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TRAVEL

LOOKING TO TRAVEL THIS SPRING? HERE ARE SOME TIPS

By Courtney Diener-Stokes
For Media News Group

For most people, just the idea of traveling has been much more taxing than the traveling itself, said Christine Lucas, a travel advisor at Boscov's Travel in Pottstown.

She attributes that to the COVID vaccination and testing requirements that have impacted the travel industry since the start of the pandemic. But with a decrease in COVID cases leading to an easing of restrictions, things are beginning to change.

That might make you more inclined to want to venture across the U.S. or out of the country.

"It's much different now and it's fairly simple," Lucas said. "A lot of destinations are easing up on their COVID requirements."

Depending on where you want to go, each destination might have a different set of COVID restrictions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you should get a COVID test no more than three days before you travel domestically.

If you plan to travel as part of a tour or other group, in most cases restrictions will apply.

"Some of these tour companies require you to be fully vaccinated and sometimes even boosted if they want to travel to the national parks, Canadian Rockies, even Ni-



COURTESY OF KAMPUS PRODUCTIONS

All-inclusive options, popular among retirees, enable you to stay put at your resort or venture out to explore.

agara Falls," Lucas said. "Getting a negative COVID test is even necessary to go to some U.S. territories like Puerto Rico and different islands in Hawaii."

Easiest place to go

Lucas shared what she believes is the easiest place to go if you want to feel assured that your trip will go as planned.

"The easiest places to travel right now are Mexico and the Dominican Republic because they don't have any vaccination requirements, and you aren't required to have a negative COVID

test," she said.

However, there will be some things to consider on your return trip.

"When you leave the U.S., no matter where you go outside of the U.S., you have to get tested before you can get back into the U.S.," she said. "You can't avoid that unless you stay in the U.S."

The war in Ukraine is also having an impact on some European travel, Lucas said.

"We have a lot of people cruising, and St. Petersburg, Russia, is very popular, and it's been re-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Boscov's Travel has 18 locations, including Pottstown, Wyomissing, Exeter Township and Lancaster.

Website: www.boscov-stravel.com

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COURTESY OF KAMPUS PRODUCTION

Travel

FROM PAGE 1

moved from the itinerary on different cruise lines just this week and last week," she said.

Travelers are getting notifications from cruise lines altering their itineraries for Northern Europe.

"Cruise lines give them options to stick with the new itinerary or they can rebook another cruise," she said. "They are also refunding and offering cruise credits too."

Guide customers

Lucas said that at this time she would guide customers to the Mediterranean if they want to be more assured their trip won't get canceled or altered.

"I would have them do something more like Italy or Greece," she said. "It's farther removed from Russia and the Ukraine that you hope it's not going to be affected."

For those who are fans of cruising but are leery of venturing into situations with large numbers of people indoors, Lucas discussed the sanitization and COVID measures that she said make it a safe option.

"In order to get on the cruise ship, you have to have a negative test as well as be vaccinated," she said. "The crew is 100% vaccinated, and the passengers are 95% vaccinated, and the 5% that aren't, are under the age of 5."

There are some new masking guidelines on cruise ships, Lucas said.

"They were required indoors before but now it's optional masking," she said.

Lucas said that masks are still required on any form of public transportation such as airplanes and tour buses.

Favorite destinations

Many clients who are 65 and older gravitate toward all-inclusive options through Boscov's travel, and Lucas said one of the

favorite destinations is Turks and Caicos.

"Aruba is also a big one, and people love Riviera Maya, Mexico and Aruba," she said. "Mexico is definitely the biggest spot, and affordability is a factor as well."

Lucas finds that many retirees love to travel by rail in addition to cruises that include some land time.

"They are always asking for rail," she said. "It's a way to sit back and relax and take in the scenery."

She said that Alaska is a huge destination for seniors.

"If you travel by train through the Canadian Rockies or Alaska, you have this panoramic view of everything around you because there are now open dome rail cars," she said. "They are the two most popular destinations for our seniors."

Best reviews

A day or two after a trip, Boscov's Travel welcomes customers back and asks them to give feedback if they would like. She shared the resort chain that gets the best reviews with regard to food, service, clientele and COVID policies.

"Some of the best resorts are the AMResorts," she said. "They consist of resort brands such as Secrets, Breathless, Dream and Zoetry, among others."

According to Lucas, a benefit of AMResorts is that they will administer your COVID test right at the resort prior to your return to the U. S.

"If you get a positive COVID test you can stay for up to 14 days at no charge," she said.

At island destinations, you have many options that can feed into a desire to either relax or add some adventure.

"You have the option of chilling at the resort, but can do horseback riding, dolphin encounters, ziplining, ATV riding, jet skiing," she said. "There are tours at all of these resorts if you're looking for something to do."

Boscov's Travel follows up with guests to get feedback on their vacations.



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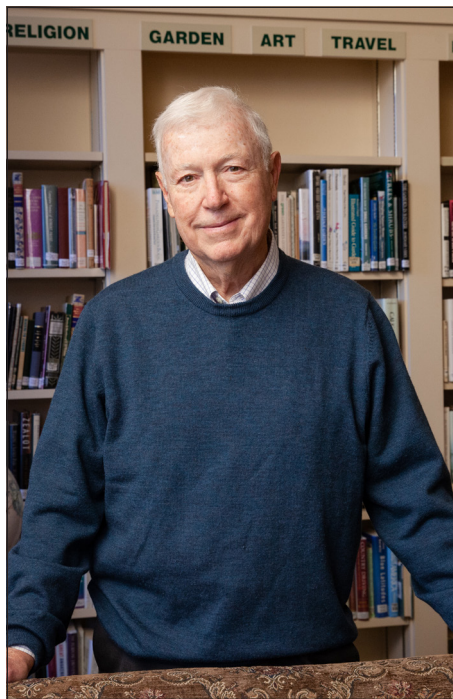
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SENIOR LIVING



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Bob Bruce in the White Horse Village library.



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Ursula Siebeneich working on a stone sculpture in the White Horse Village art studio.



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Nancy Gerber in her apartment at White Horse Village.

Tips on choosing your senior living destination

White Horse Village

Your children are grown and on their own, you are enjoying retirement, and now it is time to consider simplifying your living situation. Is a senior living community the right choice for you? What factors should you consider in choosing a senior living destination? Who do you ask for advice?

Undoubtedly, the best advice comes from those who have already made those decisions. Here are the stories from residents at White Horse Village in Edgmont Township, Delaware County.

Ginna Clark: amenities, activities and action

When her husband, Jim, passed away in 2008, Ginna Clark found herself living alone in her spacious home in Swarthmore, Delaware County.

"I didn't expect to move to a senior living community," she said. "It wasn't until my daughter suggested we stop by White Horse Village for a quick visit that I began to consider a move."

Ginna wanted a fireplace, a garden and lots of activities. Within a short time, she moved into her Garden apartment, complete with that fireplace she wanted, a day planner packed with lots of social and volunteer activities and a fitness schedule that would make the immortal Richard Simmons tired.

Nancy Gerber: continuing care options

Nancy Gerber returned to her native New York after raising her children in the Philadelphia area. Four years ago, she decided the time was right to move back. She had friends at White Horse Village and knew she would be happy returning to the area.

What really sold Gerber on the community was the knowledge that when the



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Ginna Clark in her apartment at White Horse Village.

day comes that she needs more assistance, as a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), White Horse Village will be there for her.

"The concept of knowing my healthcare needs will be met for life is wonderful," she said. "I wanted to make sure my children wouldn't need to worry about me in the years ahead. Living here enables adult children to both have a life and be attentive to their parents in ways that are not caretaking; that's very important!"

Bob Bruce: variety of housing options

Bob Bruce and his now-deceased wife, Judy, moved to White Horse Village after living in Wallingford, Delaware County, for more than 30 years.

Bob had retired as President of Widener University, and Judy was having health challenges. Finding a community that was spacious and not a high-rise appealed, but being within walking distance of the heartbeat of the community activities was important. Having a variety of options was key.

"People in their mid-60s decide it's time to get rid of the big house, and because of the many housing options here, it attracts a lot

of different people," he said. "There is something for everyone."

Ursula Siebeneich: good neighbors

Ursula Sienbeneich knew as she was picking a senior community that she needed a place where she would fit in and feel comfortable.

"It's important to have a sense of place within the community: Will I fit in here? Will I like the people? Will people like me?" she said.

With the pandemic, that need for being part of a community of "family" was all the more critical.

"I like the fact there's a sense of community," she said. "This became even more evident during the pandemic as residents walked the hallways just being friendly, smiling and greeting each other. White Horse Village is just the right size for me; you get to know many of the residents."

Whether it is the people, the activities, the amenities or the healthcare services, the key is to talk to others who have already navigated the process and who can help answer questions, ease fears, and help you turn the page to the next chapter of your best life.

About White Horse Village: Situated on 96 acres in southeastern Pennsylvania, White Horse Village is an active senior living community offering a full range of living options and healthcare services. The community intentionally creates opportunities for extraordinary living in a vibrant, diverse community through personal growth, connectedness, and relationships. As a nonprofit organization, White Horse Village reinvests earnings back into the organization to further the mission and vision. For more information, visit www.whitehorsevillage.org.



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TECHNOLOGY

White Horse Village adds robotic server to the team

White Horse Village

White Horse Village, an active nonprofit senior living community in Edgmont Township, Delaware County, has added a new member to the dining services team, a robot Servi, which has been affectionately named Robbie by residents.

This high-tech waiter is adding an entirely new dimension to the dining experience for residents, effortlessly delivering food from the kitchen to the table. Once Robbie arrives at the table, dining team members hand-deliver the food, sending the robot back to the kitchen with empty dishes to prepare for its next mission.

“Robbie supports our team members by running food, which frees up their time to focus on quality interactions and relationships with residents,” said Len Weiser, president and CEO. “Robbie ensures our team can focus on the value of building relationships, working up to 12 hours straight and never taking a break.”

Created by Bear Robotics, the robot Servi offers three tiers that hold up to 66 pounds to deliver food from the kitchen and return empty trays efficiently. Traveling quietly, the robot plays jazz tunes to alert residents that it is nearby and can also wish someone a happy birthday.

“Residents think Rob-

“Robbie supports our team members by running food, which frees up their time to focus on quality interactions and relationships with residents.”

bie is cute, and they like the music it plays while motoring about the restaurant,” said resident Jim Snively, chairman of the Resident Association’s Dining Advisory Committee. “Robbie carries meals to our table promptly, ensuring they are served hot, allowing servers to pay more attention to their assigned tables and relieving them from carrying heavy trays”

Robbie was programmed by a Bear Robotics representative, who mapped out the Steeplechase Dining Room so the robot could determine the routes to safely and easily navigate to tables. Weight sensors detect when a person has taken a plate off the tray, signaling it to return to the kitchen.

White Horse Village embraces innovative solutions to provide extraordinary senior living experiences while maintaining a person-centered approach. Servi joins other technology programs implemented on campus, including Zeen mobility device and K4Connect community system.

About White Horse Village: Situated on 96 acres in southeastern Pennsylvania, White Horse Vil-

lage is an active senior living community offering a full range of living options and healthcare services. The community intentionally creates opportunities for extraordinary living in a vibrant, diverse community through personal growth, connectedness, and relationships. As a nonprofit organization, White Horse Village reinvests earnings back into the organization to further the mission and vision. For more information, please visit www.whitehorsevillage.org.

About Bear Robotics: Bear Robotics is elevating dining experiences by automating the hard part. By utilizing AI and autonomous robot technology, Bear Robotics deploys robots to take care of everything from drink serving to food bussing, allowing hosts, servers and waitstaff to focus on delivering outstanding service. Headquartered in Redwood City, Calif., and Dallas, Bear Robotics’ multi-award-winning robots tackle tough jobs in fine-tuned fashion across a range of restaurants, corporate campuses, ghost kitchens, senior care facilities, and casinos across North America and Asia.



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

A server at White Horse Village delivers food from Servi the robot to the table.



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Servi, nicknamed Robbie by residents, in the kitchen at White Horse Village.

Let Seniorlife tell your story!



Seniorlife is the premier vehicle in the Philadelphia suburbs for news, events, stories or anything else that relates to the Senior Market.

We want your stories - Know of upcoming events that would be of interest to Seniors? Have an idea for a compelling feature story? Want to submit a personal essay? **Send it to us!**

We want your PHOTOS! Do you have pictures from community events involving Seniors, or programs at community centers or retirement facilities or milestone birthday's and occasions that should be shared? **Send them to us!**

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SPOT OF T

Finding peace in the Reflection Pool

By Terry Alburger

Life these days is nothing less than chaotic. We are emerging from a pandemic, which seemed to last an eternity; the world waits to see what will happen next in the tragic war underway in Ukraine at the hands of a ruthless enemy; locally, we seem to be plagued by violence and intolerance and hatred; perhaps we have loved ones who are struggling.

Yes, this crazy world can be very scary. Yet, if you look for it, you can find good, and you can find peace.

I am always looking for ways to keep relaxed and not let the craziness affect me adversely. I tend to use visualization to help my mind stay calm, to ease the tensions which I had absorbed throughout the course of the day. Recently, I came upon a very helpful mental exercise that really helps me. I call it the Reflection Pool.

At the end of a stressful day, I find a quiet spot and close my eyes. This works best when I'm going to bed for the evening, because it usually lulls me to sleep.

I close my eyes, my mind tends to run in 100 different directions, worrying about this one or that one, thinking of work problems or just overwhelmed with how many tasks I must accomplish.

I stress over ill family members or grieve over recent losses. My mind is a jumble of activity and abuzz with what if's. Time for action.

In my mind, I see a large swimming pool, and each problem, each worry and each stress is represented by a nondescript person floundering and splashing in that pool.

Then, it happens. I blow the imaginary whistle, and each being, each entity, each problem, turns and exits the pool.

As they emerge from the water, they simply vanish. I am left with a peaceful pool, which exudes calmness and tranquility. I continue to look at the water, soothed by the gentle lapping of water on the sides of the pool until eventually, the surface is completely still.

I can see the peace. I can feel the peace. I think of only the surface of the water. No other thoughts are allowed in, banished from my pool and from my mind. As I allow my mind to near the water, I begin to see my reflection gazing back at me.

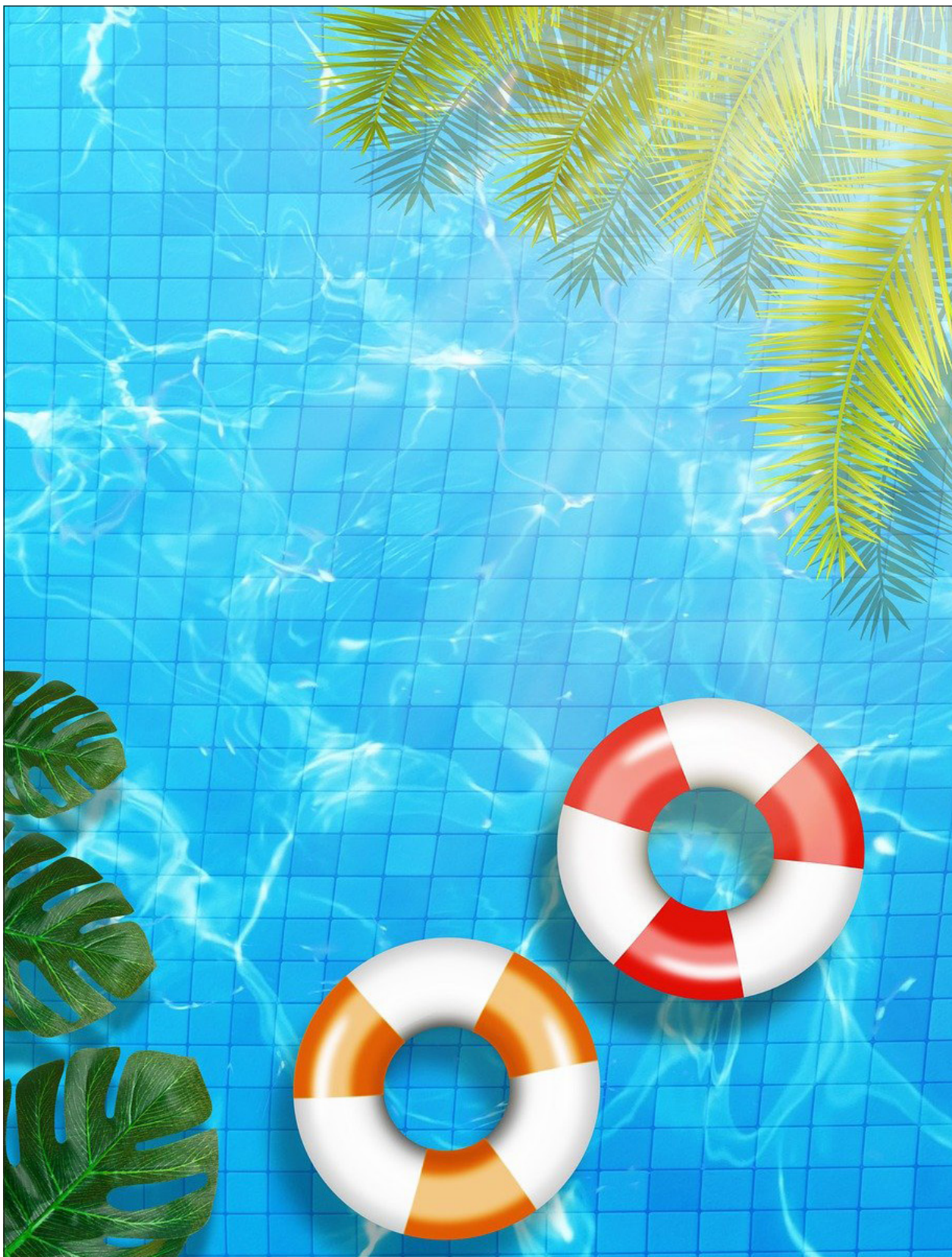
It gives me the opportunity to face a calmer version of myself, to let my mind release the problems of the day and to reflect on my life, minus all the stress with which I was burdened earlier in the day.

As I become more and more relaxed, things seem to come into clearer focus. And I know that ultimately, everything will be OK. I just have to let go of the angst and embrace the quiet.

Once I am in that mindset, I can see myself slowly walking into this still pool, lying back and floating, enveloped by the warm waters of peace. It is usually around this point that I fall asleep, peacefully and quickly. I couldn't tell you what happens next!

I know visualization doesn't work for everyone, but this certainly helps to calm the savage beast that I can become when stressed out. I welcome you to try it and invite you to my swimming pool!

Take a dip — it just might make a difference!



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HEALTH



COURTESY OF CHESTNUT KNOLL

Betty Moore of Boyertown, right, participates in a free exercise class at Chestnut Knoll.

Exercise, friendship spark Boyertown woman's comeback from health issues

MediaNews Group

When the going gets tough, Betty Moore keeps going. The spunky 76-year-old Boyertown resident has no plans to slow down.

Despite undergoing a second back surgery in November to repair nerve damage and a bulging disk, she stays on the go.

Moore exercises three times a week. She's a part

of a group dubbed the "Foxy Ladies and Gentlemen," which meets at Chestnut Knoll, a personal care and memory care community in Boyertown.

Free exercise classes are possible through Chestnut Knoll and its partnership with FOX Rehabilitation, which also provides on-site therapy services, including the exclusive FOX Optimal Living Program,

to its residents.

The program began as a pilot project as a way to ensure seniors received therapy services despite insurance limitations.

"The FOX Optimal Living Program has exceeded all of our expectations for both our residents and the surrounding community," said Chestnut Knoll Executive Director Shawn Barndt. "Since its introduction, the program has

been a game changer and is what makes Chestnut Knoll a standout in the senior living industry."

Director of Physiology and exercise physiologist Eric Sartor facilitates the classes using a variety of modified workouts that focus on improving strength, mobility and balance. The exercises are tailored to benefit older adults and can be adapted to accommodate different capabilities, so everyone can participate.

"We welcome everybody to the exercise class," Moore said. "Eric is wonderful; he takes an interest in your life, and he also puts up with our shenanigans."

Her goal is to regain her abilities following her recent procedure. Through a steady exercise routine, Moore noted she now stands more frequently during class.

"Betty brings such a unique and positive element to our group," Sartor said. "She makes it a point to interact with other members and staff, joking and motivating on a daily basis. She keeps the energy light and refreshing, putting smiles on a lot of faces. I also enjoyed getting to know Betty a little better during her short respite stay at Chestnut Knoll. She is such an incredibly valuable part of our group and I'm thankful she attends so often."



COURTESY OF CHESTNUT KNOLL

Betty Moore and Eric Sartor, exercise physiologist and director of physiology at Chestnut Knoll.

Moore attended these classes pre-pandemic. She discovered Chestnut Knoll by happenstance while at an appointment with her sister. She struck up conversation with a woman in the waiting room, who told her about Chestnut Knoll's exercise class.

"I gave it a try, and since

BETTY MOORE » PAGE 7



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SENIOR LIVING

TWO AREA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES NAMED 2022 BEST OF SENIOR LIVING

MediaNews Group

Chestnut Knoll in Boyertown and Keystone Villa at Douglassville have received the 2022 Best of Senior Living, awarded by A Place for Mom.

The leading online platform and trusted advisory service helps families navigate the complexities of finding the right senior living solution for their loved one across home care, independent living, personal care, memory care and more.

Recipients are chosen based on community reviews from seniors and their families. Eligible communities and providers had to receive at least 10 reviews with an average rating of 4.5 stars or more between Nov. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2021.

Chestnut Knoll and Keystone Villa consistently provides outstanding care, as noted by the online reviews from residents and their families and community visitors.

"I'd like to congratulate everyone on the staff for earning this outstanding achievement," said Shawn Barndt, executive director

of Chestnut Knoll. "It takes a dedicated caring team with exceptional attention to detail to accomplish these results— an indication of the superior quality of care and services we provide to the residents of Chestnut Knoll every day."

"Our team would not be able to receive this award without our residents and their families and visitors of our community," said Sue Seanor, executive director of Keystone Villa at Douglassville, Independent Living. "Their authentic, honest reviews showcase our dedication to senior living."

Chestnut Knoll provides personal care and memory care services to help seniors live full, healthy and active lives. For older adults not ready to transition to senior living, Chestnut Knoll also offers home care through Chestnut Knoll At Home Services.

Keystone Villa at Douglassville, Independent Living is an ideal setting for seniors who want to maintain their independence, while enjoying a worry-free, healthy and active lifestyle.

For more information

on Chestnut Knoll's award-winning community or to schedule a tour, call Julie or Hallie at 610-473-8066 or visit www.chestnutknoll.com.

For more information on Keystone Villa at Douglassville's award-winning Independent Living community or to schedule a tour, call Sue at 610-385-5001 or visit www.keystonevillaatdouglassville.com.

About Chestnut Knoll: Chestnut Knoll is an award-winning senior community offering personal care and memory care residences at an affordable month-to-month lease with no buy-in fees. Services include 24-hour personal care assistance with medical support, meals, housekeeping, social events, and transportation. All residents have access to FOX Optimal Living, an evidence-based continuum of wellness and rehab services. Chestnut Knoll also offers At Home Services, available to seniors where they live. This service includes assistance with medication monitoring, personal care, companion care, light housekeeping and laundry, and transportation. For



Shawn Barndt, executive director of Chestnut Knoll

more information on personal care, memory care and home-care services, call Julie Krasley, director of marketing, at 610-473-8066 or visit www.chestnutknoll.com.

About Keystone Villa

at Douglassville, Independent Living: Keystone Villa at Douglassville offers spacious studios, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom apartments designed to suit your style. There are no buy-in fees or hidden

costs, and the apartments are leased on an affordable month-to-month basis. Winner of A Place for Mom's 2022 Best of Senior Living Award. To learn more, visit www.keystonevillaatdouglassville.com.

About A Place for Mom: A Place for Mom is the leading online platform connecting families searching for senior care with a team of experienced local advisors providing insight-driven, personalized solutions. As the nation's leading senior advisory service, A Place for Mom's mission is to enable caregivers to make the best senior living decisions. With hundreds of senior living experts nationwide, A Place for Mom helps hundreds of thousands of families every year navigate the complexities of finding the right senior living solution for their loved one across home care, independent living, memory care, assisted living, and more. A Place for Mom is paid by the senior living communities and care providers in its network so its service is provided at no cost to families. For more information, visit aplaceformom.com.

Betty Moore

FROM PAGE 6

then I've even recruited friends to go," Moore said, laughing.

She quickly discovered the classes were more than fitness fundamentals. The high-spirited group that also includes Chestnut Knoll residents is a unique fusion of friendship, fun and support that includes lots of laughter and letting the good times roll.

"If I had to move to Chestnut Knoll permanently, I would. The staff is kind and helpful and the food was good; I must say that. Chestnut Knoll is a pretty darn good place to be!"

— Betty Moore, Boyertown

"It's a great group of people; we have a good time when we're together and thoroughly enjoy each other's company," Moore said. "We check in on one another

inside and outside of class, and on the first Wednesday we celebrate by going out to lunch."

Having formed a bond among residents and staff, it

was no surprise that Moore turned to Chestnut Knoll when she needed temporary care following her operation.

"If I had to move to Chestnut Knoll permanently, I would," Moore said. "The staff is kind and helpful and the food was good; I must say that. Chestnut Knoll is a pretty darn good place to be!"

Interested in joining a free exercise class or need temporary care? Call 610-473-8066 for more informa-

tion.

Chestnut Knoll is an award-winning senior community offering Personal Care and Memory Care residences at an affordable month-to-month lease with no buy-in fees. Services include 24-hour personal care assistance with medical support, meals, housekeeping, social events and transportation. All residents have access to FOX Optimal Living, an evidence-based continuum of wellness and rehab services. Chestnut

Knoll also offers At Home Services, available to seniors where they live. This service includes assistance with medication monitoring, personal care, companion care, light housekeeping and laundry, and transportation. Winner of A Place for Mom's 2022 Best of Senior Living Award. For more information on personal care, memory care and home-care services, call Julie Krasley, director of marketing, at 610-473-8066 or visit www.chestnutknoll.com.



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PROMOTING SENIOR WELLNESS

Technology can put travel at your fingertips

The Hickman

Whether you're itching to escape the cold and snowy winter or longing to relive the summer nostalgia of family road trips of years past, travel is often on our minds.

And who can blame us? Travel not only offers us the opportunity to experience new places, new cultures and new adventures, but it's also a way for us to connect with loved ones, explore our past and create new memories.

For many seniors, particularly those who are enjoying an active retirement, travel is an enjoyable pastime and a priority.

For others, limited mobility and reliance on caregivers' schedules have made travel in the traditional sense more difficult.

Fortunately, in an age where technology and digital connection have become increasingly commonplace as a result of a global pandemic, there are a multitude of ways for seniors — or anyone, for that matter — to visit faraway places, participate in meaningful face-to-face conversations with loved ones and essentially take a virtual trip from the comfort of their favorite chair.

Interested in touring a museum exhibit but lack the ability (or the desire) to travel to one in person? Or perhaps a visit to a renowned zoo across the country has been on your bucket list, but getting there now seems all but impossible.

By traveling to a website such as trip.com, a variety of cultural excursions are literally at your fingertips. Be it the San Diego Zoo Koala Cam or a 3-dimensional tour of the tomb of Pharaoh Ramses VI in Egypt, traveling across the country and the world remains accessible to young and old alike when the physical means of getting there in person are lacking.

Perhaps one of your most cher-

ished memories is an annual trip to visit faraway family and friends. While on the one hand Zoom has become a buzzword associated with lockdowns and isolation from loved ones, it remains a reliable and quite effective means of connecting with others in a way that a letter or a phone call simply cannot accomplish.

One can see the smile of a friend while hearing their laughter, read a bedtime story face-to-face with grandchildren across time zones, even participate in a class at a museum miles away from your living room.

Traveling is often an essential part of who we are as social beings. We long to see what else is out there in the world, escape our day-to-day routine and remain connected to those most important to us.

Many of us can hop in a car or book a flight to anywhere in the world with relative ease, but the option to jet-set without even packing a suitcase brings that world to us instead — and most importantly, keeps a passion for travel accessible to seniors who long for it.

Here at The Hickman, we recognize the role that travel plays in emotional well-being, especially among those facing physical or cognitive limitations. We proudly support our residents with remotely plugging into worship services online, connecting with loved ones by way of Zoom, offering local scenic bus excursions, journeying to distant locations with our virtual reality program, and more.

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SELF-CARE

Now is the time for a little emotional wellness and self-compassion

By John Grimaldi

Maintaining good physical health is paramount as we age. But seniors need emotional well-being and self-compassion, as well, in order to age gracefully.

According to the National Institutes of Health, “Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times.”

If ever there was a time when the stresses of life have been as difficult to bear, it is now, says Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens.

“The COVID pandemic continues to take its toll, having upended our lives for the past two years with no end in sight,” she said. “It has made us anxious and fearful, and for some of us it has been a struggle to cope with the upheaval that it has caused us. The result is a new focus on emotional wellness and self-compassion.”

There are many definitions of emotional well-being but, perhaps, it was best described by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, who suggested that it can be achieved using what he called “The Power of Positive Thinking.”

In Peale’s classic book, he explained how to achieve positive thinking as a pathway to contentment.

“The way to happiness: keep your heart free from hate, your mind from worry,” Peale wrote. “Live simply, expect little, give much. Scatter sunshine, forget self, think of others. Try this for a week and you will be surprised.”

Peale’s book was controversial, but it was an exceptional best seller. The

Washington Post reports that since its publication 70 years ago, it has been translated into 33 languages and has sold more than 15 million copies.

“It became the prototype for a wave of self-help literature on a variety of subjects,” the Post said.

Weber noted that his “sage advice” is still being promoted by those who urge the need to maintain a positive outlook on life, particularly in times of distress. The process for achieving positive thinking in one’s own life, according to the experts, includes forgiving yourself and others in your life for perceived iniquities, helping others with difficulties they may be experiencing and getting sufficient sleep to allow your body to repair itself.

Forgiveness also plays a role in another powerful aspect of emotional well-being, self-compassion, according to the Harvard Medical School.

“Forgiving and nurturing yourself can set the stage for better health, relationships, and general well-being,” Harvard Medical School said. “Self-compassion yields a number of benefits, including lower levels of anxiety and depression.”

“Self-compassionate people recognize when they are suffering and are kind to themselves at these times, which reduces their anxiety and related depression.”

This advice is contained in a new book by Harvard psychologist Christopher Germer, “The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion.”

Some of the ways Germer suggests for achieving self-compassion include:

Comfort your body

Eat something healthy.

Lie down and rest your body. Massage your own neck, feet, or hands. Take a walk.

Anything you can do to improve how you feel physically gives you a dose of self-compassion.

Write a letter to yourself

Describe a situation that caused you to feel pain (a breakup with a lover, a job loss, a poorly received presentation). Write a letter to yourself describing the situation without blaming anyone.

Acknowledge your feelings.

Give yourself encouragement

If something bad or painful happens to you, think of what you would say to a good friend if the same thing happened to him or her.

Direct these compassionate responses toward yourself.

Practice mindfulness

This is the nonjudgmental observation of your own thoughts, feelings and actions, without trying to suppress or deny them.

When you look in the mirror and don’t like what you see, accept the bad with the good with a compassionate attitude.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens, www.amac.us, is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation’s capital and in local congressional districts throughout the country.



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Writing a letter to yourself describing a situation that caused you to feel pain can help you with self-compassion.



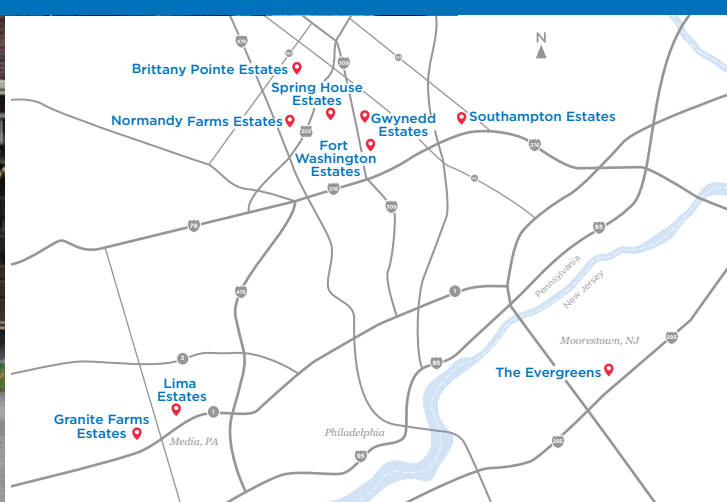
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AGING

Memory issues are part of the aging process

By John Grimaldi

Dementia is not an inevitable part of growing old. On the other hand, memory issues are, indeed, a part of the aging process.

A new study published in the journal *Trends in Cognitive Science* reveals that perhaps forgetfulness is a result of an overabundance of information we have stored in our brains, according to the authors of the review, Tarek Amer at Columbia and Harvard Universities and Jordana Wynn at Harvard.

Their assessment asserts: “Healthy aging is accompanied by declines in control of attention. These reductions in the control of attention result in older adults processing too much information, creating cluttered memory representations. Cluttered representations can impair memory by interfering with the retrieval of target information but can also provide an advantage on tasks that benefit from extensive knowledge.”

In other words, the older you are the more information you have stored in your brain — so much information that it can interfere with your ability to remember. However, as someone once explained, it is normal to forget where you left your glasses, it is not normal to forget that you wear glasses. The Centers for Disease Control says that forgetting things that can disrupt your life is not part of growing old.

The CDC says the risk factors for dementia include smoking, high blood pressure, not getting enough exercise, being overweight, trouble sleeping, isolation and blood



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It's normal to forget where you left your glasses, but not to forget that you wear glasses.

sugar levels and cites the British medical journal, *The Lancet*, which suggests that dealing with these risk factors can “prevent or delay” 40% of dementia cases.

There is a distinct difference between being absent-minded every so often and serious cognitive problems, according to the National Institutes of Health.

“It’s normal to forget things once in a while as

we age, but serious memory problems make it hard to do everyday things like driving, using the phone, and finding your way home,” the NIH said.

One can only report on the differences between senior moments, normal occasions of forgetfulness, and the potential of dementia. So, if you are having too many forgetful moments, you should consult your health care provider.

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ALSACE TOWNSHIP



WWII veteran Bill Rigby of Alsace Township recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

WW II vet celebrates 100th birthday

By Mike Urban
murban@readingeagle.com

An Alsace Township man who fought in the British Royal Navy during World War II turned 100 recently and had his birthday and his military service celebrated by a group from his church.

Bill Rigby watched from his porch Saturday as a caravan of about 30 vehicles from Zion Spies Lutheran Church in Alsace Township and the American Legion Post of Boyertown drove by in tribute.

A number of family members were also on hand, including his wife, Grace Rigby. They’ve been married 73 years and have been members of the church since they moved to Alsace Township in the 1950s.

Bill grew up in Bibury, England, and served in Southeast Asia during the war.

After moving to Berks he worked as a machinist for 30 years and was an avid painter.

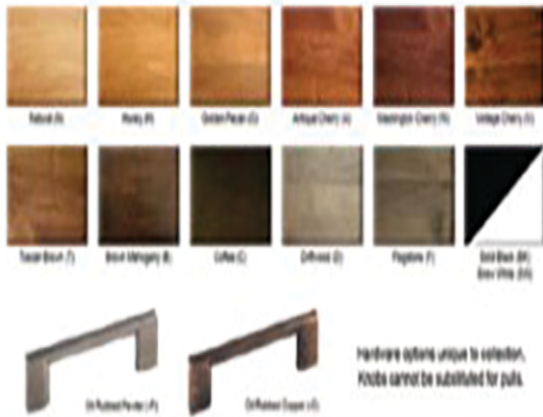
His friends and family spoke of how sharp he still is, and how he regularly sends emails and has his own Facebook page.



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PANDEMIC

As COVID slogs on, seniors find fortitude waning and malaise growing

By Judith Graham

Late one night in January, Jonathan Coffino, 78, turned to his wife as they sat in bed.

"I don't know how much longer I can do this," he said, glumly.

Coffino was referring to the caution that's come to define his life during the COVID-19 pandemic. After two years of mostly staying at home and avoiding people, his patience is frayed and his distress is growing.

"There's a terrible fear that I'll never get back my normal life," Coffino told me, describing feelings he tries to keep at bay. "And there's an awful sense of purposelessness."

Despite recent signals that COVID's grip on the country may be easing, many older adults are struggling with persistent malaise, heightened by the spread of the highly contagious omicron variant. Even those who adapted well initially are saying their fortitude is waning or wearing thin.

Like younger people, they're beset by uncertainty about what the future may bring. But added to that is an especially painful feeling that opportunities that will never come again are being squandered, time is running out, and death is drawing ever nearer.

"Folks are becoming more anxious and angry and stressed and agitated because this has gone on for so long," said Katherine Cook, chief operating officer of Monadnock Family Services in Keene, N.H., which operates a community mental health center that serves older adults.

"I've never seen so many people who say they're



White flags are seen on the National Mall near the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 19, 2021. The project, by artist Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg, uses over 600,000 miniature white flags to symbolize the lives lost to COVID-19 in the U.S.

hopeless and have nothing to look forward to," said Henry Kimmel, a clinical psychologist in Sherman Oaks, Calif., who focuses on older adults.

To be sure, older adults have cause for concern. Throughout the pandemic, they've been at much higher risk of becoming seriously ill and dying than other age groups. Even seniors who are fully vaccinated and boosted remain vulnerable: More than two-thirds of vaccinated people hospitalized from June through September with breakthrough infections were 65 or older.

The constant stress of wondering "Am I going to be OK?" and "What's the future going to look like?" has been hard for Kathleen Tate, 74, a retired nurse in Mount Vernon, Wash.. She has late-onset post-polio syndrome and severe osteoarthritis.

"I guess I had the expectation that once we were vaccinated the world would open up again," said Tate,

who lives alone.

Although that happened for a while last summer, she largely stopped going out as first the delta and then the omicron variants swept through her area. Now, she said she feels "a quiet desperation."

This isn't something that Tate talks about with friends, though she's hungry for human connection.

"I see everybody dealing with extraordinary stresses in their lives, and I don't want to add to that by complaining or asking to be comforted," she said.

Tate described a feeling of "flatness" and "being worn out" that saps her motivation.

"It's almost too much effort to reach out to people and try to pull myself out of that place," she said, admitting she's watching too much TV and drinking too much alcohol. "It's just like I want to mellow out and go numb, instead of bucking up and trying to pull myself together."

Beth Spencer, 73, a re-

cently retired social worker who lives in Ann Arbor, Mich., with her 90-year-old husband, is grappling with similar feelings during this typically challenging Midwestern winter.

"The weather here is gray, the sky is gray, and my psyche is gray," she told me. "I typically am an upbeat person, but I'm struggling to stay motivated."

"I can't sort out whether what I'm going through is due to retirement or caregiver stress or COVID," Spencer said, explaining that her husband was recently diagnosed with congestive heart failure. "I find myself asking 'What's the meaning of my life right now?' and I don't have an answer."

Bonnie Olsen, a clinical psychologist at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, works extensively with older adults.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, many older adults hunkered down and used a lifetime of coping skills to get through this," she said. "Now, as people face this current surge, it's as if their well of emotional reserves is being depleted."

Most at risk are older adults who are isolated and frail, who were vulnerable to depression and anxiety even before the pandemic, or who have suffered serious losses and acute grief. Watch for signs that they are withdrawing from social contact or shutting down emotionally, Olsen said.

"When people start to avoid being in touch, then I become more worried," she said.

Fred Axelrod, 66, of Los Angeles, who's disabled by ankylosing spondylitis, a serious form of arthri-

tis, lost three close friends during the pandemic: Two died of cancer and one of complications related to diabetes.

"You can't go out and replace friends like that at my age," he told me.

Now, the only person Axelrod talks to on a regular basis is Kimmel, his therapist.

"I don't do anything; there's nothing to do, nowhere to go," he complained. "There's a lot of times I feel I'm just letting the clock run out. You start thinking, 'How much more time do I have left?'"

"Older adults are thinking about mortality more than ever and asking, 'How will we ever get out of this nightmare,'" Kimmel said. "I tell them we all have to stay in the present moment and do our best to keep ourselves occupied and connect with other people."

Loss has also been a defining feature of the pandemic for Bud Carraway, 79, of Midvale, Utah, whose wife, Virginia, died a year ago. She was a stroke survivor who had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and atrial fibrillation, an abnormal heartbeat. The couple, who met in the Marines, had been married 55 years.

"I became depressed," he said. "Anxiety kept me awake at night. I couldn't turn my mind off."

Those feelings and a sense of being trapped throughout the pandemic "brought me pretty far down," he said.

Help came from an eight-week grief support program offered online through the University of Utah. One of the assignments was to come up with a list of strategies for cultivating well-being, which

Carraway keeps on his front door.

Among the items listed: "Walk the mall. Eat with friends. Do some volunteer work. Join a bowling league. Go to a movie. Check out senior centers."

"I'd circle them as I accomplished each one of them," he said. "I knew I had to get up and get out and live again. This program, it just made a world of difference."

Kathie Supiano, an associate professor at the University of Utah College of Nursing who oversees the COVID grief groups, said older adults' ability to bounce back from setbacks shouldn't be discounted.

"This isn't their first rodeo," she said. "Many people remember polio and the AIDS epidemic. They've been through a lot and know how to put things in perspective."

Alissa Ballot, 66, realized recently she can trust herself to find a way forward. After becoming extremely isolated early in the pandemic, Ballot moved last November from Chicago to New York City. There, she found a community of new friends online at Central Synagogue in Manhattan and her loneliness evaporated as she began attending events in person.

With omicron's rise in December, Ballot briefly became fearful that she'd end up alone again. But, this time, something clicked as she pondered some of her rabbi's spiritual teachings.

"I felt paused on a precipice looking into the unknown and suddenly I thought, 'So, we don't know what's going to happen next, stop worrying,'" she said. "And I relaxed. Now I'm like, this is a blip, and I'll get through it."

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