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JUNE/JULY 2023

## **Roughing it smoothly**

Mickey, Linda Haddock have toured 46 US parks, all 50 states in their RV.

## **'Marines like Marines'**

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# Living 50 Plus

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Published by

**TIMES  
DAILY**

219 W. Tennessee St.,  
Florence, AL 35630  
256-766-3434

**Tennessee Valley  
Media, Inc.**

### On the Cover:

Mickey Haddock sits in front of the RV he and his wife, Linda, have used to tour the country. Photograph by Dan Busey.

# Summer is time for fun, fun, fun



Adults 50 and older may have more time for leisure and recreation than working adults, and the summer months provide ample opportunities to get active.

After months of chilly temperatures, adults 50 and older may be eager to get outdoors and enjoy some fun in the sun.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults age 50 and older get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. There are plenty of ways for active seniors to meet this exercise goal and have some fun along the way.

The following are some good starting points.

- Join or start a walking club. Walking is a great way to stay in shape and work the mind as well. View new sights along the way by changing the route each time you go. Walking with friends can pass the time and provide the motivation to keep going.
- Catch a sporting event. Attending a sporting event can be an entertaining way to spend several hours, and that includes amateur and recreational sports. Catch a grandchild's swim meet or a baseball game for an action-packed way to connect with loved ones and get out.
- Take a fishing charter. Casting a rod from a dock or pier is perfectly acceptable, but securing a spot on a fishing charter is a great way to spend hours out on the water enjoying the scenery and the sport of fishing. Plus, there's the added benefit of enjoying the fruits of your labors by cooking the day's catch for dinner once you arrive home.
- Be a tourist. Many cities and towns have their own tourism boards and showcase interesting spots that have historical significance or appeal to other interests. Be a tourist for the day — even in an area with which you are familiar. Hop on a trolley or sightseeing bus to view the town as an outsider.





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# *Roughing* it smoothly

MICKEY AND LINDA HADDOCK HAVE  
VISITED 46 US PARKS, 50 STATES



Linda and Mickey Haddock visiting  
one of their favorite places —  
Antelope Canyon in Page, Arizona.  
[COURTESY PHOTO]



# Their escape *is life in a RV*

By **Chelsea Retherford**  
Staff Writer

**W**hen Mickey and Linda Haddock purchased their first Class A motorhome, the Florence couple had already done an extensive amount of traveling around the country — mostly from their van and mostly with their pets, Lola and Loulou, a tortoiseshell cat and a Pomeranian.

Months following Mickey's retirement from city government in 2016, he said a pair

of friends, Kenny and Nancy Griffin, had put a bug in his ear about traveling in a recreational vehicle.

"We finally just said, O.K, we're going to do it," Mickey said. "And truly, Linda wanted to do it because of the animals. We don't have to look ahead and find a pet-friendly hotel, and you know, it's a whole lot easier to travel with pets in the RV."

The Haddocks first RV was a 27-foot,

1997 Holiday Rambler. Mickey said they paid \$10,000 for a basic unit to get their feet wet.

"We drove it to Key West, Florida, and we really enjoyed our trip," he said. "So, maybe a year later, we bought another one, and it had a slide out. It was a 2004 model, I believe. So, we traded up a little bit, and then about a year later, we traded for another one that had three slide outs, and it was a 2008. A little bit newer."



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Mickey Haddock and wife, Linda, discuss an upcoming trip inside their motorhome in Florence. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]





This June, they're traveling westward to Utah in a 37-foot, 2017 Winnebago Adventurer with a full-size shower and half-bath.

"Now, I don't even like staying in a hotel," Linda said with a laugh. "We're getting a little spoiled."

The couple said their latest model features a sleep-number bed, three televisions and a refrigerator larger than the one they have in their home. Both agreed they feel this is their last trade until they decide to park for good.

The Haddocks guessed they stay in their RV about five months out of the year, often spending the winter at a campground they frequent in Summerfield, Florida, about 65 miles northeast of Orlando.

They said the annual trip allows them to stay close to their longtime friends and fellow RVers, the Griffins, who were formerly from Florence but now reside in The Villages retirement community south of Summerfield.

"I guess you could say we've become snowbirds," Mickey said.

He and Linda normally stay through February, but this year they extended their trip through March.

"We're not full-timers," added Mickey, who continues to work as a replay official with the





A pillow on the bed inside Mickey and Linda Haddock's motorhome. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

Southeastern Football Conference.

“Normally, we’ll take at least one two-week trip during football season. Like last year, I had a game in Kentucky and the next Saturday, I had a game in Tennessee,” he said.

“You can go wherever you want to, and wherever you decide to stop, that’s where you roll to, and you stop.

“The good thing about being retired, if we decide to take off and go somewhere, we don’t really have any plans. If we decide we want to stay three days

in a place where we thought we might just stay a day, that’s O.K. too. We really don’t have an agenda.”

While the RV gives them more freedom and flexibility, Mickey said they still have to make reservations at most campgrounds because RVs have become such a popular way to travel.

“What we really like to do when we go to Florida for a few months, we stay in the same campground and then take day trips,” Mickey said. “We’ll just go out in

the car and come back in the afternoon. We were about an hour and a half away from Orlando, and we drove over and had lunch with some friends.

One day, I drove to Daytona to watch UNA play some basketball. You just kind of base yourself and travel.”

The couple said they’ve visited all 50 states at least once, but they’re on their way to completing the U.S. map twice.

Mickey said they’re planning a road trip up the East Coast next year.





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Mickey and Linda Haddock get ready to zip-line together in Oahu, Hawaii. [COURTESY PHOTO]

“We lack five or six states up the East Coast — Maine, Vermont, Connecticut — being to every state twice,” he said. “We’ve been very fortunate. We did a good bit of traveling in a van back before we started RVing when I was still working.”

This summer, the couple will travel back to one of Linda’s favorite destinations, Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah.

“It’s gorgeous,” she said, adding that she and Mickey now have a bucket list of visiting all 63 U.S. national parks.

Off to a great start, the Haddocks have 46 parks under their belt already.

“I just love the beauty of the different parks that we go to,” Linda said. “Utah is one of my favorite states. All five of their national parks are worth going to see. I just love nature and the beauty of it.”

With so much to see

in their home country, Mickey said he has no desire to travel outside the U.S., though the couple has already been to Mexico, Canada, and to the Caribbean island Antigua.

Mickey said he’s also grateful to have a favorite camping destination back home at McFarland Park.

“We travel all over, and we’ve got one of the prettiest places here in our back yard,” he said. “We love staying down there and camping on the river. We are excited



to hear that the city has plans for 60 more spots. Our friends, Kenny and Nancy, come up from Florida and love to stay here. It's a beautiful park."

Besides their shared experiences, Mickey and Linda said they also love getting to meet fellow RVers all over the country on their travels.


"You know, it's the perfect way to start a conversation because you all have something in common," Mickey said. "I think that's the biggest thing we've enjoyed is meeting new people and hearing their stories of how they got in it. We've met some awfully nice folks."



A key holder in the shape of Alabama hangs inside Mickey and Linda Haddock's motorhome. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

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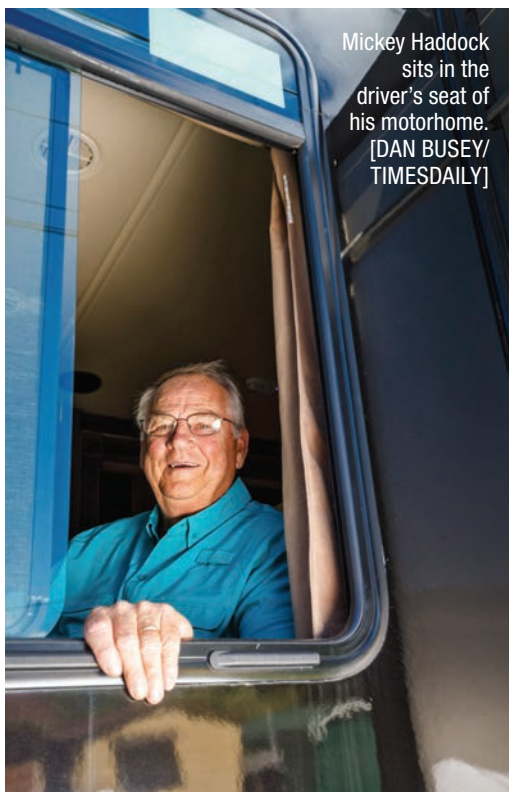
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Mickey and Linda Haddock in St. Augustine, Florida, during their first trip in their RV. [COURTESY PHOTO]



Mickey Haddock sits in the driver's seat of his motorhome. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



Linda and Mickey Haddock at the beach in Sanibel Island in Florida. [COURTESY PHOTO]







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Curtis Griffin points to a memorial for Dan Copeland, a former commandant of a neighboring detachment in Decatur. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

# 'MARINES LIKE MARINES'

CONLEY DETACHMENT HAS GROWN FROM 15 TO 80 MEMBERS IN 3 YEARS



By **Chelsea Retherford**  
Staff Writer

**C**urtis Griffith retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in 1993, but the Marine Corps League — a congressionally chartered veterans' organization for marines — remains an integral part of his life 30 years later.

"Marines like Marines," Griffith answered when asked about what drives him to stay so involved with his detachment in Sheffield.

"We like to talk Marine Corps. We like to be Marines, and we miss the atmosphere of the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps bases that we were in," he said. "It's the camaraderie. That's the big thing."

Griffith, who grew up in a fatherless household in southwestern Pennsylvania, said he enlisted in the Marines at age 19 in search of the structure and discipline he felt he was lacking at home.

"My father died when I was six years old. I think I was looking for a little bit of leadership — I had a lot of growing up to do when I joined the Marine Corps — and they provided it," Griffith, now 70, said.



Curtis Griffith sits inside the Marine Corps League Conley Detachment #1477 building in Sheffield. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



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A memorial for the late Cpl. Matthew Conley of Green Hill, who died while serving in Ramadi, Iraq, appears inside the Marine Corps League Conley Detachment #1477 in Sheffield. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



A cutout of the late Cpl. Matthew Conley Of Green Hill sits at the bar inside the Marine Corps League Conley Detachment #1477 in Sheffield. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



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Curtis Griffith tends to one of his horses at his home in Cloverdale.  
[DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



It was the Marine Corps that brought him to Alabama in 1984, when he was sent to recruit new enlistments that year until 1987.

From there, he spent three years in Iwakuni, Japan, a city about 30 miles south of Hiroshima. When he returned, he eventually set down some roots in the Shoals area.

When Griffith isn't organizing a Toys for Tots fundraiser, or coordinating some other event with the Marine Corps League Conley Detachment #1477, he can usually be found feeding horses, horseback riding, or mowing and maintaining his 15-acre farm in Cloverdale.

"I grew up riding horses — not the whole time, but in and out my whole life. I can't sit still," he said. "My wife yells at me a lot."

Griffith serves as the senior vice commandant for the Conley Detachment, and is a charter member of the organization that was formed in the Shoals in 2020.

After getting involved with the league, he also recruited his wife, Barbara, to help with detachment business. Now, she serves as the organization's historian.

"She's a big help to me, and she's putting together a book from when we started to present day with pictures of all our happenings and everything that goes on," he said.

Griffith, along with Tommy Oswald, Richard Keeton and Bill Phillips, began working to establish a Marine Corps League detachment in August 2019, and by Feb. 11, 2020, their ambitions became a reality.

The detachment is named for the late Cpl. Matthew Conley of Green Hill, who died while serving in Ramadi, Iraq, in February 2006.

"Our detachments are named for fallen Marines. It makes us a little bit more part of the community," Griffith said, adding that pride played a large part in organizing a detachment for the Shoals area.

"It was the pride of having our own, and locally taking over an area of Alabama that was not heavily involved in the Marine Corps," he said. "Now, we're the only Marine Corps League in the state of Alabama that has their own building."

He said the detachment began with 15 members, and has since grown to include over 80 enlisted and retired Marines and their spouses.





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Toys for Tots coordinator Curtis Griffith, left, hands toys and a bicycle to veteran Mike Machtolff as the organization prepares to distribute toys in Sheffield. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

“We’ve got some old, crusted Marines like me, and we’ve got some younger Marines,” Griffith said. “That includes the wives, who are a very important part of this whole thing. It’s a majority of the wives who help out with fundraisers.

“One thing about this organization, it doesn’t matter what the job is, it will get done. We all work harmoniously together to get the job done.”

When the detachment was formed, Griffith was asked specifically to help out with the Toys for Tots initiative, which is known for donating toys to local children for the holidays.

Griffith who has served as the Northwest Alabama Toys for Tots coordinator since 2020, said he works closely with other entities

like the Department of Human Resources, One Place of the Shoals, or local police forces and emergency responders to provide toys for children who are victims of domestic violence, or who lost their homes in a fire or other natural disaster.

In 2022, Griffith’s job as coordinator of Lauderdale, Colbert and Franklin counties grew to also encompass children in need in Marion and Winston counties.

In his first year, he said Northwest Alabama Toys for Tots donated to 278 children, then to 472 Shoals-area children in 2021.

Last Christmas he said that the number was up to 1,249 families assisted with the addition of two more counties in the region.

“We’ve grown a lot in the Toys for Tots, and I probably have 10

to 12 people working with me within the Marine Corps League,” Griffith said.

For Toys for Tots alone, he said he helps organize four fundraisers, including an annual golf tournament, car shows and toy drives, every year. While those fundraisers specifically raise money and accept toy donations for area children, Griffith also volunteers with other fundraisers and events through the detachment.

“It’s about Marines helping Marines, and it’s Marines helping the community,” he said. “It’s a close-knit organization. We love to be around Marines, and we love to help the community. If there’s a need, if people will get in touch with us to let us know, we’ll volunteer.”



On May 13, the Conley Detachment had members working as security and road guards for runners in the Chick-fil-A Florence Race benefiting Shoals Scholar Dollars.

In addition to volunteering for community initiatives, Griffith said the Conley Detachment also hosts its own events to benefit area veterans in need. He said his detachment has assisted at least nine local marines in the Shoals area since the Conley Detachment was formed three years ago.

Assistance to local veterans can come in the form of house or rent payments, or vehicle repairs when the Marine is down on their luck or has suffered a hardship.

But it isn't always about hard work and showing support. Griffith said the group of Marines understands the importance of

fellowship, and often organizes events for the sole purpose of celebrating or remembering one of their own.

In July, he said the detachment will honor the late Dan Copeland, a former commandant of a neighboring detachment in Decatur who played a part in getting the Conley Detachment off the ground.

"He was a big kayak guy, and we've decided to hold a kayak trip every July in his memory," Griffith said. "I think last year we had 60-something boats. We have a good time. Even us old folks get in the water, and at the end, down at Wildwood (Park), we'll have our chief burger flipper, and we'll have burgers, hot dogs, drinks and chips for everybody."

He said kayaks and canoes will launch from the Cox Creek Bridge ramp, 802 Cox Creek

Parkway in Florence, at 8 a.m. on July 15. The event is open to the public.

The Marine Corps League hosts an annual ball towards the end of the year, and, of course, holds Memorial Day and Veterans Day events with other area veterans organizations each year.

Griffith said Marine Corps League members also enjoy gathering at the Conley Detachment building for college football watch parties, or just for the sake of getting together.

Griffith attributes his good health and sense of fraternity to his decision to enlist in the Marines over 50 years ago.

"The Marine Corps taught me to stay active," he said. "The Marine Corps taught me a lot. It's drummed in our heads from boot camp on that we're the number one service out there. I'm proud of being a Marine."



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Lori White sits in a student desk inside her classroom at Rogers High School. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

A photograph of Lori White, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, sitting in a blue school desk in a classroom. She is wearing a floral patterned shirt, brown pants, and dark shoes with light-colored soles. She has a name tag that says "Lori White, Rogers High School" and is smiling at the camera with her hand resting on her chin. In the background, there are other desks, a whiteboard, and a large digital display showing a graph.

# MAKING IT ADD UP

LORI WHITE'S  
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Students taking Algebra 2, precalculus or finite math may struggle to find ways to apply those equations to life's everyday problems. Lori White, who teaches all three courses at Rogers High School in Green Hill, strives to help her students grasp the bigger picture.

"When they can see a purpose for it, math becomes more meaningful to kids," White said. "Where are you going to use this? That's the question."

White has gotten creative to find hands-on projects for her students at Rogers, where she's taught for nearly 35 years.

She said the training she's received through the Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative

(AMSTI) — as well as tips and tricks she's found on Google and other online resources — have helped inspire many of those projects.

Over the years, her students have designed roller coasters, or modeled the positions on a Ferris wheel through parametric equations.

"I always like to do some parametric motion projects with the kids where they have to model things flying through the air," she said. "If you hit a baseball, is it going to clear the fence and be a homerun? That sort of thing."

She said the interesting projects also keep things fresh for her when it comes to lesson planning.

"I like to find new things to do so that life does not become stale. I think if every teacher would kind of reinvent themselves every couple of years — change things up — then there wouldn't be as much burnout in the teaching field," she said.

"I still do some of those same projects. I think if you can have a little fun along the way — that's one of the things I love to do. I want everyone to love math. They usually don't, unfortunately," she added with a laugh.

White admits that it's not always easy to find ways to apply those math problems to real-world scenarios.

"For some things I teach, I just have to be frank and say, yeah,



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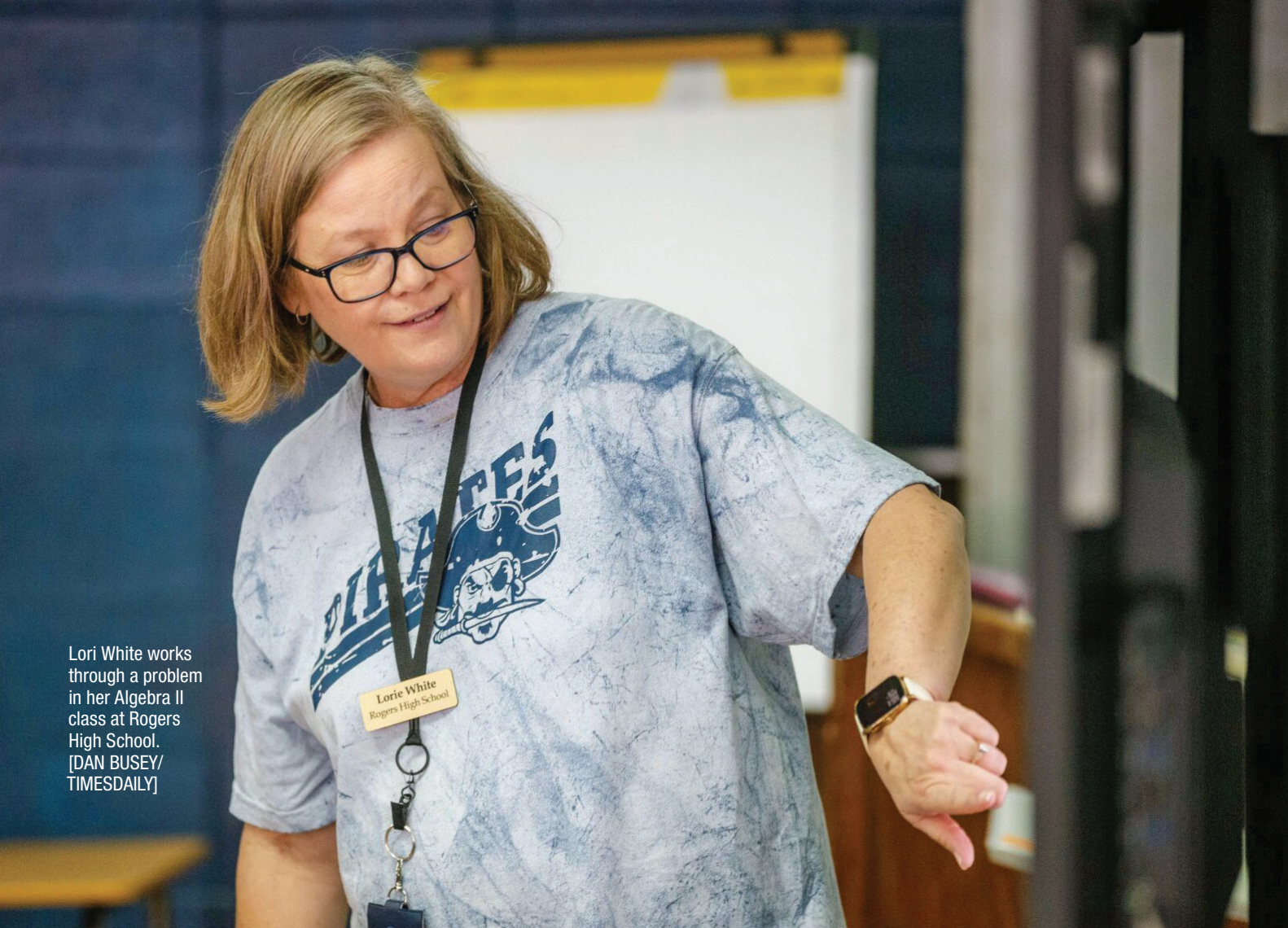
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Lori White works through a problem in her Algebra II class at Rogers High School. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

you may never use it, but math teaches you to think logically,” White said. “When in life are you going to need to logically think through a problem? If nothing else, you know, math helps with that.”

As she readies for retirement in a couple of years, White said she hopes to keep her mind sharp by continuing to work math problems in her free time.

“I think it’s so important, and that’s one reason I love to read,” she said. “When I tell my students that I just love to sit on the couch at night and work math problems, they look at me like I’ve grown a horn at the top of my head.

“That’s how I learn. I feel accomplished when I solve

problems. I know, I’m nerdy, but I like math and I love to help people solve problems.”

White didn’t always see herself at the head of the classroom. When she enrolled at the University of North Alabama, she initially pursued a degree in computer programming.

After deciding she didn’t want to spend her days sitting alone at a computer, a little bit of personal reflection told her she’d be better suited for teaching.

She graduated from UNA in December 1988 and stepped into the shoes of her own former high school math teacher, Judy Freeze, who had left Rogers to become an administrator for Muscle Shoals city schools.

“I got lucky and walked right into my home (at Rogers High School),” White said. “I have no regrets.”

“I love my job. I love what I do every day, and I love the kids. I really do. I will put these kids up here against anybody. We are really lucky.”

White said she’s also lucky to have her family close to her at school. Her husband, James White, teaches history at Rogers as well, and their son, Cael, graduated from the K-through-12 school in 2021.

“Now that James isn’t coaching anymore, we ride to school together,” she said. “I’ll see him at lunch, and I’ll see him at three o’clock. It’s kind of neat because



his vacations are my vacations. We're off at the same time."

"It's been nice that we were all here together," she added. "When my child was here, I got to watch him grow up and do all the things that kids do at school without having to take off work because I was here with him."

White said she likely would have retired sooner if not for the Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science (TEAMS) Act, which was passed by the state Legislature in 2021. The act granted highly qualified middle and high school math and science teachers up to an additional \$20,000 to teach in hard-to-staff areas of Alabama.

White said she signed a five-year contract the year the act was passed with intentions of boosting her retirement a few



Coach James White, left, enjoys lunch with his wife, Lori White at Rogers High. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

years down the road. Now, she said she's ready to retire as soon as her agreement is up.

"TEAMS probably kept me around a few more years," she said, adding that she doesn't intend to seek part-time work in the near future.

"I think when I retire, I will be retired. I do hope to become very involved with my church and things that I don't get to do now. They fix meals and take to people and other little things I can't do because I'm at work. I'm hoping to get to do that and spend time with my family."

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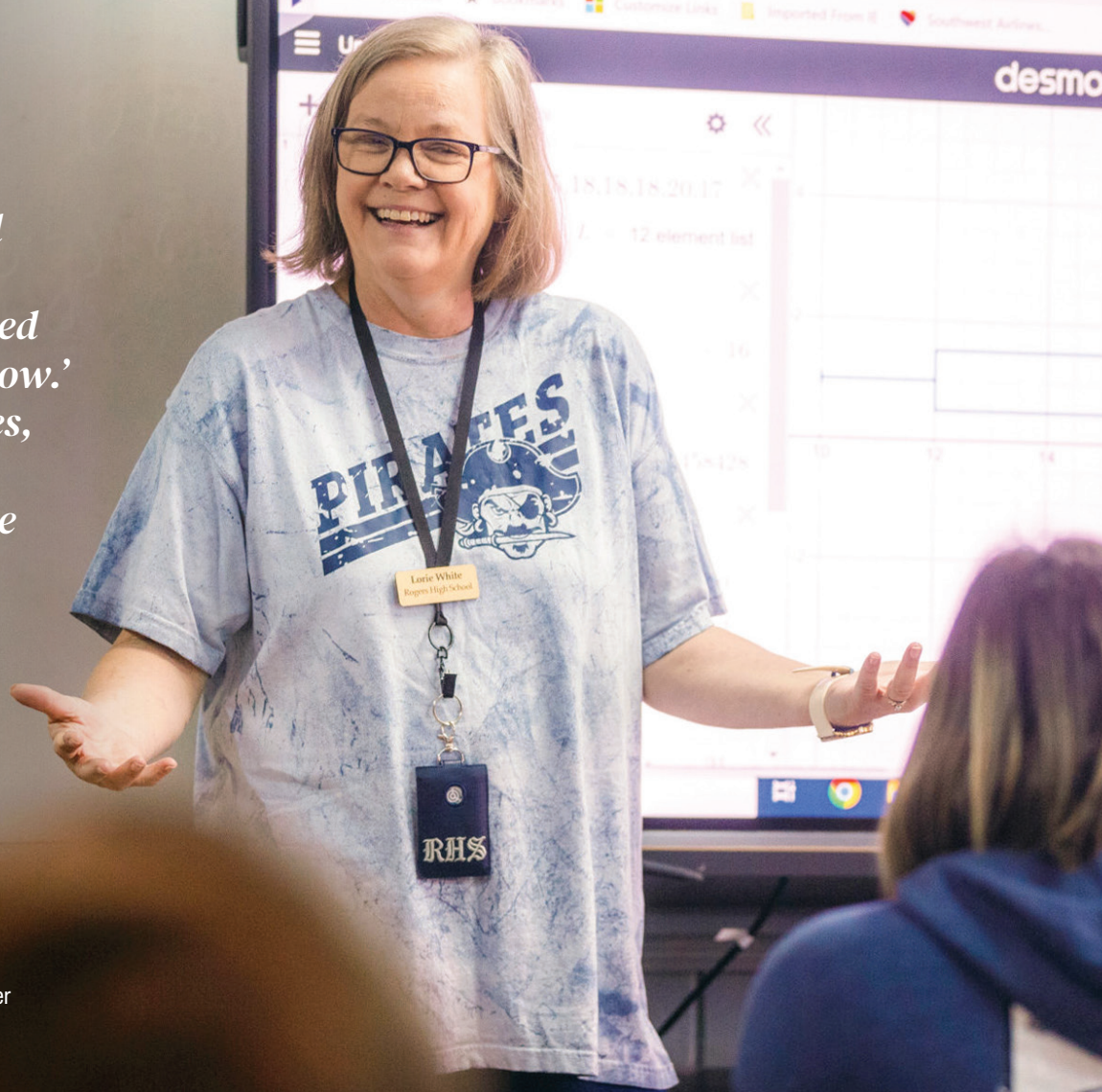
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“

*When I first started teaching, I never would have admitted to a kid, ‘I don’t know.’ But now, sometimes, I just look at them and go, huh. Let me go look that up, or let me find an answer.”*

— Lori White



Lori White interacts with students in her Algebra II class at Rogers High School. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



Lori White talks with her husband, Coach James White, in the hallway at Rogers High School. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



With over three decades of teaching experience, White said she's learned as much from her students as she's taught them. She said she also feels like she's grown into a better teacher, gaining more patience, humility and wisdom over the span of her career.

"I'm not always right. I think when you learn to laugh at yourself a little bit, you have a lot more fun, especially with these kids," she said. "When I first started teaching, I never would have admitted to a kid, 'I don't know.' But now, sometimes, I just look at them and go, huh. Let me go look that up, or let me find an answer."

More than anything, White said she's grateful to have played a part in shaping students into successful adults over the years.



Lori White grades papers inside her classroom at Rogers High School. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]

She's seen many of her students return to the high school to teach other subjects, or in the elementary school. She said it's a neat feeling to watch the torch get passed on, just as Mrs. Freeze had done with her about 36 years ago.

"It does a heart good to know that you maybe inspired them a little bit," White said. "I have students from all walks come back and say, 'I loved your math class.' It makes me happy and, you know, I get to say, 'I told you so!'"

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Madam Sew Sew Belinda Lokey is queen of the Flamboyant Foxy Ladies chapter of the Red Hat Society. [DAN BUSEY/TIMESDAILY]



# Red Hat Society

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25 YEARS OF SISTERHOOD



Each time Belinda Lokey dons a red hat, she's reminded that she is part of a sisterhood that has supported her for more than two decades.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed being a Red Hatter," Lokey said. "It is a sisterhood. It's having somewhere to go and do things with friends, and it's been really good for me."

Teresa Peck, who joined the Society around five years ago, feels the same way and added that her local chapter has pushed her to become more active in her community.

"I'm a bit of an introvert," Peck said. "Since I've gotten involved, it's really helped me come out of my shell."

The Red Hat Society was founded in 1998 by Sue Ellen Cooper of

Fullerton, California, to enrich the lives of women over 50 who may have prioritized their families and careers over nurturing friendships.

Lokey, a Florence native, joined RHS as a "lady in waiting" while she was still working as a self-employed seamstress, sewing for clients and local theaters.

"That's how I met Theresa (Kanka)," Lokey said. "She asked me to join her chapter, The Dixie Cup Red Hatters. At the time, I was a Pink Hatter because I was not 50 years old yet. Theresa actually gave me my first red hat."

By the time Lokey received her first red hat, Kanka had been encouraged to start a new chapter, the Flamboyant Foxy Ladies, and had been named the

chapter's first queen. Kanka asked Lokey to be her vice queen.

Lokey said the chapter was established in October 2003, and it began with a dozen or so members. Today, the chapter has grown to 23 members and among its newest attendants is Peck, who said she was also encouraged to join thanks to Kanka.

Peck said she retired from a 47-year nursing career in 2015. She stayed busy by picking up gardening with her husband, and becoming more involved with her church, but she said she still felt a void in her social life.

"I just needed something else. I needed friendship," she said.

Peck and Lokey said they've each made several lasting



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Sylvia Brown of the Birmingham chapter, left, chats with Teresa Peck during a past Red Hat Society event. [COURTESY PHOTO]

friendships with women in their community and all over the globe since they've joined.

Lokey said she's gotten to travel to places like Las Vegas, Nevada, St. Louis, Missouri, and the Grand Canyon.

"This will be my 16th year attending an event in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee," she said. "Queen Starr Lawson hosts it in Pigeon Forge each year. We go to parties and conventions all over the place, and

we've met wonderful ladies from all around the world. I've met ladies from Australia, England, the Netherlands, Germany. We have the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people."

As the group's current queen, Lokey is responsible for planning events and outings for the group. She said she tries to keep up with all the local happenings in the Shoals so she can present them to her club members.

"Sometimes we attend as a group, and sometimes it's just a few of us, but we always present it to everyone," she said. "If members are sick, I keep in touch and keep the group informed. I send everyone birthday cards and simple stuff like that. I encourage everyone to come to the meetings and participate."

Lokey was elected before Kanka's passing in April 2020.

"Teresa Peck and I were both up for election for queen," Lokey said. "After, Theresa Kanka asked us if we wanted to know the vote. Theresa Kanaka and only one other person knew the results, but she hasn't said anything to me, and I've never asked. We don't know how close it was, she just told me who won."

Lokey said she took time to consider who she wanted as her vice queen, and eventually posed the question to three ladies.

"I called them and told them to think about it and pray about it. Teresa (Peck) was one of the three, and she said yes," Lokey said. "She's been a wonderful asset. We have a great relationship, planning events and working together."

As vice queen, Peck said she is there to relieve Lokey whenever the queen is out of town, sick, or overwhelmed in her personal life.

While the chapter hasn't hosted a party in three years, Lokey said a Red Hat Tea Party and Fashion Show held on April 25 served as a celebration for RHS's 25th anniversary, but it was also



## DID YOU KNOW?

- **The Red Hat Society celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.**

Local chapter, The Flamboyant Foxy Ladies, will celebrate its 20th anniversary in October.

- **RHS is open to women 50 years and older, but the club also accepts “ladies in waiting” who are under 50.** Until Ladies in Waiting come of age, they sport pink hats and lavender clothes.

- **If you ever catch a Red Hatter wearing a purple hat and red clothing,** she likely has a birthday to celebrate soon. Red Hatters are permitted to reverse their colors during events held in their birth month.

- **RHS chapters are led by queens, who choose royal nicknames for themselves.** Queen Belinda Lokey is also known as Madam Sew Sew. The late Queen Theresa Kanka, who preceded Lokey, was known as Queen Scarlet Star.



Belinda Lokey, left, and Theresa Kanka, founding Queen of the Flamboyant Foxy Ladies chapter of the Red Hat Society. [COURTESY PHOTO]

a chance for the local chapter to honor the memory of its founding queen.

“Theresa (Kanka) was a flamboyant woman,” Lokey said. “She taught me how to dress, and she taught me a valuable lesson about looking well-put-together. I made a lot of her clothes, and I still make some clothing for the ladies in our chapter.”

She said the fashion show kicked off with the chapter’s members

parading the room in their regalia.

“Everyone will come out in their biggest hats, their blingiest bling and their fanciest dress, and we’ll all strut our stuff in memory of Theresa,” she said as the group was putting the final touches on the event that hosted over 100 other RHS members from Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Lokey said her chapter has been

a major source of support for her following the loss of her close friend, Kanka, and after she lost her husband of nearly 48 years, Don Lokey.

“Red Hat Society has been a blessing to me, especially since I lost my husband last year,” she said. “It’s so important to go and be a part of a group, and this is a group of all exceptional ladies. It really has been a wonderful experience.”





# Tips to keep your trails **HAPPY** (*and safe*)

**T**ravel was once a key component of the picture working professionals created of their ideal retirements.

While the COVID-19 pandemic put many retirement travel plans on hold in recent years, jetting off to distant locales is once again on retirees' radars.

A 2022 survey from AARP found that individuals 50 and over were poised to not only get back on the road, but also spend significantly more money on travel.

Prior to the pandemic, Americans 50 and over spent \$7,314 annually on travel, according to data from AARP.

By spring 2022, individuals in that same age bracket indicated a readiness to spend \$8,369 on travel. Eagerness to get back on the road, in the air or on the high seas could make it easy to overlook some principles of safe travel.

However, such an oversight could lead to complications that could make it hard to enjoy time away from home.

The following tips can reduce the likelihood that you encounter trouble while traveling.

- **Determine if any health issues are affecting your desired destinations.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a website devoted to travel vaccines ([cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines)), and that page can be an invaluable resource for individuals planning a vacation. What's more, the CDC even provides a specific list of destinations and the latest travel health notices for each of those nations. That list, accessible at [cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) can help seniors determine if there are any health-related safety issues in countries they hope to visit.

- **Speak to your physician.**

A pre-trip consultation with a physician can

uncover any issues that might arise while you're away. Such issues may be easily managed for domestic travelers who are not planning to visit any especially remote locations, but they will not necessarily be as easily navigated when traveling overseas.

Physicians can recommend certain vaccinations or measures to ensure your health while away. In addition, a pre-trip doctor visit is a great time to refill prescriptions that you will need while you're away.

- **Take financial precautions as well.**

Of course, not all travel-related concerns are medical. Finances also require some pre-trip attention. Inflation has caused a sharp spike in the price of various commodities since the start of 2022, so travelers should study up on the cost of food and attractions at their destination to ensure they have enough money to enjoy themselves.

## Planning a trip? *Take advantage of these perks*

**M**any adults over 50 are entitled to an array of discounts, which take into consideration seniors' fixed retirement incomes. Discounts are available on various services, including many travel options.

Seniors have a lot of time to devote to recreational pursuits. This list of available travel discounts can help seniors get the most bang for their vacation bucks.

### **Airline tickets**

Before booking a flight, it is worth investigating if a particular airline carrier offers senior discounts. The global pandemic has changed how some airlines do business, and many have faced significant adversity since early 2020. Airlines may offer more affordable flights to drum up business. In the past, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, British Airlines, and United Airlines have offered various discounts for people ages 65 and older.

### **Ground travel**

Flying isn't the only mode of travel available. AARP partners with various car rental companies to offer senior discounts. Seniors also may be entitled to discounts of 5 percent or more on tickets from Greyhound, Amtrak, and Trailways. Seniors who live in metropolitan areas also may get reduced fares on public buses and trains through providers like New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

### **Accommodations**

Getting there is one thing, but seniors also can receive discounts on hotel stays or cruise cabins. AARP reports that many major hotel and motel chains offer senior discounts between 5 and 15 percent. Royal Caribbean has offered senior discounts on select sailings and stateroom categories. Smarter Travel notes that most chains require travelers to book directly rather than through an online booking agency/deal site to be eligible for discounts.



### **Dining out**

Many restaurants, and national chains in particular, offer senior discounts with or without AARP membership. Applebee's offers 10 to 15 percent off to those age 60 or older. Brick House Tap & Tavern, Carrabba's Italian Grill, Denny's, IHOP, Outback Steakhouse, and many others provide discounts or special senior pricing.

### **Tours and more**

Seniors also can speak with travel agents or booking services about discounts on sightseeing tours and other vacation excursions.

One of the perks of getting older is the chance to save money on travel-related services.



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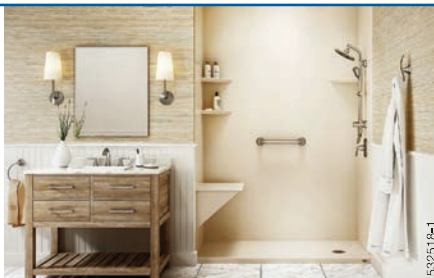
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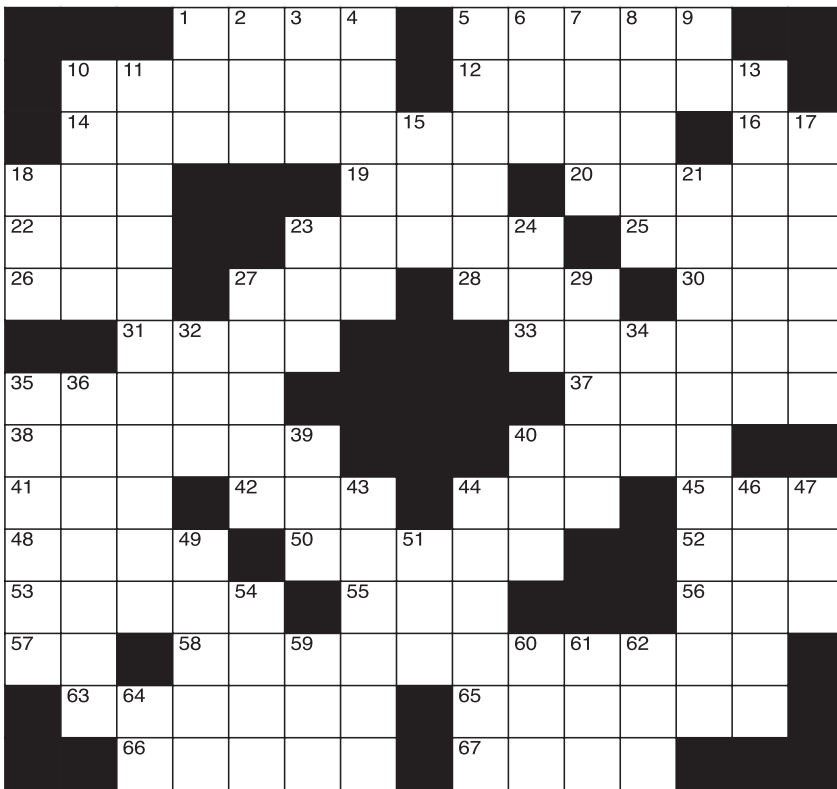
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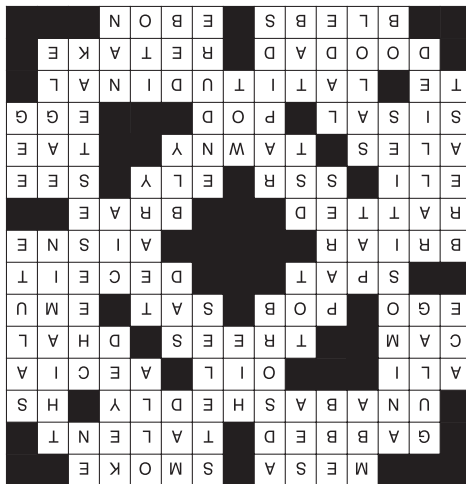


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1. Flat tableland with steep edges
5. Where there's \_\_, there's fire
10. Talked incessantly
12. Skill
14. Without shame
16. Where teens spend their days (abbr.)
18. Boxing's GOAT
19. Used to anoint
20. Cluster cups
22. Footballer Newton
23. They make up a forest
25. Split pulses
26. Self
27. Post-office box
28. Test for high schoolers
30. Large, flightless bird
31. Expectorated
33. Falsehood
35. Prickly, scrambling shrub
37. French river
38. Told on
40. Hillside
41. Peyton's little brother
42. Soviet Socialist Republic
44. Cathedral city in Cambridgeshire
45. Witness
48. Brews
50. Yellowish-brown
52. Arctic explorers, abbr.
53. Mexican agave
55. A type of "cast"
56. Encourage
57. Atomic #52
58. Relating to position north of south of equator
63. Gadget whose name you forget
65. Another recording
66. Small blisters
67. Dark brown or black

## CLUES DOWN

1. Licensed for Wall Street
2. "\_\_ and flow"
3. A very large body of water
4. Accumulate on the surface of
5. Central cores of the stem
6. Angry
7. Ceramic jar
8. Scraped a car
9. \_\_ route
10. Soviet labor camp system
11. Strong hostilities
13. Vitamin of the B complex
15. Go quickly
17. Toast
18. A team's best pitcher
21. A Philly culinary specialty
23. Small child
24. Unhappy
27. Trims away
29. Characterized by crying eyes
32. Soft touch
34. American spy organization
35. A person's chest
36. Came from behind to win
39. Fall back
40. Nellie \_\_, journalist
43. Great places to kayak
44. Suffer patiently
46. Majestic bird
47. Electroencephalograph
49. Organic compound used as an antiseptic
51. Objects connected to the web (abbr.)
54. Ship as cargo
59. The bill in a restaurant
60. Upper-class young woman (abbr.)
61. Judge in OJ Simpson trial
62. One's grandmother
64. Siberian river



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# Cut your risk of injury with these PRE-WORKOUT TIPS

As physically active individuals age, they typically must change how they approach exercise.

For example, rather than jumping two feet first into new activities like they might have done when they were younger, those 50 and older may have to think about injury prevention and ways to improve their endurance prior to lacing up their sneakers.

For most, that may boil down to taking various pre-workout steps.

- **Get enough rest.**

The body requires adequate sleep and other rest during the day to stimulate muscle growth and repair. Exercise may not be as effective, and it may be more dangerous if seniors are engaging without enough sleep.

In addition, sleep deprivation can reduce reaction times, which can adversely affect workouts.

- **Emphasize stretching.**

Stretching can improve flexibility and reduce the risk of muscle injuries. It also can improve the range of motion in the joints. Stretching before and after a workout prepares the body for exercise and helps it recover.

- **Wear the proper footwear and clothing.**

Sturdy, supportive athletic shoes and well-fitting workout wear can make working out more comfortable and safer. The National Institute on Aging recommends finding footwear designed for the specific activity you'll be engaging in. Footwear that offers sufficient heel support and nonslip soles is beneficial as well.



- **Warm up.**

Give the body an opportunity to acclimate during a warm-up period that will facilitate healthy breathing. Warming up also loosens up the joints and muscles. After a workout, seniors should cool down to reduce their heart rates.

- **Carefully consider preworkout supplements.**

Do not take a pre-workout supplement without first consulting your physician, as certain products may adversely interact with medications you're taking for preexisting conditions.

Pre-workout steps can keep seniors safe and reduce injury risk from exercise.



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# REAP HEALTH BENEFITS of spending time outdoors

## 1 Walking

Walking is free and effective. In fact, WebMD notes that a brisk 30-minute walk can improve blood flow, contribute to a stronger heart, strengthen bones, and even help people sleep better at night.

## 2 Cycling

Riding a bike is both fun and a great form of outdoor exercise. Though many studies regarding the health effects of cycling have looked at the value of riding a bike to work, the results of such studies offer insight into just how valuable it can be to ride a bike.

For example, a 2020 study published in the journal *The Lancet* found that people who cycled to work were 24% less likely to die of heart disease and 11% less likely to develop cancer.

## 3 Hiking

Hiking is a bit more strenuous than walking, particularly when individuals choose to traverse steep and/or rocky terrain. WebMD notes that hiking after age 50 can help people reduce their risk of falls and fractures; lower their risk for a host of ailments, including coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes; reduce blood pressure, even in adults who have already been diagnosed with hypertension; and maintain healthy bones and joints.

Hiking is not a one-size-fits-all activity, so seniors, especially those who would characterize themselves as novice hikers, are urged to speak with their physicians prior to hiking trails that are not flat.

The benefits of spending time in the great outdoors are significant.

Do not take a pre-workout supplement without first consulting your physician, as certain products may adversely interact with medications you're taking for preexisting conditions.

Pre-workout steps can keep seniors safe and reduce injury risk from exercise.

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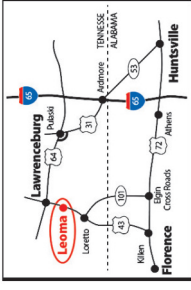
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