CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MA
You’ve Got . . .

Senior Spirit

COUNCIL ON AGING, Inc.
PITTSFIELD SENIOR CENTER
330 NORTH STREET
PITTSFIELD, MA 01201
413-499-9346 Fax # 413-442-8531

NOVEMBER 2018

AARP tax preparation
Are You OK? wake-up program
Art du Jure!
Berkshire Writers Room
Bingo
Breakfast Club
Brown Bag
Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
Ceramics
Chair Caning
Coffee Shop
Comedy Dungeon!
Community Outreach
Computer Workshop
Exercise Classes-Osteo
Foot Clinic
From Stage to Screen
Gift Shop
“Hand and Foot” card game
Health Education Workshops
Income Tax Preparation
Information/Referrals
Knitting and Crochet
“Legal Education”
Line Dancing
Lunch Served Daily
Mah Jongg
Meditation
Molari Blood Pressure Visits
Pinochle
Poetry
Pool Tables
Quality Time Club
Quilting
Seasonal Celebrations
Scrapbooking & Card Making
Scrabble
Shake Your Soul dance-exercise
SHINE Medicare Counseling
Supportive Day Program
Tai Chi, Tai Chi w/ weights
Transportation
Traveling Friends
TRIAD
Volunteer Opportunities
Woodcarving, Woodworking

AN INSIDE LOOK AT . . .
Sealed! Page 2
Determined! Page 2
Heads Up! Page 4
Step by Step! Page 4
Shifted Need! Page 5
Stream! Page 7

Froio

Ballot Box

Activity! Info! Socialization!

Winning Ticket!
Lightning In a Bottle

What is the appeal of the mason jar? It conjures rustic romanticism and good, homemade food. Some even say that it captures summer in a jar, to be uncapped and enjoyed in the long, cold winter. Perhaps you’ll even be inspired to preserve something tasty in a jar yourself on November 30, Mason Jar Day.

John L. Mason didn’t set out to become famous when he invented the mason jar on November 30, 1858. In fact, he didn’t invent the jar at all but rather the unique two-piece metal screw cap. Mason was, after all, a tinsmith, so he was well-versed in the utility of metal. Heat-based canning as a method to preserve foods was common in kitchens prior to Mason’s invention. The one problem common to this type of preservation was a faulty seal. As soon as air entered the jar or can, food began to spoil. Mason’s airtight lid solved that problem beautifully, advancing the efficiency of the canning process. While his airtight lid kept food fresh, the clear glass jar made the contents appetizing.

The most popular mason jar manufactured today is the ubiquitous Ball brand jar. Ball jars were first manufactured in 1884, and today, they are created at a rate of 17 jars per second. Not only is the glass favored over plastic jars made with synthetic chemicals but these jars are also appreciated for their versatility. A mason jar is no longer singularly used to preserve foods like jam or pickles; the jars are also used as soap dispensers, planters, vases, and drinking glasses—not just for moonshine but for trendy cocktails.

A mason jar is as authentic a piece of Americana as a cowboy hat. Collectors even seek out rare and valuable mason jar specimens. The Universal jar is worth thousands. Produced in Buffalo in 1937, only 50 were ever manufactured. Even more highly prized is the extremely rare Buffalo jar made in amber glass by the Ball company, of which only four are known to exist. From the mundane to the magnificent, mason jars have captured both food and the public’s imagination for over a century.

Activity Connection, November 2018

FRIENDS work on the inside!

To Age Well, Train for Contentment

A ‘gym rat’ realizes his mind needs strengthening, too.

At 88, I remain a competitive runner, always sprinting the last hundred yards of a race to cross the finish line with nothing left to give. The finish line of my life is drawing close, and I hope to reach it having given the best of myself along the way. I’ve been training my body to meet the demands of this final stretch. But, I wonder, should I have asked more of my mind?

I have no trouble taking my body to a gym or starting line. I’ve done a good job convincing myself that if I didn’t exercise, I would unleash the many predators that seek their elderly prey on couches, but not on treadmills. The more I sweated, the more likely it was my internist would continue to exclaim, “Keep doing what you’re doing, and I’ll see you next year.” It was my way of keeping at bay the dreaded: “Mr. Goldfarb, I’m afraid I have some bad news.”

My mind, on the other hand, seems less willing to yield to discipline, behaving as though it has a mind of its own. I have dabbled in internet “brain games,” solving algebraic problems flashing past and rerouting virtual trains to avoid crashes. I’ve audited classes at a university, and participated in a neurofeedback assessment of my brain’s electrical impulses. But these are only occasional diversions, never approaching my determination to remain physically fit as I move deeper into old age.

Despite having many friends in their 70s, 80s and 90s, I’ve been far too slow to realize that how we respond to aging is a choice made in the mind, not in the gym. Some of my healthiest friends carry themselves as victims abused by time. They see life as a parade of disappointments: aches and ailments, confusing technology, children who don’t visit, hurried doctors.

Other friends, many whose aching knees and hips are the least of their physical problems, find comfort in their ability to accept old age as just another stage of life to deal with. I would use the word “heroic” to describe the way they cope with aging as it drains strength from their minds and bodies, though they would quickly dismiss such a term as overstatement.

One such friend recently called from a hospital to tell me a sudden brain seizure had rendered him legally blind. He interrupted me as I began telling him how terribly sorry I was: “Bob, it could have been worse. I could have become deaf instead of blind.”

Continued on insert page
our
SENIOR CENTER
A convenient source for local services

FIND AN ADVERTISER NEAR YOU
SEARCH SUPPORTERS OF OUR CENTER to find trusted services in our area!
ourseniorcenter.com

PLUS Sign up to have our newsletter emailed to you!
You Are the Target
Today's swindlers make their pitches personal

Once, fraudsters blanketed as many people as possible with the same pitch, knowing they’d get a few takers. Today, that has turned around entirely. Scammers now work one person at a time. Consider it personal.

Interviews with convicted swindlers and reviews of undercover tapes of con men in action reveal that successful scammers study you before striking; they use public data and your online behaviors to learn your background and situation. Then they apply these five proven techniques to individualize their pitches.

Find the right moment
Whether it’s the death of a family member, financial troubles, a disease diagnosis or even just moving from one place to another, stressful life events seem to go hand in hand with being scammed. Why? One theory is that these stressful events require cognitive capacity that might otherwise be used to spot and resist con artists.

Win your trust
U.S. military veterans tend to trust fellow vets, so swindlers have learned to pretend to be veterans. Likewise, the best way to scam someone in Iowa is to claim to be from Iowa. Deep in debt? A con artist often will weave a story that he or she, too, was deep in debt, exactly like you, and used this very service to successfully return to financial health.

Locate your hot buttons
Once they have your trust, the best scammers ask questions about your life to find what one con man called your “emotional Achilles’ heel.” That could be fear of running out of money, concern for your spouse’s health or anger at how an organization has treated you. Swindlers are experts at empathy. What they lack is sympathy; once they find your weak spot, they attack.

Trigger your emotions
Con artists agree: The key to a swindle is to get the victim into a heightened emotional state. Once they determine your hot button, they will push it hard, using all kinds of verbal skills.

Hurry you to say yes
Why do that? Because emotions make us act more quickly. That’s why you should always hang up, cool down, do the research and get an outside opinion before deciding on any unsolicited pitch. Chances are that your more rational side will quickly tell you to walk away. Because when it comes to parting with your money, the very last thing this should be is personal.

What Can Walking Do For You
Take this quiz to see just how much lacing up and heading out can affect your health

1. Walking at a brisk pace daily will help you:
   A. Enhance your mood, lower your weight and lengthen your life
   B. Reduce your risk of memory problems by 50 percent
   C. Strengthen muscles
   D. All of the above

2. A 30-minute daily walk can dramatically reduce your risk of or improve your survival chances with:
   A. Heart disease
   B. Colon cancer
   C. Breast cancer
   D. All of the above

3. What does one study show is the best way to use walking to lower your blood sugar?
   A. Walk for 45 minutes, every day
   B. Walk for 15 minutes after every meal
   C. Either

4. True or false: For heart health, running beats walking.
   A. True
   B. False

5. Studies have found that walking can boost your brain health by:
   A. Increasing the supply of blood to the brain
   B. Strengthening muscle overall
   C. Preventing shrinkage of the hippocampus
   D. Creating a daily routine that will keep your mind on track
   E. Both A and C

6. One study showed that walking 30 minutes a day for a year can save you:
   A. Nothing
   B. $783 per year in gas expense and/or commuting costs
   C. More than $2,500
   D. The monthly cost of a gym membership

7. True or false: Walking can actually make you more creative at work.
   A. True
   B. False

Answers

1. D. All of the above

Regular walks can help your weight and memory. In one study, researchers tracked older adults and found that those who walked six to nine miles a week reduced their risk of memory problems by 50 percent. But the habit’s most important role might be in boosting your overall

By Doug Shadel, AARP The Magazine, February 1, 2018

Continued on insert page
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)
Call for appt. 499-9346
Tuesdays @ 12:00

Foot Clinic
By Appointment 499-9346
Thur Nov 1st

New! New! New!
Att'y General's Community Engagement Office
Got Questions? Get Answers
Fri, Nov. 2nd 8:30 to 10:30

November Breakfast Club
Public Health Nurse Kayla Winters explains how to gear against the ills of winter.
Thur Nov 8th 8:00 a.m. $3.00

Pittsfield Tree Watch
Nurture the roots of your tree interest!
Thur Nov 8th

Thanksgiving Party @ Meal Site!
11:30 Reserve Ahead
Thur Nov 15th

Legal Education
Have legal questions evaluated.
Thur Nov 15th 1:00 p.m. By Appt 499-9346

November Card Party
Rake it in!
Thur Nov 15th Four-somes are best. $2.00

New Member Day
Find your way.
Let us know you're coming. 499-9346
Wed Nov 21st 10:00 a.m.

Molari Blood Pressure Clinic
By Appt 499-9346
Tue Nov 27th

Brown Bag Day
Special Date!
Fri Nov 30th 10:30

Art Studio!
New Day!
Mondays @ 1:00
To Age Well, Train for Contentment

Continued from page 2

Despite all the time I spend lifting weights and exercising, I realized I lack the strength to have said those words. It suddenly struck me I’ve paid a price for being a “gym rat.”

If there is one characteristic common to friends who are aging with a graceful acceptance of life’s assaults, it is contentment. Some with life-altering disabilities — my blind friend, another with two prosthetic legs — are more serene and complain less than those with minor ailments. They accept the uncertainties of old age without surrendering to them. A few have told me that the wisdom they’ve acquired over the years has made aging easier to navigate than the chaos of adolescence.

It was clear I lacked, and had to find, the contentment those friends had attained. The hours I spent exercising had given me confidence, but not contentment.

The 30-pound weight I no longer attempt to lift reminds me that not far off is the day when lifting anything, or running anywhere, will be asking too much of my body. My brain would have to become the muscle I counted on to carry me through these final years with the peace and purpose others had found. Aging had to be more than what I saw in a mirror.

But rather than overhauling my life completely in the hopes of undertaking a fundamental change in the way I confronted aging, I felt the place to begin would be to start small, adopting a new approach to situations I encountered every day. A recent lunch provided a perfect example.

I’ve always found it extremely difficult to concentrate when I’m in a noisy setting. At this lunch with a friend in an outdoor restaurant, a landscaper began blowing leaves from underneath the bushes surrounding our table.

Typically, after such a noisy interruption, I would have snapped, “Let’s wait until he’s finished!” then fallen silent. When the roar eventually subsided, my irritation would have drained the conversation of any warmth. The lunch would be remembered for my angry reaction to the clamor, and not for any pleasure it gave the two of us.

It troubled me that even a passing distraction could so easily take me from enjoying lunch with a good friend to a place that gave me no pleasure at all. I wanted this meal to be different and decided to follow the example of friends my age who know they are running out of joyful moments and will let nothing interfere with them. They simply speak louder, accepting the noise for what it is, a temporary irritant.

My years in gyms had taught me to shake off twinges and other distractions, never permitting them to stop my workout or run. I decided to treat the noise as though it were a cramp experienced while doing crunches. I would shake it off instead of allowing it to end our conversation.

I continued talking with my friend, challenging myself to hear the noise, but to hold it at a distance. The discipline so familiar to me in the gym — this time applied to my mind — proved equally effective in the restaurant. It was as though I had taken my brain to a mental fitness center.

Learning to ignore a leaf-blower’s roar hardly equips me to find contentment during my passage into ever-deeper old age. But I left the lunch feeling I had at least taken a small first step in changing behavior that stood in the way of that contentment.

Could I employ that same discipline to accept with dignity the inevitable decline awaiting me: frailty, memory lapses, dimming sound and sight, the passing of friends and the looming finish line? Churning legs and a pounding heart had taken me part of the way. But now the challenge was to find that contentment within me. Hoping that contentment will guide me as I make my way along the path yet to be traveled.

By Robert W. Goldfarb, New York times, October 1, 2018. He is a management consultant and the author of “What’s Stopping Me From Getting Ahead?”

Noteworthy Notaries

You may not appreciate them until you need something notarized, but notaries can stand up and be recognized for their contributions to society on November 7, Notary Public Day. What is a notary public? A notary is a state government official whose job it is to maintain integrity. They act as an official witness during the signing of official documents as a means of thwarting fraud. Their duty is to screen signers by verifying their true identity. They also make sure people know what they are signing and that people aren’t being forced to sign documents against their will. Notary publics often take center stage during many of life’s important moments: signing papers to buy a house, granting power of attorney, even verifying college transcripts. Officials have carried this capacity since ancient Egypt when sesh, or scribes, acted as official witnesses and chroniclers of the pharaoh’s bureaucracy. Today, anyone can become a notary public and, hence, a valued public servant for the community.

Activity Connection, November 2018
NOVEMBER SENIOR CENTER EVENTS

Everyday! 11:30 a.m. Meal Site
British philosopher Julian Baggini opines that, "Any celebration meal to which guests are invited, be they family or friends, should be an occasion for generous hospitality." That’s the exact ethos that daily Meal Site adopts as its mandate. Enjoy! Reserve a day ahead, 1-800-981-5201.

Tuesdays! 12:00 p.m. SHINE (by appt.)
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselors help you navigate the oft treacherous maze of health insurance programs. Call Froio at 499-9346, or Elder Services directly at 499-0524.

Thursday, November 1 9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic Rides Again!
The Foot Clinic rides again! In the capable hands of Lisa Christman, R.N., you’ll find that all of your foot care needs will be thoroughly managed. Her attentive ministrations are good for the sole and the soul! Please call for appointment, 499-9346.

Friday, November 2 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Attorney General’s Community Engagement
Take advantage of this new outreach effort by the Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office. Have a consultation regarding your civic or legal concerns. For these inaugural rounds at least, no appointments are necessary.

Thursday, November 8 8:00 a.m. November Breakfast Club
Pittsfield Health Department public health nurse Kayla Donnelly-Winters explains how to gird against the unhealthy ills of winter. Breakfast Club; always delectable, always informative!

Thursday, November 8 4:00 p.m. Pittsfield Tree Watch
Tree Watch explores your deep-rooted tree interests. Keep counsel with a cabal of committed tree enthusiasts. 4:00 p.m. in the Coffee Shop.

Monday, November 12 Senior Center CLOSED Veterans’ Day

Wednesday, November 15 11:30 a.m. Thanksgiving Day!
A bounteous meal shared in good company is plenty to be thankful for. Enjoy the occasion! Call a day ahead to reserve, 1-800-981-5201.

Thursday, November 15 1:00 p.m. Legal Education (by apt.)
Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.

Thursday, November 15 1:00 p.m. Card Party
Author Ray Bradbury noted that, "Living at risk is jumping off the cliff and building your wings on the way down." At monthly Card Party there are tamer ways to fly on the wild side! Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks! Unless otherwise arranged, foursomes are best.

Wednesday, November 21 10:00 a.m. New Member Day Tour
Unearth the basic facts, and the nuances, of the Senior Center. There’s more than meets the eye and we relish the opportunity to convey the full essence de Froio. Let us know you’re coming, 499-9346.

Thursday & Friday, November 22 & 23 Senior Center CLOSED Thanksgiving Holiday

Monday, November 26 10:00 a.m. The Councilman is In!
The Froio Center hosts councilman Kevin Morandi’s invaluable “open office” sessions. His informal Q & As take place a day before City Council meetings, maximizing the potential for a responsive “public-to-council” conduit.

Tuesday, November 27 8:45 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)
Molari Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 499-9346 for an appointment.

Friday, November 30 10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.
health span, “which means not just living longer but adding more years of living independently as you age,” notes Mark Cucuzzella, a professor of family medicine at West Virginia University Department of Family Medicine. In his opinion, viewing walking only in terms of how many calories it burns sells the exercise short, given its dramatic benefits for key systems like your brain, heart and muscles. And research shows that when it comes to walking and your life span, more is more. A study from the American Cancer Society showed that an hour of walking a day lowered subjects’ risk of death by 30 percent, compared with those who stayed put on the couch.

2. D. All of the above
Yep, keeping up a walking regimen is enough to dramatically reduce your risk of heart disease and some types of cancer. There’s even news (from a study presented to an American Society for Clinical Oncology conference and released in June) that walking can influence your survival of breast and colon cancer. In one study, 992 people with stage 3 bowel cancer were assessed twice over an average of seven years. Those who followed exercise recommendations from the American Cancer Society (which could be met with moderate-intensity walking for 30 minutes five times a week) had a 42 percent lower risk of dying and less chance of a recurrence.

3. C. Either
Walking can be an important part of controlling blood sugar, and a recent study found the benefits accrue with either one longer walk of moderate intensity or three shorter walks a day. A study looking at type 2 diabetes by the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services showed that adults over 60 who took short walks after every meal lowered blood sugar more effectively and for longer — up to three hours — than they did by performing other types of moderate exercise. The only hitch? You have to lace up after every meal to get the benefit from shorter walks, says the study’s lead author.

4. B. False
A 2013 study using data in the National Runners and Walkers Health Study (a survey of 15,945 walkers and 33,060 runners conducted at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, in Berkeley, Calif.) revealed this surprising comparison: Runners reduced their risk of heart disease by about 4.5 percent, but walkers did even better, reducing that risk by more than 9 percent. While runners saw greater health benefits in other areas, the point is that walking holds its own as a heart-healthy option — and you certainly shouldn’t balk at walking if you’re no longer getting in those regular runs.

5. E. Both A and C
The links between walking and preserving brain function just keep coming. A 2011 study showed that simply by walking three days a week for 40 minutes, 65-year-olds could shave off about two years of typical age-related atrophy of the hippocampus. In that study, the group assigned to stretching instead of walking showed slight shrinkage of this region of the brain. And in a more recent study, researchers at New Mexico Highlands University found that the foot’s impact during walking generates pressure waves through the arteries that can increase the supply of blood to the brain, boosting its function. There’s also new research out of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver that shows that patients who already have certain types of dementia can see improved brain function with walking (which researchers attributed to improved blood flow to and increased growth factors in the brain).

6. C. More than $2,500
As reported in the New York Times last year, an analysis of 26,239 men and women, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, reported that being active will save you more than $2,500 annually in health care spending. In a nutshell, researchers found that those who don’t get off their duffs are more likely than those who do to develop diseases, and the costs to treat those illnesses are tremendous. So, in the same way that taking your own shopping bag to Whole Foods helps cut down the number of plastic bags cluttering up landfills, getting regular exercise through something as easy as walking means you contribute to lowering the high cost of health care in the United States today. Not that it doesn’t benefit your personal bottom line (pun intended), too.

7. A. True
Researchers at Stanford University found that subjects who took a short walk increased their scores on a standard creative thinking test (called Guilford’s Alternative Uses Test) by around 60 percent, compared with those who had remained seated. So next time you’re stumped at work, get up and get walking — or consider taking your meeting on the go. In her popular TED Talk on that subject, Silicon Valley speaker and author Nilofer Merchant points out that this habit of tech titans helps reduce the 9.3 hours a day many people sit during a day, which has been shown to have deleterious health effects on its own. Merchant herself now walks 20 to 30 miles a week and finds that “fresh air drives fresh thinking.”
Back By Popular Demand, Danielle Rides Again!
Another Senior Center Day Trip!

Magic Wings
Butterfly Conservatory & Gardens

Enjoy the gardens, gifts, food court and, by the way, butterflies!
Admission to the Conservatory is $12.

Yankee Candle Village

Enjoy the 2nd most popular attraction in the state. It’s a huge draw for candle, gift and housewares shoppers!
Far more than just a candle store!

Monday, November 19th
Leave Froio at 9:15
Return at 4:00

Sign up at office...
Cost is $10 for the ride.

or call 413-499-9346
Cost is $10 for the ride.

Wackie Wordies
Each of the puzzles below provides a visual representation of a common word or phrase. Can you decipher the clues in each puzzle box?

1. sadbackdle
2. cut REST
3. E E E
4. M M M
5. A A A
6. G G G

all
map
dastabrk

collar
HOT
circle

cry
help
help
help

9. hand hand
10. SEARCH
11. mature
12. mature

Solutions
12. Mature Reaction
11. Front and center
10. Search high and low
9. Part of hands
8. A cry for help
7. Hot under the collar
6. A drop in the dark
5. All over the map
4. Circle back
3. Game on
2. Out above the rest
1. Back in the saddle

Activity Connection, November 2018
In the Nursing Home, Empty Beds and Quiet Halls
Continued from page 5

home- and community-based services. Now, the proportions have flipped, and nursing homes get only 43 percent of Medicaid’s long-term care expenditures.

A report from the federal Government Accountability Office earlier this year pointed out, for example, that Medicaid covers assisted living for 330,000 people. A demonstration program called Money Follows the Person has moved more than 75,000 residents out of nursing homes and back into community settings.

It’s good news for consumers — but not so good for nursing homes. The 31 largest metropolitan markets have 13,586 fewer nursing home beds now than in late 2005, the investment center reports.

This could prove a temporary crisis. When the baby boomers enter their 80s and need residential care, occupancy could pick up again.

Even now, nursing homes can turn a profit with lower occupancy by attracting more patients for short-term rehab. Medicare reimburses for those stays at higher rates than Medicaid pays for long-term care. (About 80 percent of American nursing homes are for-profit.)

Facilities are bracing for some tough years ahead, nonetheless. In casting about for additional revenue, they’re trying tactics like opening pharmacies and home care agencies, and accepting sicker patients, including those on ventilators, at higher reimbursement rates.

They’re experimenting with 12-hour staff shifts, allowing them to hire fewer employees but offer more flexible schedules. Some may convert shared rooms to private ones, a popular move with residents.

Whether emptier and fewer nursing homes benefit older adults and their families remains an open question. On the plus side, people have more choices when they need help, a long-sought goal, said Robyn Grant, director of public policy and advocacy for the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care.

“You no longer have to go to a nursing home because it’s the only game in town,” she said.

But what about those who already live in nursing homes, or will move in over the coming years, because they need the round-the-clock supervision no other kind of facility offers?

“From what I’ve observed, as occupancy goes down, so will staff levels,” Ms. Grant said. With most nursing home staffs already stretched too thin, that could hurt.

Despite extensive federal regulations, including new rules adopted in the waning months of the Obama administration, nursing homes have no federal minimum staffing requirements (though some states have requirements).

“You can cut with impunity,” Ms. Grant said, and with financial pressures mounting, she worries that facilities will.

So families with relatives in nursing homes might want to pay particular attention. If occupancy falls, maybe your loved one gets a private room. Or maybe the call button takes even longer to answer.

The new federal rules require more accurate staffing information posted on Nursing Home Compare, using time-cards rather than facilities’ self-reports. That’s one way families can keep tabs on how empty beds may affect care.

“Monitor the data,” was Ms. Grant’s recommendation. “Talk to staff and residents. Definitely keep an eye out.”

By Paula Span, New York Times,
The New Old Age column, October 2, 2018
In the Nursing Home, Empty Beds and Quiet Halls

For more than 40 years, Morningside Ministries operated a nursing home in San Antonio, caring for as many as 113 elderly residents. The facility, called Chandler Estate, added a small independent living building in the 1980s and an even smaller assisted living center in the 90s, all on the same four-acre campus.

The whole complex stands empty now. Like many skilled nursing facilities in recent years, Chandler Estate had seen its occupancy rate drop.

"Every year, it seemed a little worse," said Patrick Crump, chief executive of the nonprofit organization, supported by several Protestant groups. "We were running at about 80 percent."

Staff at the Chandler Estate took pride in its five-star rating on Medicare’s Nursing Home Compare website. But by the time the board of directors decided it had to close the property, only 80 of its beds were occupied, about 70 percent.

Revenue from independent and assisted living couldn’t compensate for the losses incurred by the nursing home.

In February, the last resident was moved out. Morningside Ministries operates two other retirement communities in the San Antonio area; they took in the independent living and assisted living residents and about 30 nursing home patients, absorbing most of the staff as well.

But more than 40 older people had to relocate to other nursing facilities or move out of town closer to family, and 30 staff members lost their jobs.

"There was some real sadness, tears, frustration," Mr. Crump said. "It’s hard knowing you won’t be providing services to those older folks."

At least the organization has the cold comfort of knowing that nursing homes across the country are grappling with the same problem.

The most recent quarterly survey from the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and care reported that nearly one nursing home bed in five now goes unused.

Occupancy has reached 81.7 percent, the lowest level since the research organization began tracking this data in 2011, when it was nearly 87 percent.

"It’s a significant drop," said Bill Kauffman, senior principal at the center. "The industry as a whole is under pressure, and some operators are having difficulty."

Such national statistics mask considerable local differences.

"The best facilities still have 100 percent occupancy and waiting lists — that’s how you know they’re good," said Nicholas Castle, a health policy researcher at the University of Pittsburgh.

But in 2015, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that more than a third of beds were empty in some states, including Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Utah. Texas wasn’t far behind.

Nationally, "200 to 300 nursing homes close each year," Dr. Castle said. The number of residents keeps shrinking, too, from 1.48 million in 2000 to 1.36 million in 2015, according to federal data.

Given an aging population, you’d think nursing homes would be coping with the opposite problem — surging demand for their services.

But they also face growing financial strains and regulatory requirements intended to control costs, Mr. Kauffman pointed out.

Under the Affordable Care Act, for instance, hospitals face financial penalties for readmissions, and some have responded by designating patients as "under observation," rather than admitting them as inpatients. After discharge, Medicare won’t cover skilled nursing care for these patients.

(Generally, Medicare pays for short-term rehabilitative care in nursing homes following a hospital stay; however, Medicaid, administered by the states, covers long-term care.)

Moreover, "certain surgeries are migrating from inpatient to outpatient surgical centers," Mr. Kauffman said. Medicare won’t cover skilled nursing for those patients, either.

The growth of Medicare Advantage plans, which now cover a third of Medicare beneficiaries, also plays a role.

"They have a keen interest in lowering costs, so maybe they divert people from skilled nursing to home care," Mr. Kauffman said. "If you do go to a nursing facility, instead of a 30-day stay, maybe the plan wants the patient out in 17 days."

At the same time, nursing homes face stiffening competition. As their operators sometimes say themselves, they’re selling a product nobody wants to buy. "You have increased alternatives, like assisted living, and other ways for people to stay at home," said Ruth Katz, senior vice president of public policy at Leading Age, which represents nonprofit senior service providers. "When people find community alternatives, they use them whenever possible."

Federal policy has helped propel this shift. For years, advocates protested that Medicaid covered care in nursing homes but not in the places people much preferred to live. Congress paid attention and passed legislation in 2005.

Thirty years ago, 90 percent of Medicaid dollars for long-term care flowed to institutions and only 10 percent to

Continued on insert page
Catch a 50s Dream and Put It In Your Pocket

I was waiting for my dream at the bus stop when I remembered I had forgotten where I lived.

I knew if I sang it like a song, all the way through, it would come to me like "the wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round."

But when I tried, the chord changed, the chorus replayed and the pause went on and on.

Two ladies in top hats and ties joined me at the bus stop and asked what dream I was waiting for.

What could I tell them?

That I was waiting for Richard the Lion Hearted to rescue me, or the Dark Prince to take me home?

Then I remembered Horace Mann Street and the teacher dream.

I told them about the open classroom.

"Did you bring your manual?" they asked.

I clenched my backpack and searched it frantically.

There were only comic books.

"Oh, I know," I said.

"I think I'm supposed to write a book, or some poems, or at least a joke or two."

They smiled at me and danced away to catch the Hollywood Express.

"No wonder they left," I thought.

"I forgot to offer them the Motherhood Dream."

"Hush little baby don't say a word..."

It was my favorite!

Now all the buses were pulling in and I hadn't remembered which dream to catch.

I could only imagine a bird flying free from the mouth of an open cage into the silence of a snow-filled sky.

Maybe the only dream worth its weight in feathers is survival.

"I'll work on it," I promised.

But I hear no one has caught that one yet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Advanced Osteo</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess</td>
<td>9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Brand New Line Dancing</td>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>Meditation (new time)</td>
<td>9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>&quot;Shake Your Soul&quot;</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Ladies Pool</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>SHINE 1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle</td>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Art du Jure!</td>
<td>1:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>From Stage to Screen</td>
<td>1:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Senior Center CLOSED**

Veterans' Day

| 9:00  | Advanced Osteo | 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:00  | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:30  | Brand New Line Dancing | 9:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability | 9:00  | Ceramics |
| 10:00 | Poetry | 9:15 | Meditation (new time) | 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 10:30 | "NO "Shake Your Soul" TODAY TODAY" | 12:00 | Tai Chi w/weights | 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 11:00 | Ladies Pool | 12:00 | SHINE 1:00 Bridge | 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |
| 12:00 | Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle | 1:00 | Canasta! 1:00 Art du Jure! | 1:35 | Bingo |
| 1:00  | Mah Jong, Hand & Foot! | 1:30 | From Stage to Screen | 1:35 | Yoga |

| 9:00  | Blood Pressure Clinic (by apt.) | 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:00  | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability | 9:00  | Ceramics |
| 9:15  | Meditation (new time) | 12:00 | Tai Chi w/weights 12:00 SHINE | 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 12:00 | Bridge, Canasta! | 1:00 | Art du Jure! 1:30 Stage to Screen | 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:00  | Mah Jong, Hand & Foot! | 1:00 | Stage to Screen | 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |

**Senior Center CLOSED**

Thanksgiving

| 9:00  | Beginner Osteo | 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:00  | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability | 9:00  | Ceramics |
| 9:15  | Meditation (new time) | 12:00 | Tai Chi w/weights | 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 12:00 | Bridge, Canasta! | 1:00 | Art du Jure! 1:30 Stage to Screen | 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:00  | Mah Jong, Hand & Foot! | 1:00 | Stage to Screen | 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |

**Senior Center CLOSED**

Thanksgiving

| 9:00  | Beginner Osteo | 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:00  | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability | 10:10 | New Member Day |
| 9:15  | Meditation (new time) | 12:00 | Tai Chi w/weights | 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 12:00 | Bridge, Canasta! | 1:00 | Art du Jure! 1:30 Stage to Screen | 1:00 | Bingo |
| 1:00  | Mah Jong, Hand & Foot! | 1:00 | Stage to Screen | 1:35 | Yoga |

**Senior Center CLOSED**

Thanksgiving

| 9:00  | Beginner Osteo | 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:00  | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00  | Woodworking 10:00 Beginner Chess | 9:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability | 9:00  | Ceramics |
| 9:15  | Meditation (new time) | 12:00 | Tai Chi w/weights | 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 12:00 | Bridge, Canasta! | 1:00 | Art du Jure! 1:30 Stage to Screen | 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:00  | Mah Jong, Hand & Foot! | 1:00 | Stage to Screen | 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |

| 8:30 | Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office |
| 9:00 | Pitch, Knitting |
| 11:00 | Comedy Dungeon |
| 12:30 | Woodcarving 1:00 Bingo |
| 1:45 | Beginner Tai Chi |

| 8:00 | Breakfast Club |
| 9:00 | Beginner Osteo 9:00 Ceramics |
| 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |
| 4:00 | Pittsfield Tree Watch |

| 9:00 | Pitch, Knitting |
| 11:00 | Comedy Dungeon |
| 12:30 | Quilting, Woodcarving |
| 1:00 | Bingo |
| 1:45 | Beginner Tai Chi |

| 9:00 | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00 | Ceramics |
| 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 11:30 | Thanksgiving Party! |
| 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:00 | Card Party |
| 1:00 | Legal Education |
| 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |

| 9:00 | Pitch, Knitting |
| 11:00 | Comedy Dungeon |
| 12:30 | Quilting, Woodcarving |
| 1:00 | Bingo |
| 1:45 | Beginner Tai Chi |

| 9:00 | Beginner Osteo |
| 9:00 | Ceramics |
| 10:15 | Flexible Feet & Core Stability |
| 12:30 | Chair Caning |
| 1:00 | Berkshire Writers Room |
| 1:15 | Tai Chi w/weights |

| 9:00 | Pitch, Knitting |
| 10:30 | Brown Bag (Special Date) |
| 11:00 | Comedy Dungeon |
| 12:30 | Quilting, Woodcarving |
| 1:00 | Bingo |
| 1:45 | Beginner Tai Chi |