



AGING

A LOOK AT

HOLISTIC TRENDS IN AGING

COURTESY OF POLINA TANKILEVITCH

By Courtney Diener-Stokes
For MediaNews Group

As the saying goes, “aging isn’t for the faint of heart,” which is why many of us are willing to put on a brave face and make the effort to explore ways to combat the effects of getting old.

“None of us want to go down without a fight,” said Cindy Boyer, a naturopathic doctor and co-owner with Susanne Fiori of Na-

ture’s Garden Natural Foods and Shoes in Exeter Township. “You do whatever you can to stay as healthy and functional as possible.”

Their business is 45 years old, so many of their customers have aged with the store, which has given Boyer an inside glimpse at the trends in aging from the perspective of natural remedies and what people are asking for.

Acceptance of graying

Covering up gray hair is often a top priority for those on the lower end of the active aging category. Boyer has seen a shift in the acceptance of graying more recently.

“I think that people are starting to move away a little bit from hair color,” she said. “I feel like I’m seeing more and more going au natural and letting it gray.”

Since there are still some who

feel younger when they color their hair, Boyer suggested henna-based products as a wonderful solution when it comes to over-the-counter dyes.

“It’s a natural, non-chemical-based hair color solution,” she said, adding that the brand that has the best results among their customers is Light Mountain Natural. “It’s also a great moisturizer for the hair.”

Another kind of hair dye Boyer

When it comes to aging, we don’t want to go down without a fight, and there are many safe and natural avenues we can take to combat getting old.

recommends that uses natural substances is by Naturtint.

“That’s more of a permanent hair color versus the henna that is going to wash out faster,” she

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COLUMN

Alzheimer's remains modern-day mystery

The month of June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. It's a time to talk about a disease that impacts far too many people, promote brain health and wear purple to raise awareness.

Worldwide, 55 million people are afflicted by Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, which is the sixth leading cause of death for adults in the United States.

Although Pennsylvania has an older population compared to other states, the commonwealth's death rate per 100,000 is relatively low at 23.2, with just seven states faring better.

Like cancer, another disease that is very deadly across the globe, there is no known cure for Alzheimer's, only medicine that can temporarily reduce symptoms.

A long list of drugs has gone to trial over the years only to be discarded after being deemed ineffective.

The quest to cure this disease remains elusive to the world's brightest scientists.

Some hope came on June 7, 2021, when a new drug called Aduhelm was granted conditional approval to treat Alzheimer's. Aduhelm was approved using an accelerated pathway reserved for drugs that can be used for a serious or life-threatening illness. It was the first time in 18 years the FDA had blessed a drug to treat the disease.

However, the jubila-



Judy Schwank
Report to the People

tion that followed the FDA's announcement around this time one year ago was quickly extinguished as medical experts called into question the effectiveness of the drug.

This made Medicare's decision to cover the drug, especially given its hefty price, questionable. The price of Aduhelm comes in at a staggering \$28,200 per year per patient.

Medicare beneficiaries are responsible for covering 20 percent, or \$5,640 per year.

As the details of Aduhelm's trials continue to be scrutinized, what remains is the fact that Alzheimer's is a mystery modern science has yet to solve, even after a century of research and billions of dollars spent on finding a cure.

It's unclear when a cure will come, or if one ever will. But what is clear is the devastating impact the disease can have on those it afflicts and their families.

What may start as normal memory lapses can quickly devolve into much more serious memory loss like forgetting who family members are.

If you've ever experienced a beloved family member looking at you as if you're a stranger, you know how painful that can be.

In Pennsylvania, we

have taken some steps to strengthen how we respond to Alzheimer's.

In 2013, Gov. Tom Corbett developed a state plan to respond to growing cases of dementia in the commonwealth.

Unfortunately, much of that plan remains unimplemented seven years later, according to an analysis by Spotlight PA, an independent news organization that covers state government.

For example, a study of the economic impacts of Alzheimer's, a statewide education initiative, and a county by county study of strengths, gaps and barriers are yet to be completed due to a lack of resources.

As fate would have it, the Pennsylvania General Assembly is in the middle of budget season, which means now is the time we can make sure financial resources are where they need to be.

While Alzheimer's remains a disease without a cure, the best action we can take at the state level is to ensure Pennsylvanians have access to treatment and other related services that limit the impact of the disease.

Judy Schwank is a state senator for the 11th district. Her Reading district office is located at 210 George St., Muhlenberg Township. Contact her at 610-929-2151, senatorschwank@pasenate.com or visit her website www.senatorschwank.com or www.facebook.com/senatorjudyschwank.

Holistic

FROM PAGE 1

said. "It's ammonia free and a safer product to go with, but not as pure as henna."

Age-related hair loss

Age-related hair loss can be experienced by both men and women. Boyer offered some solutions that she sees as the safest and healthiest ways to help the body naturally grow more hair.

"A product called Hair Renew by Terry Naturally has biotin, a B complex and millet seed oil," she said of



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More people have been embracing their grays instead of concealing them with hair color.

the dietary supplement that comes in a soft gel. "These are the key ingredients that provide maximum nutrients to support healthy hair growth."

Younger, plumper skin

Collagen has been the latest buzz word when it comes to rejuvenating aging skin, but Boyer said it's not the only answer.

"Collagen acts as the rubber band in our joints and ligaments and the rubber band eventually gets saggy and dries out and can break," she said. "While collagen is all fine and good, you need to bring hyaluronic acid along with the collagen because it helps assist the job to moisturize the collagen so it stays more elastic and more flexible."

A brand that Nature's Garden carries that makes hyaluronic acid is called Hyalogenic, which comes in many forms, including a topical serum, an ingestible gummy and a liquid that you also ingest, among other forms.

"They also make some collagen products," Boyer said. "The hyaluronic acid in the serum form helps to plump the skin and get rid of fine lines — it's a much healthier and safer way than Botox."

The result of this pairing is a "winning combination," according to Boyer, that leaves skin looking younger and more plump. Beyond skin, both collagen and the hyaluronic acid offer a wealth of benefits to other parts of our body.

"It can help our joints, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and play a huge role in our skin," she said. "As we age the production of both collagen and hyaluronic acid diminishes, so it's important we continue to replenish it through supplementation. It's like motor oil for our joints."

Allow time for results Essential omega-3s

It might take a little time to see the results of this winning combination if taken on a daily basis, but it will be worth the wait, according to Boyer.

"It will take a month to six weeks to see the effects of the collagen and the hyaluronic acid taken in combination with collagen you will notice more quickly," she said.

When you look at the whole cosmetic realm, Boyer said it's not inexpensive. Hyaluronic acid costs \$40 to \$60 per bottle.

"You get what you pay for in a lot of different companies out there," Boyer said. "Because the serum is concentrated it will last a while."

Memory loss remedy

Customers in the active aging category often express their needs to Boyer when they come into her store searching for remedies.

"One of the biggest complaints we see here is memory loss," Boyer said.

She typically recommends they take a daily therapeutic dose of ginkgo biloba phytosome.

"When you bind the ginkgo biloba to that lipid you increase the absorption of that herb," she said, referring to the phytosome. "The outcome is better memory recall, better retention and increasing memory capacity."

Caffeine-free boost

A normal part of aging is the loss of energy. While many might tend to fuel up on caffeine, it's not a good solution for everyone.

"With caffeine you are driving up heart rate and blood pressure," she said.

Boyer shared some alternatives such as PQQ-10, which is a natural product that helps to increase energy, among other benefits.

"It acts like a dimmer switch on our brain in helping to reduce chronic degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and it really helps in regards to helping people to recall better and protects the mitochondria — the energy in our cells," she said.

Red ginseng is another option Boyer recommends that is beneficial for energy that you can use daily.

"It helps support our normal circadian rhythms, and it helps us to be better focused with better energy and stamina," she said. "It is also an adaptogen, so it helps our body process stress and increases stamina and endurance."

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WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE?

Cara Graver is a holistic life coach based in Chester County who supports people on their journey through life.

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Boyer said one thing that goes hand in hand with aging is fish oil to get your omega-3s.

"Omega-3s are essential fatty acids that are good at helping us stay more lubricated in our joints and help lower cholesterol, brain function and heart health," she said.

Boyer said flaxseed oil is a good alternative to fish oil for vegetarians.

"It will provide you with omega-3, 6 and 9," she said.

Boyer stressed the importance of omega-3s in our diet, particularly as we age.

"Omega-3s are essential fatty acids, which means they are essential," she said. "Our body requires omega-3s in every cell to function, and we don't produce it, so you have to supplement or consume it."

The importance of omega-3s becomes more obvious to people as they get older.

"The consequences of not getting enough is that you are going to age more rapidly and you will go from a grape to a raisin very quickly and have faster mental decline among other things," Boyer said.

What's on your plate?

Beyond products and supplements that can help us age more gracefully, there is a wellness component that is based on how a person lives their everyday life.

"Their primary 'food' is how they live their lives when it comes to career, relationship, spiritual practice and exercise," said Cara Graver, a holistic life coach based in Chester Springs, Chester County.

Through her business, What's on Your Plate?, Graver helps people navigate changes in their lives.

As people begin to age, they might find themselves struggling in various areas.

"You notice yourself changing, you notice your ability to do things and your stamina, your hearing and eyesight changing, so you might find yourself having different needs than you're used to having and being kind of bummed out by that," she said. "It's time to ask yourself what you really need."

Graver explained it's about looking at all the facets of nourishment through a different lens.

"You could lament your losses, but you can also say, 'things are changing now and are different,'" she said. "Your wellness is dependent on your attitude."

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COLUMN

Accepting responsibility solves most problems

By Ryan Daniels



Ryan Daniels

Our nation seems to be the most divided since the Civil War. Issues ranging from abortion to guns, race to religion, and gender identity to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) have polarized us to a point where civil discourse seems impossible. The solution to all of these issues starts with accepting 100% responsibility for your life. The blame game only positions you powerless and subject to the narrative of the day of the elite who only look to solidify their status as somehow superior to you.

When you make the decision to accept 100% responsibility for your life, something amazing happens. You realize you are in control, can make decisions and take actions that will result in the life you imagine. You are no longer the result of circumstance; you are a result of hard work and resiliency. This applies to every area of your life. Think about if everyone accepted 100% responsibility for their life and their actions, how all of those issues above could be resolved or moved in a positive direction.

While I might not be a scholarly expert on all the issues above, I do have experience as a Financial Advisor working with hundreds of families. One conclusion I can make is that when people make a decision to accept 100% responsibility for their finances, they take control of money instead of money controlling them. Initially some might believe they

don't make enough money or were born into a poor family, so they are somehow destined to be poor. However, they quickly realize during our conversation that the difference between the "have's and have-not's" is generally not how much they make, but how much they keep.

A lot of families spend \$300-\$600 or more each month eating out. Throw in a trip to the movies, Starbucks coffee and an impulse buy on Amazon and you easily have \$1,000 or more that could be redirected to building a simple-to-follow financial plan that fits your life and puts you in control of money.

I'm a firm believer that a successful financial plan prepares you for the future, but also balances a life today. Accepting responsibility and building a financial plan is not about giving up all the things you enjoy. You do have to create memories and live a little; however, by accepting responsibility, you know that if you don't prepare for the future starting today, it's not somebody else's job to bail you out, and you'll probably have to continue working.

Since this theme seems to apply to just about every news headline, let's discuss the idea of forgiving student loans. Again, if we accept responsibility for the fact that we made the choice to go to college

and take on student loans, then we should accept responsibility to make a plan to pay them off. Some will try to say that if you have student loans, then you are the "victim" of loan companies or you weren't properly educated on the loans beforehand.

It might be a tough lesson to learn, but as long as you put ink to paper, that is a commitment and therefore your responsibility. I know this might not be a popular position, especially among my peers, but I've seen too many lightbulb moments with families where they realize they can honor their commitment with the help of a plan.

Tensions are running high in the United States. It's time we cool things off, find common values and regain a sense of pride in our nation. If we can pivot the conversation internally and focus on what we can do, I think we will all find room for improvement. By accepting responsibility for ourselves, we can fix the fabric of our country and bring us all together under our founding values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Ryan Daniels is a Financial Advisor and author of "Money Basics and Fundamentals." He is host of the "Say Hi to Money" Podcast and an Army Veteran who enjoys continuing to serve, "Supporting communities building financially strong families." Visit his website at www.RFinances.com.

ASK RUSTY

Must I pay income tax on my Social Security benefits?

By Russell Gloor



Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I do not recall the rules on my income tax obligation for Social Security benefits. Can you please explain these rules to me? — Senior Taxpayer

Dear Senior Taxpayer: I'll be happy to review the rules about income tax on Social Security benefits for you. If your combined income from all sources is low enough, your Social Security benefits aren't subject to being taxed by the IRS. But some of your Social Security benefits will become taxable if your combined income from all sources exceeds certain thresholds, and the thresholds are dependent on your tax filing status (single or married).

If you file your income tax as "married-filing jointly" and your combined income from all sources (both taxable and non-taxable income) is less than \$32,000, then your Social Security benefits aren't taxable. But if your combined income as a married couple is between \$32,001 and \$44,000, then half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year become taxable, and single filers whose combined income exceeds \$34,000 will see up to 85% of their Social Security benefits become taxable.

able income. And if your combined income as a married couple exceeds \$44,000, then up to 85% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes part of your taxable income. Those SS benefits will simply be included as part of your taxable income and taxed at whatever your normal IRS tax rate is.

If you file your income tax as a "single" the thresholds at which Social Security benefits become taxable are different. Single filers with a combined income of \$25,000 or less pay no income tax on their benefits. But single filers with combined income between \$25,001 and \$34,000 will have half of their SS benefits received during the tax year become taxable, and single filers whose combined income exceeds \$34,000 will see up to 85% of their Social Security benefits become taxable.

These single filer thresholds apply also to those filing as Single Head of Household or Qualifying Widow(er), and to those filing as "married-filing sep-

arately" if they lived apart for the entire tax year. But the threshold is zero dollars for married couples who file separately but lived together at any time during the tax year.

To clarify what "combined income" is, the IRS uses something called your Modified Adjusted Gross Income, or "MAGI," to determine if your Social Security benefits should be taxed. Your MAGI is your normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from your tax return, plus any non-taxable income you may have had, plus 50% of the Social Security benefits you received during the tax year. If your MAGI is over the thresholds described above, a portion of the SS benefits you received during the tax year will be included in your taxable income. If it is not, you pay no income tax on your benefits.

To be sure you're aware, when you file as "married/jointly" income from both partners counts when determining your MAGI for income tax purposes.

Russell Gloor is a certified Social Security adviser by the Association of Mature American Citizens: <https://amac.us/social-security-advisor>.

DID YOU KNOW?

Free time often increases as you age

Metro Creative

Men and women may have more free time after 50 than they had in previous decades. As children grow more independent and even leave the house, parents look to various activities, including travel, to fill their free time.

Travel is often seen as a luxury, but heading off for parts unknown can produce some serious health

benefits. A joint study from the Global Coalition on Aging and the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies found that women who vacation at least twice a year have a lower risk for heart attack than those who travel once every six years. The study also found that men who do not take annual vacations are at a significantly higher risk of death (20 percent) and heart disease (30 percent)

than those who make who take time to get away each year.

Vacations don't even need to be long to produce significant, positive results. A 2018 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that a four-day long weekend vacation positively affected well-being, recovery, strain and perceived stress for as long as 45 days.



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SPOT OF T

Enjoy some time in the world of whimsy

By Terry Alburger

This past weekend, I had a debate with my eldest granddaughter, who is 11 years old. No, we were not concerned with election fraud or global warming or some of the more serious topics of the day. But we were each intent on proving our stance.

The question at hand — was the inflatable raft which was bobbing in the pool in front of us a unicorn or was it a Pegasus? Ah yes, the tough questions indeed. She insisted it was a unicorn, and I claimed it was a winged horse. With all the passion of a future litigator, she sought to win the case.

“It has a horn,” she said. “Pegasus doesn’t have a horn. How can it be Pegasus? Remember when Perseus rode him to save Andromeda? That was Pegasus. No horn. Just wings. But this has a horn. It must be a unicorn.”

While I was tickled pink that she actually knew mythology based on watching the film “Clash of the Titans” with me last year, I could not let on that I was pleased. I continued the debate the issue as her opponent.

“But this beast has wings. How many unicorns do you know that have wings? Maybe this Pegasus just has a deformity in the shape of a horn?” I said, with all the authority of someone who has never seen a unicorn. Probably with good reason.

“The magical ones do, like on ‘My Little Pony.’” she said. “Haven’t you ever seen those?”

I could not argue with her fictional logic. I conceded that perhaps it

could be both, unicorn and Pegasus. Perhaps it was in the family of the narwhal? Anything’s possible. And we both walked away happy in our whimsical collaboration, smiling with fictional pride. I consider that to be time well spent.

What I enjoyed the most of our little tete-a-tete is that we were up to our eyeballs in our whimsical world, both engaged in a fictional and fun creation of our own making. Sometimes I think a little whimsy is a wonderful thing.

Whimsy can remove us from the harsh and painful reality that surrounds us in social media offerings and the news sources. It can remove us, albeit temporarily, from the sadness and the tragedy that sometimes surround and overwhelm us.

It’s interesting how some of these whimsical wonders have transcended their fictional walls and have become part of our lives. If you are a Harry Potter fan, you will no doubt agree that Buckbeak plays a key role in Harry’s narrow escapes, or that the Cloak of Invisibility and the Marauder’s Map are important tools to his victory over ... He Who Will Not Be Named. Any true Harry Potter fan will follow that logic without hesitation.

I suppose this is part of the reason I love Disney World so much. When you set foot in those magical gates, you are transformed into a world of magic, princesses and wonder. There is nothing wrong with an escape from reality every now and again. Each time I go there, I am once again a 12-year-old kid, with no problems of adulthood other than avoiding long wait times for the attrac-



PIXABAY

tions.

But you needn’t travel anywhere to be transported and you do not need the power of the entertainment industry, either. Recently, I have begun re-reading Sherlock Holmes books. I love a good mystery, and these books certainly fit that bill.

This fictional crime fighter, quirky as he may be, is certainly a clever fellow! I love to try to solve the mysteries as I read, but there are so

many clever and sometimes insidious twists and turns, I am seldom right.

Books definitely help escape the harsh reality of our day and take us to so many exotic, far-away and even whimsical places. I have rediscovered some of the hundreds of books I have stowed away in my house. Most, I kept for a reason.

Now is a great time to remember the wonder that each book held for me. Books are the perfect

escape in a time where COVID is still very much a danger. Though I’m not ready to travel yet, I can be transported anywhere I choose through the literary talents of some of the masters.

Whimsy. We all need a little bit of it in our lives. It’s like an escape hatch from reality, a temporary shelter to let your brain rest, reset and recover. Let a little whimsy into your life when the barrage of tragic or horrific

news unfolds in our everyday lives.

Take that temporary journey into the whimsical, a journey that will allow you to smile at the imaginary and will allow relief from a tired and painful reality.

For a short time, follow that White Rabbit down Alice’s hole in Wonderland. Close your eyes and take a break. Ponder the existence of the unicorn. I did, and it was well worth the trip.

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EVAN BRANDT — MEDIANEWS GROUP

From left, Brian Parkes, executive director of the Tri-County Active Adult Center, Martha Pish, State Rep. Tim Hennessey, Chester Pish, Pottstown Mayor Stephanie Henrick and state Rep. Joe Ciresi.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

Couple celebrates 80 years of marriage, the longest-married couple in Pennsylvania

By Evan Brandt
ebrandt@pottsmmerc.com

POTTSTOWN » When Martha Pish was born, she was the youngest of 13 children and weighed only two pounds.

Martha's older sister was a nurse who helped to deliver her and did not expect Martha to live through the night, according to the family lore. "But they wrapped her in a blanket and put her in a shoe box on top of the stove," according to Martha's daughter, Anita Scherer.

In 2022, it seems that

prediction of a short life was a bit premature. Not only is Pish 99, but so is her husband Chester. Both will reach the century mark next February, just nine days apart.

As if that were not accomplishment enough in its own right, the two were celebrated recently just a few days after their 80th wedding anniversary. According to state Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-146th Dist., that makes them "the oldest married couple in Pennsylvania, maybe in the country."

Gathered in their driveway Friday morning, af-

ter a rainy weather forecast put the kibosh on a planned car parade, the couple was all smiles and jokes, welcoming family, friends, public officials (and press). "This is fabulous," exclaimed Chester.

"I never give her anything," he joked with a wry smile when asked about his 80th anniversary gift to his wife. "I don't want to set any precedents. That way, she's never disappointed."

She patted his hand, smiled confidently and riposted "he lies a lot."

The Pishes were married on May 23, 1942, at St.



EVAN BRANDT — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Martha and Chester Pish cut a cake from Beverly's Pastry Shop during a celebration of their 80th wedding anniversary, making them the oldest married couple in Pennsylvania.

Philomena's Roman Catholic Church in East Lansdowne, Delaware County. They were married shortly after he was deployed in the Navy during World War II.

Together they have three children — Albert Frank, Christina Elizabeth and Anita Alyce — seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, "and two more in the oven," Martha added with obvious delight.

While the rain held off, the official proclamations

congratulating the couple seemed to be falling out of the sky. Firstly, Ciresi and state Rep. Tim Hennessey, R-26th Dist., congratulated the couple from the floor of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on May 25.

"If you could see them when I visited them on Thursday, he was out mowing the lawn and she was inside cleaning," Ciresi said. "These two people are an incredible asset to the Pottstown community. Their son is 79, to put

it in perspective."

Ciresi said he also had a proclamation from Gov. Wolf, "but I had to send it back because they only had you married for 70 years."

Hennessey provided the couple with a proclamation from U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey and they received another from the office of U.S. Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-4th Dist.

"You know, in our society today, people don't stay

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD » **PAGE 10**



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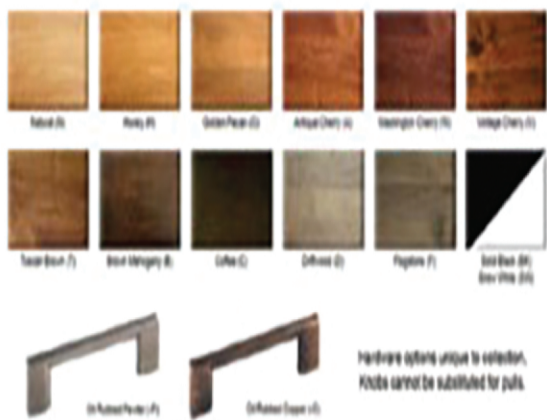
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State Rep. Tim Hennessey, R-23rd District, presents a proclamation from U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey congratulating the couple on 80 years of marriage.

To have and to hold

FROM PAGE 3

married for 80 years,” Hennessey said. “They don’t stay married for 10 years or eight years. It’s a tribute to your commitment you’ve made to each other. Strong families make for a strong Pennsylvania.”

Also on hand with a proclamation was Pottstown Mayor Stephanie Henrick. The proclamation noted that Chester Pish worked in a colliery before moving to Pottstown for a job at the former Firestone Tire and Rubber plant. Of Polish descent herself, she even sang the couple a song in Polish as they cut their cake from Beverly’s Pastry Shop on High Street.

“Everyone at the center sends their congratulations and we miss seeing you,” Brian Parkes, executive director of the Tri-County Active Adult Center, told the couple.

Pottstown Borough Council President Dan Weand and his wife Polly, who were out of town, sent a vase of roses.

The couple attends St. Aloysius Catholic Church and ran the parish’s BINGO game for 23 years. While Martha volunteered at Pottstown Hospital and



EVAN BRANDT — MEDIANEWS GROUP

This plant and specially-made pot, were among the gifts presented to the Pishes.

the YMCA, Chester held several positions with the IMC organization. He still enjoys gardening and she continues to cook and bake.

“She’s still an excellent cook,” said Scherer, rattling off the unfamiliar names of her mother’s Polish specialties.

“We grew up on Maple Street,” Scherer recalled. “They were good parents,

very supportive, and when I had my kids, even better grandparents and so, so helpful.”

The family, Scherer said, “has always had fun. We like to play cards until 11 or 12 at night, mostly ‘hand and foot,’ Mom really likes that one. And just last summer, we were dancing on my back deck” — mostly Polish polkas of course.

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