pandemic, of course, but we're not getting crazy. They're doing everything they can here, and we go to the store with our masks, wipes and sanitizer. We have to make the best of it."

"Mike and I are independent. We walk outside and have met people from a safe distance. We're very happy to be living in a beautiful

home, all on one floor, in such a lovely community."

Maris Grove's Sales Director Liz Harrington observed that many prospective residents were optimistic about moving in during COVID-19, because they felt that being in the community was safer than staying home alone.

"They saw how well-prepared we were and didn't want to be isolated in their homes, especially if they

didn't have family close by," she said. "Our dining team delivered meals, and the concierges brought packages and supplies so residents didn't have to go out. Our TV station kept everyone informed, connected, and entertained with special programming."

"We limited access to essential vendors and checked temperatures at the entrance. On-campus health-care was available via tele-

medicine. For their own safety and peace of mind, new community members preferred to be here."

Since the Burgsteins moved in April, some restrictions have eased: Healthy visitors are allowed on campus, and many amenities have reopened, including the resident gardening area, walking paths and nature trails, putting green, bocce courts, marketplace, pharmacy, library, fitness and aquatics center, salon and more.

The couple is content with the pace and say that overseas travel is what they miss most. Mike was born in Vienna; every year for decades, they visited his homeland, plus one other European destination.

"Travel is our passion," Judy said. "We can't wait to start again."

Until then, they are enjoying their new home at Maris Grove and taking each day as it comes. Their advice?

"Don't wait if you're thinking of moving," Judy said. "This is a safe, beautiful community, and you can have a wonderful life here, COVID-19 or not."

About Maris Grove: Maris Grove, one of 20 continuing care retirement communities developed and managed by Erickson Living, is situated on a scenic 87-acre campus. The not-for-profit community of more than 1,900 residents and 1,000 employees is governed by its own board of directors, affiliated with National Senior Campuses, who provide independent financial and operational oversight of the community. Additional information about Maris Grove can be found at [MarisGroveCommunity.com](http://MarisGroveCommunity.com).

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— Jill R. and Rod S.,  
family members of resident



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# Retirement didn't work for her

By Marc Narducci — *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

**PHILADELPHIA** » For years, Connie Kleinschmidt has been hearing the same question from friends:



Kleinschmidt

“Are you still working?”

Kleinschmidt, 84 — she'll be 85 at the end of the month — doesn't know many people her age who are employed. And she's clearly the oldest clerk at Rite Aid in Upper Darby, where she chats up customers while ringing up their orders.

Oh, she tried the retirement thing once — and found it to be overrated. In 1998, she left Verizon (formerly the Bell Telephone Co.) after 30 years. Her retirement lasted just nine months.

“It got old pretty quick,” Kleinschmidt said. “I wanted to get back to work.”

So Kleinschmidt, who lives in Aldan, took a full-time job in Folcroft with Eckerd Drugs, which later became Rite Aid. When the store closed last year, she transferred to the Garrett Road Rite Aid in Upper Darby, about three miles

from her home. She drives her 2001 Toyota Celerio to and from the store.

“I can't believe she's still working,” said her friend Patricia Henry, a former Bell Telephone coworker, who is also 84. “Are you kidding me? I admire her.”

Sal Calabrese feels the same way.

He used to be a regular at Kleinschmidt's first Rite Aid location, in Folcroft, where Calabrese had a business.

“For about six or seven years, I would go there almost every day to talk to her, even if I didn't need anything to buy,” he said. “It was great to interact with her. She knows the Phillies inside out and she was so easy to talk to, so engaging.”

These days, he said, “When I go to Folcroft to work, I'm kind of lost without her,” he said. “Rite Aid is lucky to have her as an employee. I cried when they closed. I love her.”

Kleinschmidt said it's easy to be lovable when the customers are so nice to her. In fact, interaction with them is what keeps her going.

“When I worked for the phone company, I worked in directory assistance and sometimes customers were not nice,” she recalled. “In 21 years of my current job,

I can count probably no more than five nasty people. I greet them all by saying, ‘Good morning. How are you?’” she said.

Kleinschmidt, whose husband, Paul, died three years ago, used to work full-time at Rite Aid but now pulls an 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. shift, five days a week. She lives in Aldan, Delaware County, with daughter Connie Gilchrist, and Connie's son. She has three other adult children (she lost a fourth, a daughter who died at 48; and, long ago, an infant who lived only a day). She has 11 other grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Oh, and a cat, Meow-Meow.

“I have been told a key to living long is having a pet,” she said.

“She's at the register all day long. It keeps her brain going,” Gilchrist said of her mom. “She's tired when she gets home and sleeps a couple of hours.”

Kleinschmidt said she rises at 5 a.m. each morning to get ready for work, which, compared to her old job, feels like sleeping in. While working for the phone company, she had a 4 a.m. wake-up call.

“When the sun goes down I need to be down,” she said. “And when sun goes up I need to be up.”



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## WHITE HORSE VILLAGE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

*White Horse Village*

White Horse Village Endowment Fund awarded a total of \$18,900 to 12 team members for education scholarships. Individual scholarships range from \$800 to \$2,500.

The majority of the contributions made to the fund for the awards were from White Horse Village residents.

A resident committee chose the scholarship winners based on the merit of essays that were submitted anonymously. The 2020 recipients, schools and areas of study:

Adekunle Adesida, Delco

Practical School, nursing

Gina Bakey, Penn State World Campus, human development and family studies

Kristina Balta, Penn State University, computer science

Wloe Bargblor, Catholic University, nursing

Chris Borgardus, Temple University, media studies and production

Amber Chandler, Delco Community College, nursing

Bradley Dinger, Temple University, computer science

Cathy Hentschel, Western Governors University, business administration

Andrew Lawrence, Bloomsburg University, Eng-

lish/secondary education

Sydney Miller, West Chester University, communication studies

Sean Prior, Temple University, exercise science

Genesis Shacorro, West Chester University, nursing

In 1991, the White Horse Village Endowment Fund was established as a non-profit organization to receive and administer donations to White Horse Village.

The fund provides support for campus improvements, financial assistance programs for residents, special community activities and educational scholarships for team members.



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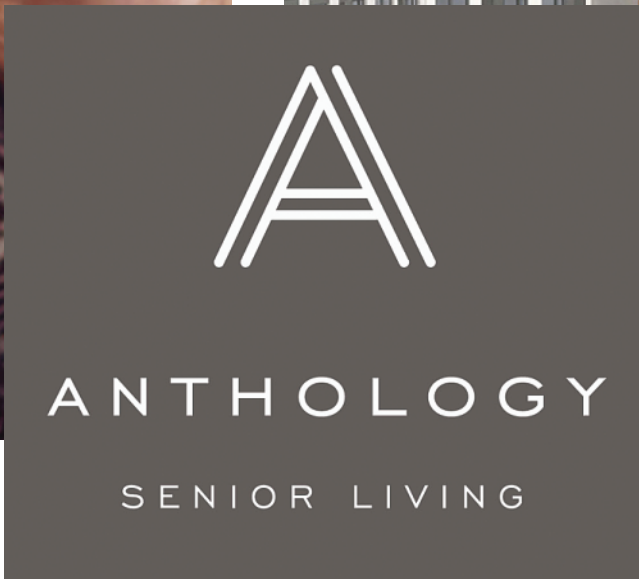
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