

# Vitality

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGING WITH  
GRACE, PURPOSE AND WELL-BEING

## IN SEASON

Local master gardener  
cultivates home-based  
'Joematoes' business

PAGE 12

## HEALTH & FITNESS

Four steps to happier feet

PAGE 8

## SOCIAL & WELL-BEING

Local farmers markets  
gear up for summer

PAGE 14

June 2021





**On the cover:** Joe Rarus, 71, of Southfield, stands in his test garden where he produces unique tomato varieties and sells them — a few of which he developed himself.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE RARUS

## VITALITY

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## MONEY & SECURITY

**Ask the financial doctor:** If I remarry would my ex-spousal benefits continue? **PAGE 6**

**Real Estate:** Higher prices and low inventory didn't happen overnight **PAGE 3**

## SOCIAL & WELL-BEING

**Yes or no?:** Is your town friendly to family caregivers? A new survey will help **PAGE 10**

**Pandemic rebound:** Wading back into a social life after COVID **PAGE 16**

**Tis the season:** Oakland, Macomb farmers markets gear up for summer **PAGE 14**

## HEALTH & FITNESS

**Guidelines:** Take these 4 steps for happier feet **PAGE 8**

**Give it a try:** Why you should manage your own medical records **PAGE 19**

## WORK & PURPOSE

**Not too late:** Zigzagging to a successful third act **PAGE 4**

## CALENDAR

Upcoming travel and events listings for Macomb County and Oakland County **PAGE 21**

## MACOMB COUNTY

**Centerline Towers:** 803310 Mile, Centerline, 48015

**Chesterfield Library:** 50560 Patricia, Chesterfield, 48047

**Chesterfield Senior Center:** 47275 Sugarbush, Chesterfield, 48047

**Macomb Daily Building:** 19176 Hall Road, Suite 200, Clinton Township, 48038

**Macomb County Seniors:** 21885 Dunham, Clinton Twp, 48036

**Pine Ridge Assisted Living:** 36333 Garfield, Clinton Twp, 48036

**Clinton-Macomb Library:** 35891 S. Gratiot, Clinton Twp, 48035

**Clinton Twp Senior Center:** 40730 Romeo Plank, Clinton Twp, 48038

**Heritage Senior Place:** 15430 18 Mile/ Hayes, Clinton Twp, 48038

**Eastpointe City Rec:** 16435 8 Mile, Eastpointe, 48021

**Fraser Senior Center:** 34935 Hidden Pine, Fraser, 48026

**Tucker Senior Center 26980 Ballard, Harrison Twp, 48045**

**Macomb Senior Center:** 19925 23 Mile, Macomb Twp, 48042

**Mt Clemens Library:** 150 Cass, Mt. Clemens, 48043

**New Baltimore Library:** 36480 Main, New Baltimore, 48047

**Romeo Park and Rec:** 361 Morton, Romeo, 48065

**Roseville Senior Center:** 18185 Sycamore, Roseville, 48066

**Roseville Library:** 29777 Gratiot/ Common, Roseville, 48066

**Shelby Senior Center:** 51670 Van Dyke, Shelby, 48316

**Sunrise Assisted Living:** 46471 Hayes, Shelby, 48315

**Utica Senior Residence:** 7650 Greeley, Shelby/Utica, 48317

**St Clair Shores Library:** 22500 11 Mile, St. Clair Shores, 48081

**SCS Parks and Rec:** 20000 Stephens, St. Clair Shores, 48080

**Sterling Heights Senior Center:** 40200 Utica, Sterling Heights, 48313

**Henry Ford Medical:** 3500 15 Mile Rd/ Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights 48310

**Andreas Rest:** 12/Bunert, Warren 48088

**Warren City Hall:** 29500 Van Dyke between 12 & 13, Warren, 48093

**Warren Community Center:** 5460 Arden, Warren, 48092

## OAKLAND COUNTY

**Auburn Hills Senior Center:** 1827 N. Squirrel, Auburn Hills, 48326

**Orion Center:** 1335 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, 48360

**OPC Rochester:** Letica Rd, Rochester, 48307

**Troy Senior Center:** 3179 Livernois, Troy, 48084

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## MONEY &amp; SECURITY

# Real Estate: Higher prices and low inventory didn't happen overnight

X marks the spot. What am I referring to? Read on and find out. I am asked often; "Steve, when are the prices going to come down? Steve, when are there going to be more homes for sale?" The answer to both questions is not anytime soon. So, in other words, don't hold your breath (unless you want to look like a Smurf). Some folks are in the camp that any day now prices are all of a sudden going to drop and inventory of homes for sale are going to dramatically increase. Again, not going to happen anytime soon. Prices have been going up for more than 10 years while inventory has been going down for more than 10 years.

Supply and demand fuel whether prices are going up or down. With inventory so low there is no reason for prices to go down. The Great Recession and housing bubble which was caused by poor mortgage lending practices is not a factor today. It was easy to get a no money down mortgage back then. Have you tried getting a mortgage in the last 10 years? It's a much more stringent process and has been known to cause foul language to come out of borrowers' mouths.

Here are some facts as to why there is a housing inventory shortage. In 2018 Freddie Mac estimated that there was a housing supply shortage of 2.5 million units. Towards the end of 2020 it increased to 3.8 million and in early 2021 it was estimated at 4.0 million already. New home construction has been way down since the end of the Great Recession due to the following; builders went out of business, lack of skilled workers available and government regulations. In the late 1970's there were 418,000 entry-level homes being built per year. In the last 20 years it has been going down. In 2004 there were 186,000 and in the 2010s it averaged around 55,000. In 2020 there were 65,000. Add to that, tens of millions of Millennials coming into the housing market and buying their first homes. Overall new construction single family home construction has been down in the last 10 years.

Some folks think that because of the pandemic that there is going to be a bunch of foreclosures coming on the market. Again, that's not going to happen. This time the government and lenders



**Steve Meyers**  
Columnist

got smart and offered forbearance agreements to homeowners that were having financial issues during the crisis. Now with the economy taking off and the country opening back up there are very few foreclosures expected. Even if there was a slight uptick, the inventory would get absorbed quickly. More than likely, those facing foreclosure would put their property on the market and sell it quickly, preventing a foreclosure from happening.

Unfortunately, I do not have room in this column for graphs; but if I did and you were able to look at two graphs showing 10 years of housing data for Michigan you would see the following. One would be the number of homes for sale and the other is the average sales price. If you overlay them, you would notice that it forms an X. Prices have been going up for more than 10 years while inventory has been going down for more than 10 years. Hopefully, we will see more inventory coming on the market soon. What's the best advice I have if you're searching for a home? Stay in the game and have patience! If you're selling a home; congratulations! If you would like me to send you a copy of the graphs let me know.

**Market Update:** April's market update for Macomb County and Oakland County's housing market is as follows. In Macomb County prices were up by almost 13% and Oakland County prices were up by more than 17% for the month. Residential home/condo on market inventory was down again. Macomb County's on market inventory was down by more than 55% and Oakland County's on market inventory was down by more than 42%. Macomb County average days on market was 21 days and Oakland County average days on market was 25 days. Closed sales in Macomb County were up by almost 64% and closed sales in Oakland County were down by 57%. The closed sales were up a large percentage compared to last year because of the COVID-19 shutdown last year. (All comparisons are month to month, year to year.)

*Steve Meyers is a Realtor at RE/MAX Metropolitan in Shelby Twp. and is a member of the RE/MAX Hall of Fame. Contact him with questions at 586-997-5480 or at Steve@AnswersToRealEstateQuestions.com You can also visit his website: AnswersToRealEstateQuestions.com.*



## Brian J. Kurtz

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(June 2004)

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**LTC COVERAGE:** Should you buy long-term care insurance? Maybe... or maybe not. I can inform you of ALL the options available to set aside funds for your own care, and help you make an informed decision on which method is best for you.

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## WORK &amp; PURPOSE

# Zigzagging to a successful third act

**Losing my job at 56 was one of the best things that ever happened to me**

**By Ivy Eisenberg**  
*For Next Avenue*

Countless people have launched a second act in their 50s. But how many have attempted a third?

Had I not been kicked to the curb at 56, I might not be living my best life now in my third act — eight years later.

## Prologue

I knew half a century ago that my path was not going to be straightforward when I considered becoming either a math teacher, an English teacher or a famous comedic actress.

I majored in English, and after failing to get a teaching job, went to grad school for more English.

The two-year graduate degree wound up taking four years, thanks to some insanely poor boyfriend choices, general confusion and my switch from Literature to Writing and Editing. I'd concluded that my life's calling was to explain technical concepts in a way that non-technical people could understand.

I would, I decided, become a technical writer.

## Act One

I landed my first professional job as a technical/promotional writer in a small health care computing company, thus beginning a 38-year unbroken streak of positions with a slash in their titles.

It was a great post-graduate gig; I was writing for a living and managed to find a smart, funny male colleague with good raw qualities to be shaped into husband material.

After six months, I leapfrogged to a business/systems analyst position at a major firm. I then spent the next 22 years as a technical writer/requirements analyst, information architect/user expe-

rience analyst/project manager/senior interaction manager, systems/requirements analyst. Despite the diverse titles, I had the same role: liaison between the users and the builders of technology.

While I was deeply entrenched in the non-sexy software applications area of Information Technology by day, I was also honing my humor-writing chops on the side.

In the late '90s, I was tapped to manage an innovation project, researching cutting-edge business opportunities. It was exhilarating, and I decided that Innovation was where I really wanted to be. So, I began my path toward a grueling MBA degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at 41 — when my older child started kindergarten.

I completed this degree while working full-time at my day job, moonlighting as an innovation consultant and raising two kids. Everything got done eventually (except laundry).

At 50, I left my job, using a voluntary separation package and outplacement assistance to reinvent myself.

## Act Two

The outplacement representative provided an extensive inventory for me to complete — the professional equivalent of “which Kardashian are you?” — and of course, it came out that I am all the Kardashians, even Rob.

I had too many interests and directions, needed to make money, wanted to flex my creative muscles and yearned for anything other than software applications.

I bounced around a bit before taking a full-time position in technology innovation and planning. It was billed as a “unique” position with an eight-slash job description. On paper, it sounded like a great fit. However, the organizational culture was arrogant, the commute was long and I had so many tasks that I couldn't develop expertise in any of them.

But here's the thing: Being miserable at a job, I found, is terrific



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEXT AVENUE/DAVID BIXBY

Ivy Eisenberg performing stand-up comedy at Levity Live in West Nyack, N.Y. in 2014.

for building your side hustle as a comedian.

I pursued storytelling and stand-up comedy while considering what I might do if I left the job. That consideration was moot; I was laid off, by surprise, at 56.

I was shocked, panicked, depressed and angry. My little tikes were now in college or headed there. A financial tsunami was headed my way and I had to squeeze my post-menopausal body into a business suit to find my next gig.

## Act Three

My husband suggested I might want to use this opportunity to scale back my work and focus on a comedy career.

“Au contraire, dear!” I declared. “I’m going to start a consulting practice to do everything I want to do. On my own terms. While keeping the roof over our heads and food on the table.”

The truth is, I like corporate work. I like the salt mines, the smell of the corporate coffee-maker, the challenge of a jammed copy machine.

Six weeks after getting laid off, I held my nose, dipped into my 401(k) — yes, I know that's frowned upon by financial pros — and took the leap into consulting.

I basically Lean Startup-ed myself.

The Lean Startup approach in the business world is to build a “minimum viable product” and launch it with real customers. So, I made business cards listing my various skills and went to events pitching one consulting offering or another. I also met with business coaches and professional connections and took personal branding workshops.

Problem was, I'm a terrible networker. My elevator pitch requires a trip on the Empire State Building elevator.

Stand-up comedy is great training for rejection, however. With stand-up as with a start-up, you must get out there (“get stage time,” we call it) to understand what works. It takes about 80 hours to produce three minutes of stand-up comedy material and from those three minutes, maybe there's one “good” minute that'll

survive the beta test in front of a live audience.

One minute of output for 4,800 minutes of effort is a 0.02% success rate.

Along these lines, I sent out 5,000 cold-call letters to strangers, offering my consulting services. I got 20 bites, had four phone calls, and landed one amazing innovation workshop gig (yup, a 0.02% success rate here, too).

Meantime, I also ran storytelling workshops, produced shows and wrote and performed comedy in no-name venues.

After some soul searching, I connected with one of my favorite former bosses, who was now head of an IT department. I missed working in the trenches. So, at 60, I dove back into software applications — as a consultant.

It feels like home.

I'm once again the liaison between the users and the builders of technology. I'm learning every day (which brings me joy), I have a huge to-do list (which brings me joy) and I'm mired in the details of problems that need to be solved (also, joy).

My bank account has risen from the dead (much, much joy).

I am still performing and writing. Last month, I was one of seven finalists in the 2021 Ladies of Laughter® Story Slam Competition.

And all of this lets me put delicious food on the table for my kids (now in their late 20s) — when they visit.

My friends are winding down toward retirement; at 64, I'm just getting fired up. If Grandma Moses could begin painting at 78, I have years ahead of me. Who knows? Maybe there'll be an encore for me as the Grandma Moses of the comedy circuit.

*Ivy Eisenberg is an award-winning humor writer, storyteller and comedian. She performs and produces solo shows and stories in venues throughout the greater New York City area, Washington, D.C. and online.*



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## MONEY & SECURITY

### Ask the Financial Doctor: If I remarry would my ex-spousal benefits continue?

**Q** : What is the maximum amount that I can contribute to a 2021 ROTH IRA?

**A** : The maximum amount is \$6,000 plus \$1,000 if you are age 50 or older.



**Richard Rysiewski**  
Columnist

**Q** : What are the income limits that could reduce my 2021 ROTH IRA contributions?

**A** : Your modified AGI (adjusted gross income) cannot exceed \$140,000 (single filers) or \$208,000 (married filing jointly). In most cases, the modified AGI equals the AGI.

**Q** : Due to the income limits I contributed \$1,500 more into my 2020 IRA. What are my options to correct this mistake?

**A** : If you realize your mistake before filing your tax return, you can simply withdraw the excess contribution plus the earnings. If you have already filed, you can remove the excess and the earnings within six months and file an amended return. In both cases there is no penalty but you will have to pay taxes on the earnings. The last option is to reduce the following year's contribution by the excess amount but you will have to pay a 6% penalty on the excess for every year it remains in the account.

**Q** : I am 62 years old and collecting ex-spousal Social Security benefits. I am considering getting married next year. If I remarry would my ex-spousal benefits continue?

**A** : No, you cannot collect on a living ex-spouse's Social Security benefit if you remarry. However, you can collect on a deceased ex-spouse's record provided you remarry after age 60.

**Q** : I have a disabled son who is 29 years old. Will he receive the STIMULUS 3 payment of \$1,400?

**A** : Yes, he will. Any adult dependent, age 17 or older is eligible for the STIMULUS 3 payment, together with college students and elderly adults. The taxpayer claiming the dependent will

have to meet the income requirements to be eligible for the payments. Single filers earning up to \$75,000 will receive the full \$1,400 and married couples earning up to \$150,000 will get \$2,800, plus payments for any dependents. Taxpayers will receive reduced payments for single filers earning between \$75,000 and \$80,000 and for couples earning between \$150,000 and \$160,000.

**Q** : What are the conditions for parents to qualify for the American Opportunity Credit (AOC) for their child in college?

**A** : The AOC is an education tax credit for the first four years of post-secondary education. The student must be enrolled at least half-time, can be claimed only for four years and the student must not have any felony drug convictions. The parent must claim the student as his dependent and the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) cannot exceed \$90,000 (filing single) or \$180,000 (filing jointly).

**Q** : I am a sole proprietor with five employees and have a SIMPLE retirement plan. When is the latest date that I can contribute to my SIMPLE plan for my employees and myself?

**A** : The latest date is the federal tax filing deadline including extensions. If you have an extension, then it is October 15th.

**Q** : My dad is under age 65. Can he qualify for Medicare coverage?

**A** : Your dad is eligible for Medicare if he is a citizen, lived in the U.S. for five years in a row and is disabled and has been receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for at least 24 months. If he has end-stage renal disease and is getting dialysis treatments he could qualify for Medicare. If he has Amyotrophic Lateral Disease (ALS) he will automatically be enrolled in Medicare when he receives his first monthly check from SSDI.

*Submit your tax and finance questions to Richard Rysiewski, Certified Financial Planner, at Richard Rysiewski, Financial Doctor, 3001 Hartford Lane, Shelby Twp., MI 48316 or call (248) 651-7710.*



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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



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Like every other part of our body, our feet change as we get older.

# Take these 4 steps for happier feet

**By Penny Musco**  
For Next Avenue

When I noticed Dr. Jill Biden walking in pointy-toed high heels in her husband's inaugural parade, I thought, her feet must be killing her! Not that I know much about her, but as a woman only a few years her junior, I know I can't wear those kinds of shoes for very long anymore.

That's because of a problem impacting nearly all mature adults — fat pad atrophy, when the cushion on the balls of our feet thins out, causing inflammation

and marked tenderness.

Like every other part of our body, our feet change as we get older. No surprise there: not only do we spend a lot of hours just standing around, but by the time we turn 50, most of us have logged 75,000 miles strolling, running and bouncing in all kinds of shoes (or not), according to the American Podiatric Medical Association.

And although we schedule regular exams for our teeth, eyes, and general well-being, our feet, our literal support, usually get the short shrift.

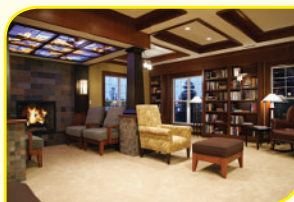
Yet, "To pay attention to your feet is to pay attention to your overall health," says Marian Hannon, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and senior scientist at the Marcus Institute for Aging Research.

Why we neglect them is anybody's guess, particularly since a 2018 study by the podiatric association found that as many as 75% of respondents reported some sort of foot impediment. Association spokesman Dr. Alex Kor sees this repeatedly in his practice.

"Patients come in and say, 'Oh, I've had this prob-



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lem for a year, and I thought it would go away,” he says. Brushing it off as “just part of growing old” is a familiar excuse.

In addition to loss of padding, other oft-dismissed conditions in older adults include aching bunions, toe deformities and mid-foot soreness. For patients with diabetes and those with neuropathy (nerve damage) and impaired circulation, though, ignoring lower limb infirmities can have dire consequences.

The good news is that experts say most of our foot ailments can be minimized or even averted with early treatment and routine maintenance.

Follow these four steps to put your best foot forward now and in the future.

### 1. Get a Foot Inspection

Chances are, unless you have a chronic disorder involving your feet, your primary doctor doesn't inspect them or your gait during a standard checkup.

“Some patients tell me that they've never been asked to take their shoes and socks off,” says Kor. The reason, Hannon asserts, is that “the vast majority of physicians in the United States have never had a day of training in the foot.”

If you have foot issues, speak up and get a referral to a podiatrist or orthopedist. Many health insurance plans, including Medicare,



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CREATION

By the time we turn 50, most of us have logged 75,000 miles strolling, running and bouncing in all kinds of shoes (or not), according to the American Podiatric Medical Association.

won't pay for a visit to a foot specialist unless you first get a referral, notes Kor, except for patients with very specific, documented diseases. Check your insurance coverage to be sure.

### 2. Adopt a Foot-Friendly Lifestyle

The pounds we carry unquestionably affect our foot health, says Kor, whose association found that 74% of overweight Americans surveyed say they experience foot pain.

A little over half of U.S. adults surveyed confess that discomfort due to excess weight limits their everyday activities. Which means physical fitness also falls by the wayside.

Instead of giving up, Kor suggests modification. Habitual exercisers can switch

to running or walking every other day instead of on consecutive days. Or, log the same miles but spread them out more over the week. Non-weight-bearing workouts — biking, swimming, water aerobics, and elliptical machines — are alternatives for everyone.

Another risk to our foot health is heavy alcohol consumption, a trigger for neuropathy, especially as we age. Smoking, Kor stresses, is “probably the No. 1 reason” for poor circulation and its accompanying agony.

In extreme cases, decreased blood flow leads to amputation if not treated promptly (my mom confronted this scary possibility when she finally sought relief for her sensitive, discolored toe, a sign that she needed a stent in one leg).

## The good news is that experts say most of our foot ailments can be minimized or even averted with early treatment and routine maintenance.

### 3. Buy Shoes That Fit Well

Our footwear, says Hannon, is “the canary in the coal mine,” an early warning system that something might be amiss with our feet. Shoes that begin to feel uncomfortable may be the first indication of trouble, and sometimes the fix can be as simple as purchasing new ones.

Follow the usual tips when buying them — shop in the afternoon when your feet are largest, get them professionally measured, make sure the toe box is roomy enough — then put them to the flex test.

A shoe should be rigid in the area between the heel and the ball of the foot and bend only at the joints at the base of the toes. This is crucial for maintaining balance, something to keep in mind since falls are the leading cause of injuries to those 65+, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (see the American Podiatric Medical Association's Seal of Acceptance/Approval Program for shoe recommendations).

For those looking for

more padding, over-the-counter custom orthotics “have become pretty good,” Kor says. He recommends bringing all footwear and inserts to a podiatrist for an expert opinion. But don't go overboard with the extra cushioning, cautions Hannon.

“If you don't need the support, you're taking away musculature that will help keep your feet healthy,” she says.

### 4. Embrace Foot Care

The most many of us do for our feet is clip the

nails — and even that we often get wrong (by cutting them too short or, conversely, not enough). That job might get harder as back problems worsen or we become less limber and can't reach our toes.

Medicare doesn't cover nail upkeep except in the case of some chronic illnesses, so both Hannon and Kor agree a salon pedicure or less-expensive nail trim is a good alternative for men and women (the American Podiatric Medical Association offers guidelines for salon and home treatments).

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## SOCIAL & WELL-BEING



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The assessment — the first of its kind in the nation — asks participants to rank themselves in eight different categories that are considered critical to meeting the needs of a growing senior population.

# Is your town friendly to family caregivers? A new survey will help

Marsha Koet was among the first senior services professionals to take a survey that aims to help senior-focused organizations and local governments up their game when it comes to supporting family caregivers.

Koet supervises the senior division for Farmington and Farmington Hills. She took the Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment, developed by the Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) with a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, to see just how well her department is doing when it comes to helping caregivers.

It turns out, pretty well.

"I felt proud when I did this, proud of the people we work with and how many services we offer," Koet says. "It's good to review what you're doing. There are times I thought, 'Could we do that?' We get so busy thinking about the seniors we forget to do programming for the caregivers."

The assessment — the first of its kind in the nation — asks participants to rank themselves in eight different categories that are considered critical to meeting the needs of a growing senior population. The Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment provides

real-world evidence of the strengths and weaknesses in the caregiving chain — and offers best practices for becoming more caregiver friendly.

After taking the online survey, participants will immediately get a snapshot report of how they scored in these areas:

- In-home care and respite services availability
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**CAREGIVERS » PAGE 20**



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## WORK &amp; PURPOSE

# Southfield master gardener cultivates home-based 'Joematoes' business

By Debra Kaszubski  
For MediaNews Group

Tomatoes in Joe Rarus's Southfield greenhouse aren't limited to red and green, although he does harvest several of the customary color variety. Along with traditional shades, Rarus, a master gardener, also grows black, pink, white, brown, yellow, blue, and even multi-colored tomatoes with such interesting names as Brad's Atomic grape, Pop My Cherry, and Black Beauty.

Rarus, 71, who recently retired from his job as garden supervisor at the City of Southfield, grows 40 tomato varieties, a few of which he developed himself in his home-based test garden. After 15 years of growing and selling, Rarus has earned the nickname "Joematoes."

Rarus has a 9x17 foot greenhouse in his yard where he grows hundreds of plants. After harvesting the fruit, he sells tomatoes outside of his home on weekends in May and June. The 2021 tomato season wraps up the weekend of June 11-13. Tomatoes cost \$4 each, and Rarus only accepts cash or check as payment.

"This is a labor of love," he said. "I would be scared to add up what it costs me to do this, and I would hate to say it, but I'm probably making only 10 cents an hour. But when you see how much people enjoy it and you watch them get their kids involved in gardening, it's worth it."

There are about 40 varieties for sale from Joematoes, including the popular and sweet Brandywine variety. Other best-sellers include Triple Sweet Plum and Sun Sugar, which tastes like candy according to Rarus. Brazilian Beauty is a brown tomato and Lucid Gem is blue on the outside and yellow on the inside. These tomatoes, Rarus said,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOE RARUS

Southfield resident Joe Rarus with a bowl of Santa Maria tomatoes. He suggests freezing the fruit and using it in pasta and other sauces.

are nothing like what's found in the grocery store. "I can't stomach a grocery store tomato," he said. "I can taste the chemicals used in the fertilization of those plants."

Rarus recommends eating his tomatoes raw or freezing them for use during the off-season. He said he makes the best-tasting pasta sauces using his home-grown varieties. Rarus donates new plants, and what he is unable to sell or freeze to The Salvation Army.

An award-winning and skilled

master gardener, Rarus, who was inspired by scientist Luther Burbank (who was known for cross-breeding vegetable plants), even developed a few completely new tomato species.

"About 15 years ago, I noticed there's Big Boy, Better Boy, and Celebrity (tomato types). I thought, I know how to grow things, I'm going to start these by seed," he said. "I went on the internet, where I found a mixture of heirloom tomatoes on eBay. I got a mix of seeds and there was a black one. I thought



Rarus grows 40 tomato varieties in his backyard greenhouse. He sells the harvested fruit for \$4 each.

it was fabulous."

After finding his first black seed, Rarus was on a mission to order a wide variety of seed colors and types. Using those seeds, time, and technique, he eventually developed new species of tomatoes, which he named Supernova, Chocolate Beefsteak, and St. Patrick's Day. It takes 6 to 8 years to grow and stabilize a tomato, he said, but his new tomatoes are worth the wait.

"Chocolate Beefsteak has an earthiness to it," he said. "It's not sweet, but when you bite into it, you think, wow, that's what a tomato should taste like."

Even though he has a wide variety of tomatoes to enjoy, Rarus is still able to narrow down a favorite, called Stump of the World. "The whole world compares the taste of a tomato with Brandywine because it's that good. The guy who bred Brandywine also made Stump, but in my opinion, Stump is superior," Rarus said.

Stump of the World is for sale, along with Rarus's 39 other varieties. Joematoes is located at 20995 Van Buren St. in Southfield. Rarus is open from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday to Sunday. For more information, visit his Facebook page @joematoes1.

**"This is a labor of love. I would be scared to add up what it costs me to do this, and I would hate to say it, but I'm probably making only 10 cents an hour. But when you see how much people enjoy it and you watch them get their kids involved in gardening, it's worth it."**

— Joe Rarus, Southfield resident





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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# Farmers markets gearing up for summer

By Kathy Blake  
MediaNews Group

Farmers markets are popping up in the area, offering flower and vegetable plants, herbs and early season fresh produce. In addition, some markets host food trucks and musical entertainment. Other items at the markets include beauty products, baked goods, arts and crafts.

As the state of Michigan eases COVID-19 restrictions, outdoor capacity limits have been removed as well as mask mandates. The markets continue to follow COVID-19 safety measures, and patrons are advised to ask vendors for assistance before handling produce and products, and maintain six-foot distancing of vendors and other shoppers. The following is a list of farmers markets in Oakland and Macomb counties that are open or plan to open soon:

## Oakland County

- **Birmingham Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays, May 2-Oct. 31, walkable outdoor market featuring produce, meat and dairy, artisan baked goods, fresh foods and more, at Public Parking Lot 6, 660 N. Old Woodward Ave., Birmingham, [allinbirmingham.com/visitors/farmers-market](http://allinbirmingham.com/visitors/farmers-market), 248-530-1200.

- **Clarkston Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays June 19-Oct. 9 in the front parking lot at the Clarkston Community Education Center, 6558 Waldon Road, Clarkston, 248-821-4769, [clarkstonareafarmersmarket.com](http://clarkstonareafarmersmarket.com).

- **Farmington Farmers and Artisans Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham Farmers Market features produce, meat and dairy, artisan baked goods, fresh foods and more.

- **Farmington Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, June 19-Oct. 9 in downtown Highland, at the Milford and Livingston Road intersection, 313-753-2756, [highlandfarmmarket.com/vendor-information.html](http://highlandfarmmarket.com/vendor-information.html).

- **Fogler's Greenhouse & Farm Market:** Open daily, seasonally from early spring to late fall, 3979 Rochester Road, Rochester, and 559 S. Lapeer Road, Lake Orion, [foglersgreenhouse.com](http://foglersgreenhouse.com), 248-652-3614.

- **Holly Farmers Market:** Open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays, May 2 to Oct. 17 at Crapo Park, downtown Holly, [facebook.com/HollyFarmers](http://facebook.com/HollyFarmers).

- **Milford Farmers Market:** Open 3-7 p.m. Thursdays, May 6 to Oct. 14, at East Liberty Street between

- **Northville Farmers Market:** Open 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Thursdays, May to October, across from the Northville Downs Track, 7 Mile and Sheldon, 248-349-7640, [northville.org/farmers-market-vendors](http://northville.org/farmers-market-vendors).

- **Oakland County Farmers Market:** Open 7 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 2350 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford Twp., email [OCmarket@oakgov.com](mailto:OCmarket@oakgov.com). 248-858-5495, [oakgov.com/parks/parksandtrails/farmers-market/Pages/default.aspx](http://oakgov.com/parks/parksandtrails/farmers-market/Pages/default.aspx).

- **Rochester Farmers Market:** Open 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, May 1-Oct. 31, corner of E. Third and Water Street, 248-656-0060, [downtownrochestermi.com/farmers-market](http://downtownrochestermi.com/farmers-market).

- **Ortonville Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. June 19 to October, downtown Ortonville, [facebook.com/ortonvillefarmersmarket](http://facebook.com/ortonvillefarmersmarket).

- **Royal Oak Farmers Market:** Open 7 a.m.-1



PHOTO BY NIKI COLLIS — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

The St. Clair Shores Farmers Market is open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. the fourth Sunday and 5-9 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month, May through October at Blossom Heath Park.

- **South Lyon Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays, May 1 to Oct. 30 at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Liberty Street, downtown South Lyon, 248-437-1735, [southlyonfarmersmarket.org](http://southlyonfarmersmarket.org).

- **Troy Farmers Market:** Open noon-5 p.m. Fridays, June 18 to Oct. 1, at the Troy Community Center north lot off Big Beaver & Civic Center Roads, fresh and seasonal, local Michigan grown fruits and vegetables, flowers and products, food trucks, musical entertainment, 248-524-1147, [troymi.gov/farmersmarket](http://troymi.gov/farmersmarket), [facebook.com/TroyMIFarmersMarket](http://facebook.com/TroyMIFarmersMarket).

- **Walled Lake Farmers Market:** Open 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesdays, May 19-Oct. 27, at the Walled Lake City

- **Event Field, 1499 E. West Maple, Walled Lake, 248-624-4847, [walledlake.us](http://walledlake.us).**

## Macomb County

- **Armada Flea and Farmers Market:** Open 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesdays and 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays, May thru October, 25381 Armada Ridge, Richmond, [armadafleamarket.com](http://armadafleamarket.com), 586-784-9604. A special Saturday market day is planned for June 19, with details to follow.

- **Fraser Fresh Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. the second Saturday of the month, May thru Sept & Oct.. 2, at Steffens Park, 33000 Garfield Rd., Fraser, [fraserfreshfarmersmarket.com](http://fraserfreshfarmersmarket.com).

- **Kutchey Family Market:** Open 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday year-round, 27825 Ryan Rd., Warren, 586-806-2262, [KutcheyFamilyMarket.com](http://KutcheyFamilyMarket.com).

- **Mount Clemens Farm-**

- **ers Market:** Open 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, May through November, 141 N. River Road, Mount Clemens. Local vendors with colorful flowers, vegetable seedlings, honey, baked goods, eggs, coffee and more were selling their wares at the North River Road park and ride lot. Other seasonal vegetables and fresh, frozen and smoked fish will be available on future Market days. 586-493-7600, [mountclemensfarmersmarket.com](http://mountclemensfarmersmarket.com). WIC, Project Fresh SNAP/Bridge Cards, Market FRESH, and Double Up Food Bucks programs accepted here.

- **Mount Clemens Downtown Market:** Open 1-5 p.m. Wednesdays, Mid July through late September, S. Gratiot & Pine Street in downtown Mount Clemens. WIC, Project Fresh SNAP/Bridge Cards, Market FRESH, and Double Up Food Bucks programs accepted here.





PHOTO BY DAVID ANGELL — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

A transaction takes place at the Mount Clemens Farmers Market.

- **New Baltimore Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. the first Sunday in May thru last Sunday in October, at Washington Street, between Main and Front Streets. WIC, Project Fresh SNAP/ Bridge Cards, Market FRESH, and Double Up Food Bucks programs accepted here. Visit [newbaltimorefarmersmarket.com](http://newbaltimorefarmersmarket.com) for more info.

- **Shelby Township Farmers Market:** Open 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays, May 15 through October 16, held on the front lawn of the Packard Proving Grounds, 49965 Van Dyke, Shelby Charter Township, 586-739-4800, [packardproving-grounds.org/shelby-farmers-market](http://packardproving-grounds.org/shelby-farmers-market).

- **St. Clair Shores Farmers Market:** Open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. the fourth Sunday and 5-9 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month, May through October at Blossom Heath Park, 24800 Jefferson, St. Clair Shores. Find fresh locally grown produce and food items, handmade goods, entertainment and kids activities. Visit [scsmi.net/877/St-Clair-Shores-Farmers-Market](http://scsmi.net/877/St-Clair-Shores-Farmers-Market) for more information.

- **Sterling Heights Dodge Park Farmers Market:** Open 3-8 p.m. Thursdays, June through September at Dodge Park, 40620 Utica Road, Sterling Heights, [sterling-heights.net/1236/Dodge-Park-Farmers-Market](http://sterling-heights.net/1236/Dodge-Park-Farmers-Market), 586-446-2692.

- **Warren Farmers Market:** Open 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Sundays, June through October, 1 City Square, Warren. WIC, Project Fresh SNAP/Bridge Cards, Market FRESH, and Double Up Food Bucks programs accepted here. Visit [cityofwarren.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/sundays-at-the-square/farmers-market-faq](http://cityofwarren.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/sundays-at-the-square/farmers-market-faq).



PHOTO BY NIKI COLLIS — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

In addition to the many vendors, the St. Clair Shores Farmers Market offers entertainment and kids activities.



You will find lots of colorful flowers, vegetable seedlings and more at the Mount Clemens Farmers Market.

PHOTO BY DAVID ANGELL — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP



PHOTO BY ROY J. AKERS — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

A variety of foods are available for purchase at the Highland Farmers Market, such as jams, jellies and baked goods.



PHOTO BY DAVID ANGELL — FOR MEDIANEWS GROUP

The Mount Clemens Farmers Market is open 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, May through November.



## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# Wading back into a social life after COVID

By Jill Smolowe

For Next Avenue

I awoke this morning alive with a feeling I haven't experienced in months: anticipation.

At 5 p.m., nine other women and I, all of us vaccinated, are scheduled to gather at a house in suburban New Jersey to celebrate "The Bubbe Diaries," a new audio book written and voiced by our friend, New York Times writer Paula Span. According to the invitation, the plan is to assemble outdoors unless the weather proves infelicitous.

This being New Jersey and life in the time of COVID-19, the weather, of course, sucks today: a steady drizzle interspersed with flood-like downpours. No problem. The host has a Plan B. We'll move indoors.

## Looking Forward to Getting Out

Then, at 11:03 a.m., an email arrives bearing unanticipated news. The object of Bubbe Paula's grandmotherly affection, a delightful tyke nicknamed Bartola, co-mingled with a classmate who tested positive for COVID-19 during routine school screening earlier this week. Though Bartola and her classmates all subsequently tested negative, Paula's daughter is leaving nothing to chance. As I write, she is taking Bartola for a rapid test.

Plan C? If Bartola is negative, we'll gather inside the host's home and mask between sips of bubbly and bites of light appetizers.

Plan D? If Bartola is positive, we'll meet at a different house on a semi-heated porch and hope this un-spring-like weather doesn't leave us shivering.

"If anyone is uncomfort-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEXT AVENUE/GETTY

Many older adults are dipping their toes into socializing again after more than a year of isolation from friends and family as a result of the pandemic.

able," the host's note concludes, "please do not hesitate to sit this out. We can Zoom you in for a toast."

Zoom me in? Not a chance. All week, I've been looking forward to getting out — finally — to share a three-dimensional encounter with a group of women whose company I enjoy.

For 14 months now, I've been cautious, careful and reliant on the company of one: my husband. Bob's a lovely guy. But that bit about love knowing no bounds? Highly overrated.

## What Will We Discover About Ourselves?

It's not just cabin fever that's driving me.

During these months of isolation, the only gatherings I've attended that involve more than one or two people (save family get-togethers with Bob's and my three kids) are my Pilates classes. But after we greet each other there, we climb onto the reformers and the only interaction is shared grunting.

At this point, I'm eager to see if I'm still capable of having a "normal" social encounter.

As the world begins to reopen, conversation is focused largely on how fast and how far people are willing to go to break out of their coronavirus cocoons. Are we willing to venture into a restaurant? An airport? An athletic stadium? Are we willing to exchange an elbow bump? A handshake? A hug?

While all this merits discussion, to me the more interesting question is what we're going to discover about ourselves when we step back into a world that has been in a state of arrest for more than a year.

I wonder, for instance, if we're going to find it a challenge to sustain a conversation without having the option to hit the Stop Video button on our Zoom screen so we can slip off to the bathroom to pee. If someone blathers on too long, will we find it difficult to maintain a pleasant expression on our face? (That Stop Video button has been

brilliant for hiding scowls.) Will we be able to converse comfortably without having a minute-to-minute readout on how our hair looks?

## How Will Social Engagements Change?

Are we going to feel the same enthusiasm for social engagements that we did before our enforced confinement? For months now, we've had few plans to make, fewer to juggle, almost none to worry about. Are we going to slip back into our multi-tasked lives with ease? Or are we going to discover that, hey, life in the slow lane had its appeal.

When I was training to become a life coach, one of the instructors observed, "Comparison is the death of true self-contentment." One of the delights of COVID-19 has been that it put everybody in the same docked boat; there was little to compare. When we venture back out into the world, the Comparison Games are certain to resume.

Are we going to discover

**As the world begins to reopen, conversation is focused largely on how fast and how far people are willing to go to break out of their coronavirus cocoons.**

that the "Quarantine 20" that everyone reportedly packed on is a myth? That our friends have been Peloton-ing their way through the pandemic and look fabulous? How will we feel if they look streamlined in the skinny jeans that websites insist are no longer a thing, while we stand out in our mom jeans as the very model of excessive nosing?

Will that blizzard of blogging about the joys of letting our hair go naturally gray prove a misleading weather report? Will we be the only one at a gathering sporting gray and looking, (yeah, I'm gonna say it) older?

As people return to theaters, cruise ships and museum lectures, are we going to find that we haven't missed being bombarded constantly by news of other people's exciting (and often pricey) adventures? Will we still be able to access the patience required to exhibit interest when people resume shoving their cell phones in our face to show off pictures of their latest exotic adventures?

Then there's the matter of dealing with multiple people vying for our attention.

When there's a pile-on of voices on Zoom, people tend to register the clamor and step back to let someone else finish a thought. At pre-COVID-19 gatherings and dinner parties, people had a habit of interrupting each other, often making it hard to get a word in edgewise, let alone complete a sentence. Are our brains still primed to deal with the ca-

cophony, let alone the frustration? Will we—

Wait! This just in: "Drum roll please.....Bartola is negative." All right, then. Game on. Yay.

But also, as Bubbe Paula would say, Oy.

Now, I've got to figure out what to wear. Too warm for a sweater? If I go the scoop-necked route, do I need a scarf? A necklace? And what about footwear? It's probably cool enough for ankle boots. But I've been comfy in slippers for months. Can my back handle standing around in heels? And what about leg coverage? After the bliss of sweatpants, do I really want to squeeze back into jeans, skinny or otherwise?

## Is the Zoom option still on the table?

All right, enough. Time to get up from this computer and begin preparing for my first social outing in 14 months. Never mind that a part of me wants to don a pair of ruby slippers, click my heels three times and say, "There's no place like home."

If my social skills have atrophied, well, I'll just have to forgive myself. Life, after all, is meant to be lived in 3D.

*Jill Smolowe is the author of *Four Funerals and a Wedding: Resilience in a Time of Grief*. To learn more about her book and her grief and divorce coaching, visit [jillsmolowe.com](http://jillsmolowe.com).*



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## SOCIAL &amp; WELL-BEING

# SOAR relocates to new Farmington Hills community center

By **Jenny Sherman**  
MediaNews Group

Farmington Hills opened its new community center The Hawk on June 8, offering a wide-variety of recreational spaces for aquatics, athletics, fitness classes, visual and performing arts, camps, special programming, events and more to local residents.

Among The Hawk's many offerings, the city's special services department has also teamed up with the Society of Active Retirees (SOAR) to relocate the group's offices to the newly renovated space, helping to expand their programming for Adults 50 & Better.

"We work very hard to put on excellent classes, events and social interactions for our members," Said Dionna Lloyd, executive director of SOAR. "The Hawk is going to be a great opportunity for us to partner together, to work on things in the future as a joint effort, and also to give our members things that they did not have (where we were before)."

SOAR—a community-based, lifelong learning initiative affiliated with Wayne State University and the Road Scholar Institute Network —has been offering classes and programs to retirees and residents 50 and older in the Farmington Hills area for the past 17 years on a wide variety of topics, according to Lloyd.

"SOAR members are very active, vibrant people," she said. "They have a love for learning and they like to stay engaged."

The Farmington Public Schools Board of Education voted in March 2018 to sell the 245,000-square-

foot Harrison High School building, 29995 W. 12 Mile Road, to the city of Farmington Hills for \$500,000 for future use as a community recreation and fine arts facility. The school closed in June 2019 due to declining enrollment and the city began converting the space into a community center later that year.

City council voted unanimously in July 2019 to authorize up to \$25 million in capital improvement bonds to convert the former school building— \$3 million of which went toward improvements to the Costick Center, the city's existing recreation center.

SOAR will continue to offer programming at the Costick Center in addition to programs, activities and events held at The Hawk. A nonprofit organization, SOAR offers a broad range of non-credit courses and related activities that provide multiple opportunities for social and cultural enrichment as well as personal growth, according to the organization's website.

And with expanded programming in 2021, there are plenty of opportunities for local retirees to enrich their lives.

"(At The Hawk) everything is in one place: theater, pool, gym; whatever makes you happy," Lloyd said in a promotional video for the new space. "You could walk around the outside; you could eat lunch outside; it's a beautiful grounds. So if you're an active retiree, come SOAR with us at The Hawk — I can't wait to see you!"

For more information about SOAR or to sign up for classes, visit [soarexplorer.com](http://soarexplorer.com).

— Mark Cavitt contributed to this report



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

The Hawk, Farmington Hills' new community center located inside the former Harrison High School building, opened to the public on Tuesday, June 8.



Offerings at The Hawk include a wide-variety of activities and programs such as aquatics, athletics, fitness classes, visual and performing arts, camps, special events and more.



## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

## Why you should manage your medical records

New rules and apps make it easier to compile them yourself

**By Christina Hernandez Sherwood**  
For Next Avenue

Tara Nurin has lived in seven states and seen at least a dozen doctors. So, in an effort to organize her health information, Nurin, a freelance journalist and author, started compiling decades worth of her medical records. Sometimes, the process has been surprisingly simple. Other times, it's been exasperating.

Nurin, 47, lives in Camden, N.J. — a city and state that both have health information exchanges, which enable record sharing across medical institutions. For Nurin, this means her current health care system links its virtual patient portal to her old system, making those records easy to combine.

But tracking down her old medical records from a dermatologist was an exercise in frustration. Nurin couldn't remember the provider's name. After two emails to her primary care doctor, that office sent a name — the wrong one.

Finally, Nurin found a prescription from her former dermatologist. She filled out a form to allow her new doctor to request the records, but as far as she knows, they're still in limbo.

"The fact that I've had to chase this down through so many different doctors' offices multiple times is aggravating," Nurin says.

"It concerns me a tiny bit," she adds. "I'm relatively young and healthy, so it's never been particularly critical to have my records. But I have no idea when I was immunized for certain things and no idea [about other aspects of my health history] and, theoretically, that could present a problem."

### Why Isn't This Process Easier?

Despite strides over the last decade to improve access to medical information, the U.S. health care system remains frustratingly fragmented. Many providers have online patient portals with at least some medical data, but you can't always depend on those systems to communicate with each other.

There's no master patient identifier to ensure all your records are linked back to you, says Dr. Harlan Krumholz, a cardiologist and director of the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation at the Yale School of Medicine. The only way to ensure you have all your health records, he says,

is to compile them yourself.

"Your medical record, believe it or not, even in 2021, varies from place to place," Krumholz says. "We're in an era where people need to be sure that they've got all the information and that information is right."

### Is It Worth the Time It Takes to Gather Your Records?

There are several reasons why you should compile your medical records, even if you don't have a major health issue, says Catherine DesRoches, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and executive director of OpenNotes, a nonprofit that studies and advocates for communication between patients and health care providers.

When patients have access to their medical notes, a 2019 study found, about a quarter identify an error — and half of those errors are considered clinically important. (That's a better success rate, DesRoches says, than many of the artificial intelligence systems that health care organizations use to catch potentially dangerous mistakes.)

Also, according to research, patients who read their health notes are more likely to take their medications as prescribed.

Why the bump in compliance? Sometimes we just need a reminder. Unless prompted, patients only remember half of what's discussed during a clinical visit, one study showed. We might recall even less from a particularly stressful visit, DesRoches says.

"Looking at what's in your record is a really great way to be sure that you understand what the doctor is thinking, and you know what you're supposed to do next," she says. "Those two things are quite powerful for patients."

### How Do I Get Started?

Here's how to compile, manage and use your medical records:

- Go digital. Start by signing up for the patient portals of all your health care providers, DesRoches says, and finding out what they have there. Through the portals, you might be able to link your digital records, as Nurin did, or request your records as a printable PDF.

(As of April 5, these online data hubs are even more rich with information. That's when a federal rule took effect that requires health care providers to give patients free access to all the information in their electronic records, including procedure notes and laboratory report narratives.)

RECORDS » PAGE 20

*God be in my head,  
and in my understanding.  
God be in my eyes  
and in my looking,  
God be in my mouth  
and in my speaking.  
God be in my heart  
and in my thinking,  
God be at my end  
and at my departing.*



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## Records

FROM PAGE 19

■ Consider an app. To streamline the process, you could connect your patient portals to a third-party medical record-management application. But a cautionary note: apps aren't covered by federal HIPAA privacy rules, so the onus is on the consumer to review an app's privacy standards.

Krumholz, who founded Hugo Health, a company that uses a cloud-based platform to enable patients to compile their health data, says: Read the fine print to ensure your security is protected and you maintain ownership of your information.

■ Know your rights. Though federal and state laws aim to make it easier for patients to access their medical records, discrepancies remain. Krumholz was a co-author of a 2018 study that found some of the top U.S. hospitals were not complying with medical-record release requirements.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information

Technology has online resources to help patients understand their rights around medical records.

■ Maintain your medical records. Make sure to hang on to any related to a major health event, such as a heart attack, cancer or surgery, says DesRoches. Related scans, imaging and other tests are also important, Krumholz adds, to help prevent costly and sometimes harmful repeat tests.

■ Use your data. You can use your medical records to keep up with your doctor's orders, prepare for upcoming appointments, share your health history with new doctors and keep family members in the loop. Having ownership of your medical records makes it easier to get a second opinion, Krumholz says, and to participate in medical research.

"I'm hoping within five years that this is going to be really common," he says. "[A patient's medical records] will tell a story of their health that can potentially provide insights that may help them and may help others."

*Christina Hernandez Sherwood is a freelance writer and editor.*

## Caregivers

FROM PAGE 10

■ Caregiver training and education (workshops and other reduced-cost learning opportunities)

■ Caregiver social and emotional support

■ Financial and legal support

■ Healthcare services

■ Transportation

■ Housing

Along with a one-page summary that can be downloaded, participants will get suggestions for improvements. They can also check out a best practices section to help guide them in beefing up services, and link to a website that offers evidence-based training and programs for caregivers.

"This is objective and simple and they get immediate results," says Amanda Sears, AAA 1-B's grant manager.

The 60-question survey requires a bit of preparation – participants need information about available services – and

about 30 minutes to plug in answers.

"Depending on who you have in the room, you can get it all in one day to find out where to invest energy to better support caregivers," says Sears.

The Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment is based on the walkability assessment Realtors use to "sell" a neighborhood. Communities that take the survey – and take action, if necessary – will be able to promote themselves as attractive for seniors and the family members who care for them. They may use the results to request more funding or advocate for more services for caregivers.

Representatives from 21 communities throughout Michigan, including Shannon Etcheverry, MSW, of Silver Club Memory Programs in Washtenaw County, road tested the assessment before its launch in the spring.

Adding weekend hours to the adult day program she runs is one of the recommendations of the assessment. And while the idea isn't new, Etcheverry isn't yet sure there is consumer de-

mand or how to reconfigure staff to make it happen.

"Like any organization, we have areas we could do better. One of our barriers is that our hours have always been 10 to 3, so it makes it difficult for caregivers who are working. There are things like that where we could do better," she says. "Doing an assessment made me think about it differently: How does my organization fit into the puzzle of caregiver services in the county?"

Julie Shaw, associate director of SAIL, Disability Network of the U.P. in Marquette, says the assessment pointed out gaps in services, some of them chronic such as transportation and the availability of direct care workers.

Still, "The information we received back from the survey was wonderful. For the last 25 years of my career, I've tried to work on the gaps identified and verified for me, which made me happy to hear I'm on the right path," Shaw says.

*Content courtesy of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B.*



Vitality publishes every month, and is specially written and produced for older adults 55 and over. Monthly features include • Health Care

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## Calendar of activities, events and trips

**Editor's Note:** Before attending an event, contact the organizers to find out if it has been cancelled due to COVID-19.

To submit information for the calendar, email jgray@medianewsgroup.com.

### New groups forming in the New Baltimore/Chesterfield area:

**Widow-ers, Widows and Divorced Seniors On With Life.** This group offers socializing, activities and rap sessions. For more information or to be placed on the contact list, call 586-6465636.

## JUNE

**June 15:** Adult Take & Make Craft: Paper Butterfly sponsored by the Roseville Library, 29777 Gratiot Ave. Pick Up: Tuesday, June 15. Register beginning: Tuesday, May 25 Use pages from an old children's book, magazine or other colorful

paper to create a beautiful paper butterfly. Participants must have a valid Roseville library card in good standing in their name to register for this program. For more information, call 586-445-5407.

## AUGUST

**Aug. 11:** Cornwell's Tur-keyville & Marshall – Aug 11. Join Travel with Nance for \$85. Live musical matinee, of 'Godspell' with turkey buffet lunch, time at gift shop, bakery. Narrated tour of Marshall (drive-by): Honolulu House, National Inn, Governor's Mansion & Capitol Hill School House. Call 313-535-2921.

**Aug. 30-Sep. 3:** MHL presents the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, the life-sized Noah's Ark Experience will certainly amaze you. Ark Encounter features a full-size Noah's ark built

according to the dimensions given in the Bible. Spanning 510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet high this modern engineering marvel amazes visitors young and old. We will also visit the Creation Museum's 75,000 square feet of state of the art exhibits, stunning botanical gardens, petting zoo, etc. This evening enjoy a dinner party with entertainment. The next day after our morning continental breakfast, we stop at a casino for some gaming. Afterwards, you'll enjoy a BBBB River-boat's sightseeing cruise on the Ohio River. All this and the price is only \$579 double occupancy and it includes 4 breakfast, 4 dinners, admission to all attractions, sight-seeing cruise and visit to a Casino. Contact Mary Ann at 586-530-6936 for more information and details.

## SEPTEMBER

**Sept. 4-6:** 63rd Annual Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk. Join Travel with Nance (price to be announced). 2 nites at Days Inn in St. Ignace (Upper Peninsula). Round trip ferry to Mackinac Island for the day (open return). Shopping in Mackinaw City, two nites gaming at Kewadin Shores Casino (\$20 Free Play, \$10 Food Coupon). 2 continental breakfasts at motel. Call 313-535-2921.

**Sept. 11-19:** Mount Rushmore. Join Travel with Nance for \$989. 4 nites in South Dakota & two nites enroute each way. Badlands National Park, Borglum Historical Center, Mt. Rushmore National Cultural Center. Journey Museum & High Plains Western Heritage Center. Guided tour Deadwood & Casino. Des Moines Botanical Center, Wall Drug, Corn Palace, Amana Heritage Museum.

6 dinners (2 with entertainment), 8 breakfasts. Call 313-535-2921.

## OCTOBER

**Oct. 3-9:** Cape Cod, Boston, Salem, Gloucester, MA. Join Travel with Nance for \$996. 4 nites at Commo-dore Inn on the Cape & 1 enroute each way. Guided tours of Boston, Salem, Cape Cod, Hyannisport & Plymouth. Cape Cod National Seashore, House of Seven Gables, dune buggy ride Provincetown, Cheers Bar, Fanuil Hall & Quincy Market, JFK Memorial, Sandwich Glass Museum, Plymouth Rock & Lobstering Cruise. 6 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 2 dinners. Call 313-535-2921.

**Oct. 6-19:** MHL presents Grand Canyon, Las Vegas and the Hoover Dam, Oct. 6 through Oct. 19. We're going to go for 13 nights, three consecutive nights in a Las Vegas casino hotel, with 19

meals (10 breakfast and 9 dinners), admission to the Hoover Dam Visitor Center, a visit to the Grand Canyon National Park including viewing an IMAX Grand Canyon movie, Petrified Forest National Park, Etc., Etc. The cost is \$1,559 with double occupancy. For more information, pick-up locations, times, and other details, contact Mary Ann Spisak at 586-530-6936.

**Oct. 10:** Belle Isle and Homes of Detroit. Join Travel with Nance for \$55. One hour Belle Isle narrated tour, City tour of Detroit: drive by 'Tiny Houses', Boston Edison District, James Scott Home, Indian Village. Lunch at American or Lafayette Coney Islands. Call 313-535-2921.

**Oct. 13:** Cornwell's Tur-keyville & Marshall. Join Travel with Nance for \$85. Live musical matinee, of

CALENDAR » PAGE 22

# Proud Grandparents

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Proud Grandparents are: \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Any photos received after photo page is full will be held and used in future issues.

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# Calendar

## FROM PAGE 21

'Johnny Cash' hits with turkey buffet lunch, gift shop, bakery. Narrated tour of Marshall (drive-by): Honolulu House, National Inn, Governor's Mansion, Capitol Hill School House. Call 313-535-2921.

**Oct. 18-22:** Nashville, TN. Join Travel with Nance for \$665. 4 nites hotel in

the Nashville area. Guided City tour with stop at the Parthenon. Grand Ole Opry performance, Nashville Nightlife Dinner Theatre, Grand Ole Opry Backstage tour. Country Music Hall of Fame, Belle Meade Plantation, Delta Flatboat Ride at Opryland Hotel. 4 brkfs, 4 dinners. Call 313-535-2921.

**Oct. 24-30:** Savannah, St. Simons & Jekyll Islands, GA and Beaufort, SC. Join Travel with Nance for \$789. 4 nites Savannah area, and

one night enroute each way. Guided Trolley tour of Savannah plus Hop-On/Hop-Off Privileges. See Parris Island, SC, Beaufort. Tour St. Simons Island, tram tour of Jekyll Island. Evening show at Famous Savannah Theatre. Visit S.C. State Museum. 6 brkfs, 4 dinners. Call 313-535-2921.

## DECEMBER

**Dec. 5-11:** Christmas in the Smokies: Seven days

six nights, Dec. 5-11, which includes a visit to the Titanic Museum, Admission to Dollywood Theme Park, Tour of the Biltmore House, souvenir gift, etc. and the price is only \$1,179 with double occupancy. For information and to make reservations, contact Mary Ann Spisak at 586-530-6936.

## MONTHLY EVENTS

■ **Octagon House Sit and Stitch:** is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 1-4 p.m., 57500 Van Dyke, Washington. For more information, call 586-781-0084.

■ **Volunteers needed:** Volunteers are needed to help immigrants with conversational English during English workshops at the Troy Community Center. Neither educational qualifications nor experience is required, but volunteers should be natural-born Americans who speak the standard American dialect. Volunteers may sign up for

one or both schedules, 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays. For more information, contact Ed Lee at 248-926-2288 or edlee@toee.org.

■ **Confident Communicators Club:** Meets monthly for people that need self improvement skills in public speaking and confidence with leading people confidently, in any clubs, schools, travel, families, churches and it is a free non profit club the first three visits. The group meets at Washington townships senior center 57900 Van Dyke upstairs level on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8-9:30 a.m.

■ **Senior Card Playing:** Come and join a fun group of card players who play a wide range of card games. Everyone brings a snack to share while playing. Free. Mondays from 1-4 p.m. at 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

■ **New Baltimore Senior**

**Club:** Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This welcoming group of seniors has all sorts of fun. We play bingo, hold luncheons, go on trips, and play cards. Monthly dues, \$2. Location 35248 Cricklewood Blvd. (Cricklewood Recreation Building). Call 586-725-0291.

■ **Zumba Gold:** from 10:30-11:30 a.m. every Monday and Wednesday at the Washington Center, 57880 Van Dyke, Washington Twp. Cost depends on how many punches purchased. 4 punches \$23 resident, \$29 NR; 11 punches \$60 resident, \$66 NR. For more information, call 586-752-6543.

■ **Line Dancing:** Join us for line dancing every Thursday at our Washington Activity Center (57900 Van Dyke, Washington) Intermediate/Advanced starts at 10:30 and Beginners starts at 11:30. Call for more details 586-752-6543

■ **Pickleball:** is played from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at the Romeo Activity Center, 361 Morton St. Drop in to play or call 586-752-9601 for more information.

■ **The Warren/Center Line Senior Connection:** invites adults ages 55 and older to join Macomb County's vibrant senior group. The group meets on the second Monday of the month at DeCarlo's Banquet & Convention Center, 6015 E. 10 Mile Road in Warren, just east of Mound. Doors open at 5 p.m., and programs start at 6 p.m. Dues are \$10 per year, and members receive the following: free refreshments, coffee, soft drinks, juices, and snacks; music by a disc jockey and dancing; and information from guest speakers. Featured speakers throughout the year include officials from federal, state, county, and city governments; doctors of all specialties, from internal medicine and gerontologists to cancer specialists; elder law attorneys; and fraud prevention speakers. For

# Next Issue of Vitality



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**THURSDAY  
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## In Loving Memory

To all Pet Owners who would like to post a Memory Photo and Note of a Pet that has passed away, please send a photo/note to the email or address below along with form below.

*Photos will not be returned.  
We must receive photos by  
June 30, 2021*

*To be include in our July issue.*

Name(s) of Pets: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Family.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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demke@medianewsgroup.com

Mail to: Vitality Pet Page  
Attn: Dawn Emke  
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\*Any photos received after photo page is full will be held and used in future issues.



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## 2021 Motorcoach Tours

**Cornwell Turkeyville Dinner Theatre**

Aug 11, \$85. "Godspell".

**Uncle John's Cider Mill**

Aug 28, \$72. Arts & Crafts Fair.

**63rd Annual Labor Day Bridge Walk**

Sept 4-6, Price To Be Announced.

**Mt. Rushmore, Sept 11-19, \$989**

**Cape Cod, Boston, Salem, Gloucester**

Oct 3-9, \$996. Commodore Inn.

**Belle Isle & Homes of Detroit**

Oct 10, \$55. Det. Edison, Tiny Houses.

**Nashville, Oct 18-22, \$665**

**Cornwell Turkeyville Dinner Theatre**

Oct 13, \$85. "Johnny Cash".

**Savannah, St. Simons, Jekyll Island**

Oct 24-30, \$789

**Branson (7 shows), Nov 8-13, \$687.**

**Cornwell Turkeyville Dinner Theatre**

Nov 17, \$85. "Dashing thru the Snow"

**Detroit Churches (4), Dec 3, \$60.**



more information, call 586-268-9452, 586-264-5657, or 586-755-6112.

■ **Pickleball:** is going strong at the Romeo Activity Center (361 Morton Street, Romeo) every Tuesday and Thursday from 10-11. Please call for more details 586-752-6543.

■ **Volunteers needed:** Volunteers are needed to help immigrants with conversational English during English workshops at the Troy Community Center. Neither educational qualifications nor experience is required, but volunteers should be natural-born Americans who speak the standard American dialect. Volunteers may sign up for one or both schedules, 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays. For more information, contact Ed Lee at 248-926-2288 or edlee@toee.org.

■ **Euchre parties:** Disabled American Veterans 129 and Operation Yellow Ribbon

hold euchre parties from 4 to 6 p.m. on the second Sundays and 7 to 9 p.m. on the fourth Thursdays of every month at 47326 Dequindre Road in Shelby Township. The cost is \$7 (plus quarters for euchre). Refreshments will be available. Reservations are needed one day in advance. Call 248-425-2722 or 248-953-4901 to register or for more information.

■ **The Mi Stitchin' Time Crochet Group:** meets from 5:30 to 7 p.m. every Tuesday at the Romeo District Library's Kezar Library, 107 Church St. For more information, call 586-752-2583.

■ **Detroit region retirees:** If you live in the metropolitan Detroit area, are retired, and would like to meet new people from other walks of life, the Detroit region retirees group meets five times a year at various restaurants in the area. For more information, contact

Stanley Hreneczko at 586-268-3656.

■ **Cards and games:** Widowed men and women of all ages are welcome to meet for cards and games from 6 to 9 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at Sts. John and Paul Catholic Church, 7777 28 Mile Road, in Washington Township and on the third Thursday of each month at St. Isidore Church, 18201 23 Mile Road, in Macomb. Cards and games will be provided. Bring a small snack to share and your own beverage. For more information, call 586-781-5781 or 586-991-7374.

■ **Fine art classes:** The Older Persons Commission, 650 Letica in Rochester, offers fine arts classes such as Chinese brush painting, watercolor painting, drawing, clay jewelry, or pottery wheel hand building. Days and times vary. For more information, visit opcseniorcenter.org and

click "about us" and then the "newsletter" tab.

■ **Club 55:** meets from 9 a.m. to noon every Tuesday at Classic Lanes, 2145 Avon Industrial Drive in Rochester Hills. The cost is \$5 per person for three games and shoes. Guests receive complimentary coffee and cookies. For more information, call 248-852-9100.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited for a movie and dinner on the third Sunday of each month at the AMC Forum 30 Theatre in Sterling Heights, followed by dinner at UNO Restaurant in the same complex. To RSVP and find out movie selection and time, call 248-917-3733 or email angelway11@comcast.net.

■ **All widowed:** are invited to meet on the third Wednesday of each month for dinner at area restaurants at 5 p.m. Order from the menu, separate checks. RSVP and find out location

by calling 248-840-0063.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited every third Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. at St. Isidore Church, 18201 23 Mile Road, for cards, games, and friendship. Bring a small snack to share and your own beverage. For more information, call 586-991-7374.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited to meet at 10 a.m. each third Tuesday at The Pancake Factory, 13693 23 Mile Road, in Shelby Township. For more information, call 586-781-5781.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited to meet at 10 a.m. each second Monday at Wildflower Restaurant, 42900 Garfield in Clinton Township. For more information, call 586-264-1939.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited to meet for breakfast on the second and fourth Monday of every month at Sero's, 925

Gratiot Ave., in Marysville. For more information, call 810-334-6267.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited to meet for breakfast at 9 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at Country Inn, 35229 23 Mile Road in New Baltimore. For more information, call 586-991-7374.

■ **Widowed men:** are invited to attend breakfast every first and third Thursday monthly at 9 a.m. at Lukich Family Restaurant, 3900 Rochester Road in Troy. For more information, call 248-585-5402.

■ **Widowed men and women:** are invited to bowl at 10 a.m. every Wednesday at 5 Star Lanes, 2666 Metropolitan Parkway in Sterling Heights. Drop-in league, pay when play, and cards are drawn to form teams. Lunch afterward is optional, and checks will be separate. For more information, call 586-755-0597 or 586-254-8199.

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# In Memory of Bailey Bear

To My Sweet Bailey Bear,  
You have stolen the heart of all who  
ever met you. You have loved and  
accepted everyone you could possibly  
find to pet you.  
You would just lean into their leg and  
see how long you could get them to  
pay attention to you.

Your quirkiness of wanting full  
attention and snuggles....  
but not too much!

You were a great ball chaser,  
cannonball expert, swimmer, traveler,  
treat requester, neighborhood  
wonderer, friend, and barker just in  
this past year.

Your kind, gentle soul is visible in all  
the fond memories we have of you.

Till we can pet you again.  
Love, Mom

Bailey,  
I'm taking comfort in knowing you're  
casually doing a lap in heavens  
swimming pool, taking yourself for  
walks, running with Chevy and finally  
getting a chance to apologize to the  
squirrel you shook too hard.

I love you Bailey Bear.  
Love, Erika

Bailey,  
You were one of the most loyal  
and obedient dog anyone could  
ask for. You never let anyone  
pass without petting you.

Brandon

Bailey,  
You will always hold a very special  
place in my heart.  
Thank you for giving me the best  
childhood ever and being my best  
friend. I will miss having you chase  
us around the pool and bringing you  
to your favorite park, or upnorth to  
go swimming in the lake. You always  
knew how to cheer me up when I was  
sad and were the best cuddler. You  
were the most laid back and friendly  
dog and showed love to every single  
person, stranger or not, that passed  
by. Also, thank you for putting up with  
our crazy family for all of those years!  
It's going to be different not having  
you greet me every time I come home  
and I will miss that, but at least I have  
about a million pictures of you to  
remember you by. I know you hated  
pictures being taken of you, but you  
will always be the most photogenic  
dog I've ever seen.

Love, Amanda





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