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

MARCH 2019

S O B S E N E R  C E N T E R  A C T I V I T I E S

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
Yoga

AN INSIDE LOOK AT.....
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Giving Patterns Page 2
Considerations Page 4
Keen Focus Page 4
Now Hear This! Page 5
Harbor Page 7

Will the Real Froio
Active? Social? Info?
Please Stand Up!
The Pattern of Life

The third Saturday in March has been designated Worldwide Quilting Day, a global celebration of quilters and their fabulous creations. Quilts began not as the intricately patterned blankets we often use today, but as padded clothing. The first evidence we have of humans wearing quilted clothing comes from ancient Egypt. Quilted clothes were covered at the Temple of Osiris dating back 5,000 years. Modern quilting of clothes dates back to the Middle Ages in Europe when these soft garments were worn over and under chain mail armor. The first evidence we find of quilted blankets comes from 15th-century England, but all this evidence is merely written about; few, if any, blankets from that era have survived.

English immigrants brought their sewing and quilting skills with them to America, where quilting grew into more than a practical skill—it became an art form. Patterns grew into symbols and stories. When President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act of 1862, which opened up the West for settlement, families prepared for their westward journeys by sewing quilts. These quilts have become records of history.

One of the earliest patterns, known as the Nine Patch, was simply nine squares in a three-by-three pattern. This was the quickest quilt to sew and a great and thrifty use of leftover scraps of fabric. Often, girls as young as age three or four could be taught to sew the Nine Patch pattern. A more elaborate pattern was known as the Log Cabin. This pattern was symbolic of the home. The center square was always red, to symbolize the hearth at the heart of the home. Narrow strips of fabric, like logs used to build frontier cabins, radiated from the center square in stacks. Light fabrics representing the light of day were sewn on one side of the quilt. Dark fabrics representing night were sewn on the opposite side. This pattern was also known as the Sunshine and Shadow. Patterns depicting pinwheels, stars, flowers, animals, crops, biblical stories, and even schoolhouses followed. Women sewed as they lived, a tradition that continues to this day.

Activity Connection, March 2019

6 Tips From Marlo Thomas for Making Charitable Donations

The actress knows a lot about giving.
Her father founded St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Actress Marlo Thomas, 80, grew up with charity at the center of her life. Her father, entertainer Danny Thomas, founded St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., to provide state-of-the-art care for children with life-threatening diseases at no cost to their families. After her father’s death in 1991, Thomas became national outreach director for St. Jude and helped turn it into one of the world’s leading pediatric cancer research centers. Over the years, she’s developed a unique perspective on the psychology of giving and what it takes to cultivate a generous heart.

1. You don’t have to be a zillionaire to change the world

The biggest misconception people have about charity, Thomas says, is that giving a little bit doesn’t help. “My father used to say that he’d rather have a dollar from every American than a million dollars from a few,” she says. “Every dollar really does help. St. Jude costs $2.8 million a day to run, and the majority of that comes from small gifts.”

2. Listen to what moves you

That’s the most important first step. When Marlo’s father died, she offered to fill in for him at the hospital. In time, she got hooked emotionally. “One day I walked into the medicine room and saw a little boy jump up on a stool and shout, ‘Mommy, I don’t have cancer anymore!’” she says. “How do you not get moved by that? I knew then that I wanted to be in a room where every child stands up and says, ‘Mommy, I don’t have cancer anymore!’ ”

3. Give — even in uncertain times

It’s too early to tell what impact the new tax laws are going to have on giving. Thomas says. “People are being very careful about where they put their dollars, especially people on fixed income,” she says. “When things are volatile, people hang on to what they have to be sure that they will be safe.”

4. Observe the needs around you

“I think taking care of people is all about noticing,” Thomas says. “Most people walk down the street, and there’s a homeless guy lying there or a woman with some cans in a bag, but they don’t see it.” During Thanksgiving week, Thomas will appear on the Today show with children from St. Jude to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the

Continued on insert page
6 Proven Ways to Pay Less for Car Insurance

Experts say these techniques could shave hundreds of dollars each year off your rates

With a little shopping around and knowing what makes your rates rise and lower, you can save big, says Michelle Megna, managing editor of Carinsurance.com: “I recommend doing this at least once a year, if not at each six-month renewal.”

The savings really can be tremendous. A rate analysis by Carinsurance.com shows the average savings you get from comparing rates range between $350 and $3,000, depending on what state you live in. Each insurer plugs dozens of different data points into its equation to come up with a unique price for you.

But no two companies calculate rates the same way, which is why it’s worth consulting several of them. It’s particularly important to shop around when milestone events occur, whether positive or negative in nature. They include:

- Purchasing a car
- Adding or removing a driver from a policy
- Getting married or divorced
- Moving
- Buying a house
- Getting a DUI or other major violation
- Being in an accident
- Having a significant change in credit score

How to Save on Car Insurance:

Review the discount menu. Don’t just rely on an insurance agent to tell you which discounts you qualify for; ask for the full menu that the company offers and review it carefully. You might find a few that aren’t so obvious. Note that in some states drivers can receive a discount on insurance if they complete a driver safety course, for example, like the AARP Smart Driver Course.

Groom your credit report. CarInsurance.com’s rate analysis found that rates for drivers with fair credit scores were, on average, 17 percent higher than rates for those with good credit scores. Rates for drivers with poor credit were even higher: 67 percent more than those for drivers with good credit.

Consider giving up smoking. “Most car insurance companies don’t ask if you’re a smoker or not,” says Penny Gusner, consumer analyst at CarInsurance.com. Still, there are exceptions. A few car insurance companies may inquire about your smoking habit and charge you higher rates if you say yes. This has everything to do with their internal claims

What to Know About Cataracts and Cataract Surgery

Learn about the causes, symptoms and treatment of this common eye problem

If you live long enough, you’ll probably get cataracts, which are an inevitable consequence of getting older. The eye lens can begin to cloud in middle age and by 80, more than half of all Americans will either have cataracts or have had cataract surgery. “I liken cataracts to wrinkles and gray hair,” says Anupama Horne, an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon at Duke University in Durham, N.C. In the end, nearly everyone will develop them.

But the good news is that today’s high-tech procedures restore clear vision in 90 percent of the 3 million Americans who undergo cataract surgery every year.

What they are

Cataracts usually occur when normal proteins in the lens of the eye break down, causing the lenses to become cloudy. The lens of the eye works much like a camera’s: It focuses light onto the retina at the back of the eye, which then relays nerve signals to the brain, and it adjusts the eye’s focus, enabling us to see things clearly up close and far away. But the normal wear and tear of aging causes the proteins to clump together, which clouds the lens, gradually making it harder to see as the cataract grows larger. Cataracts usually take a long time to develop, and can occur in one or both eyes but won’t spread like an infection from one eye to the other.

Causes

Aging is the most common cause of cataracts, but other culprits can contribute, including certain medications, chronic illnesses, poor health habits or too much sun without protection. “Being extremely near-sighted is also associated with a higher frequency of cataracts,” says John D. Dugan Jr., an ophthalmologist and cataract surgeon at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. “But we’re not sure why.” Family history plays a role, too.

Symptoms

Because age-related cataracts generally develop over time, gradually worsening vision may not be noticeable. But as the clear lens of the eye slowly turns a yellowish/brownish color, the increased tinting may make it more difficult to read and colors seem faded. Other symptoms include blurry or double vision, glare — when headlights, lamps or sunlight appear blindingly bright — and poor night vision that can make driving hazardous.

“It’s like a piece of clear plastic becomes yellowed and discolored,” says John Bartlett, an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon at UCLA Stein Eye Institute in Los Angeles. “As new layers are added, it becomes denser and harder.”
Tips From Marlo Thomas: Making Charitable Donations

Continued from page 2

hospital’s Thanks and Giving program. “That’s where awareness comes in,” she says. “Real stories interest people. It puts a face on giving.” (Note: This article is from AARP, Nov., 2018. Ed.)

5. Cultivate gratitude

When their grandchildren were younger, Marlo and her husband, Phil Donahue, gave each of them $40 a year and told them to give it away. “They’d take time figuring out what really mattered to them,” she recalls. “It showed that money isn’t just something you spend on yourself. It grew their gratitude. That’s what you’re trying to do with children: grow their spirit.”

6. Never underestimate your impact

One of Thomas’ most moving stories is about Ira Jackson, a retiree on Social Security who managed to donate a little to St. Jude every month. Then he got a terminal illness. In a letter to the hospital during his final days, he wrote, “I’m prepared to die, but I’m concerned that the little children won’t have a chance to grow into healthy adults. My last wish is for you to use this letter to find someone to take my place.” The hospital shared his letter and got 900 new donors who gave hundreds of thousands of dollars. “Ira knew that when he died, he would leave a hole behind,” Thomas says. “He donated about $80 total. It wasn’t billions, but it was a lot of money to him. He gave us as much as he could and was worried when he left that there wouldn’t be any more. I love that story.”

By Hugh Delehanty, AARP Bulletin, November 5, 2018

Take Charge of Your Medical Care: Make Sure You Understand

Continued from page 5

- current medical issue, as well as what would be best for your health in the long run.
- Once you understand your diagnosis and treatment plan, it may be helpful to let trusted family members or friends know that you’re sick so they are aware and can check in periodically. You can also ask them to weigh in on the decision you have to make regarding your treatment if you’d like additional opinions.

WHEN YOU NEED (OR WANT) A SECOND OPINION

Some medical conditions have routine, straightforward treatment procedures. Other times, there are multiple ways to treat a patient, and it can be difficult to determine which option would be most beneficial. That may mean it’s time to get a second opinion. Moreover, if your doctor recommends a procedure that is invasive or your diagnosis is severe, that’s another good time to get a second opinion. This is true for diagnoses and treatment for both your physical and mental health. Doctors should not be offended if you ask for a second opinion, and may even recommend other physicians they trust.

When it comes to selecting a doctor for a second (or even first) opinion, don’t be afraid to shop around. If you’re going in for surgery, ask potential surgeons how frequently they perform a specific procedure. Even if it’s something basic that you assume all doctors know how to do, ask if the procedure is a regular part of their practice.

By Elizabeth Yuko, New York Times, January 30, 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyday!</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Meal Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hippocrates, he of the famous oath, said that “If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.” That sounds like the formative dawning of a Froio Meal Site Special! Enjoy, and reserve a day ahead. 1-800-981-5201.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesdays!</td>
<td>12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>SHINE (by appt.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 5</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Mardi Gras Party!</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Laissez le bon temps rouler!” Get the message? It’s time to roll out the good times at the Froio Mardi Gras party. Call a day ahead to reserve, you’ll be glad you did. 1-800-981-5201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 7</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Foot Clinic ...kickin’ it!</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Foot Clinic is alive and kickin’! In the capable hands of Lisa Christman, R.N., you’ll find that all of your foot care needs will be throuroughly managed. Her attentive ministrations are good for the sole and the soul! Please call for appointment, 499-9346.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 11 &amp; 25</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>The Councilman is In!</td>
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<td>The Froio Center hosts councilman Kevin Morandi’s invaluable “open office” sessions. His informal Q &amp; As take place a day before City Council meetings, maximizing the potential for a responsive “public-to-council” conduit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 14</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>March Breakfast Club</td>
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<td>Breakfast Club features intriguing speakers from the realms of senior-med, senior-law, senior-cultural, and senior-general interest! Couple that with a scrumptious meal and it’s quite the floor show. Breakfast Club; always delectable, always informative!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 14</td>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Pittsfield Tree Watch</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 18</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Day Party!</td>
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<td>“Erin Go Bragh” has become a rallying cry for Irish-of-all-persuasions to enjoy St. Patrick’s Day! You’ll find a tasty pot o’ gold at the end of our Froio Meal Site rainbow. Call a day ahead to reserve. 1-800-981-5201</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 20</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>New Member Day Tour (Tour du Jour)!</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 21</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>March Card Party</td>
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<td>1957 found Johnny Mathis intoning the good luck mantra of all table game and card players, “The chances are your chances are awfully good.” “Chances Are” was referring to romance, but who’s to deny the eternal romance of the Card Party. Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks. Unless otherwise arranged, foursomes are best.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 21</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Legal Education (by apt.)</td>
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<td>Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 22</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Brown Bag</td>
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<td>Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 26</td>
<td>8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molari Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 49-9346 for an appointment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 28</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>TRIAD SPECIAL!</td>
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<td>This is a first-timer, an afternoon TRIAD session. We’re pleased to have the Honorable Judge Jennifer Tyne, Of Pittsfield District Court, offer her opinions on relevant senior-centric issues. TRIAD: at the heart of community awareness! Please join us in exhibiting that interest. Listen. Suggest. Discuss. Refreshments.</td>
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data. “It’s likely these companies have data that shows smokers are more likely to be in accidents,” Gusner says. If you’re a smoker and aren’t ready to quit, ask your insurer if your habit factors into your rates. If it does, consider shopping elsewhere.

**Change your deductibles.** A deductible is the amount you pay for a repair before insurance coverage kicks in. Often, people buy insurance with a deductible of $500. But if you can afford it — or truly believe in your ability to avoid causing an accident — consider raising your deductible to $1,000 or higher. “You can save up to about 30 percent off your monthly premiums by hiking your deductible,” Megna says.

**Lower coverage for older cars.** “Don’t buy comprehensive and collision insurance if you have a car that’s more than 10 years old and worth less than $3,000,” Gusner says. State laws generally mandate only that you buy insurance that covers damage to others — liability insurance. Comprehensive and collision coverage for your own car is optional (unless the car is still financed; most finance companies require these coverages). Why pay hundreds of dollars a year for coverage that at most will pay out the full value of a car worth just a few thousand dollars?

**Safety Features May Not Equal Discounts**

You would think that insurers would offer discounts if you have driver-assistive features such as blind-spot warning systems, which are increasingly common on new cars. But most haven’t been on the market long enough to generate meaningful statistics. So many insurance companies don’t offer discounts for high-tech features. In fact, insurers may charge you higher rates if your car is loaded with them. The reason: “These items can be expensive to replace and repair,” says CarInsurance.com’s Megna says.

This should change as data starts to roll in regarding the actual value of these safety features. And a handful of insurers have begun offering discounts for certain ones, such as a lane-departure warning system, a collision-preparation system and adaptive cruise control. Ask your insurer if you might qualify for lower rates. But don’t let insurer ambivalence keep you from buying a car with driver-assistive features. “Paying a little more to have a blind-spot detection system, for example, may keep you from having an accident,” Megna says.

*By Warren Clark, AARP, November 13, 2018*

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**Mardi Gras!**

**St. Patrick’s Party!**

Tuesday, March 5th, 11:30
Reserve a day ahead!

Monday, March 18th, 11:30
Reserve a day ahead!
FRIENDS...

Who are they?
Anyone! Friends can be anyone, regardless of age or place of residence. Anyone who uses the Senior Center is encouraged to join the Friends group and support all the programs and activities!

What are they for?
Friends become members through their support for the Senior Center and want to be involved with its continued success. With a membership in the Friends, support is directed toward; the Coffee Shop, ice cream socials, the Traveling Seniors, woodworking, woodcarving, ceramics, bingo, raffles, furniture, and special events—all for the Senior Center.

Why become a Friend?
Friends are vital and needed for financial support. The money donated to the Friends allows the Senior Center to purchase items necessary to support the programs and the building, implement new programs and activities to enhance the building, hold various annual celebrations, save for special projects as they arise, and help alleviate budget cuts should they occur.

Where will I be recognized?
Lifetime members of the Friends have their names posted on a plaque in the lounge so that everyone will know who the stellar patrons are—and so you will receive the recognition you deserve!

How do I become a member?
It’s easy! Support the Friends Drive annually with a $10 donation, or you can become a lifetime Friend for a one-time donation of $50!

Support the Friends!

Your membership in the Friends of the Pittsfield Council on Aging, Inc. entitles you to either a one-year or a lifetime membership (check an option below). You will receive a notice of the Annual Meeting, voting privileges at the Annual Meeting, participation in fundraising events, and the promotion of activities at the Ralph J. Froio Senior Center.

I want to become a Friend! Check one: ______  One-Year Membership - $10 Individual
______  Lifetime Membership - $50 Individual

Please make your check payable to:
Friends of the Pittsfield Council on Aging, Inc.

Please send your form and check to:
Ralph J. Froio Senior Center, 330 North St, Pittsfield, MA 01201
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
Thurs March 7th

March Breakfast Club
Delectable eats and intriguing guest speakers!
Thurs March 14th
8:00 a.m. $3.00

Pittsfield Tree Watch
Nurture the roots of your tree interest!
Thurs March 14th
4:00 Coffee Shop

New Member Day
Find your way.
Let us know you're coming.
Wed March 20th
10:00 a.m. 499-9346

March Card Party
Surrender to it!
Thurs Four March 21st
1:00 p.m. somes are best. $2.00

Legal Education
Have legal questions evaluated.
Thurs March 21st
1:00 p.m. By Appt 499-9346

Brown Bag Day
Fri March 22nd
10:30 a.m.

Molari Blood Pressure Clinic
By Appt. 499-9346
Tue Feb. 26th
What to Know About Cataracts and Cataract Surgery

Continued from page 4

Diagnosis

If you have a constellation of these symptoms, see a doctor for an eye exam. Experts recommend that people over age 65 get checkups every year or two; those younger should have their eyes checked at least once every two years — more if they have certain health issues. “If you’re on corticosteroids, you should have regular eye exams,” says Dugan. “You might not even be aware that it is starting to affect their vision.”

Cataracts are usually identified by a thorough exam that includes a visual acuity test, where you read letters of varying sizes off an eye chart. This measures the sharpness and clarity of your vision, and how well you can see at various distances.

You’ll also be given a dilated eye exam, in which drops are used to dilate and widen the pupils, offering the physician a clearer view of the back of your eye. Your doctor will then use a slit-lamp microscope to look for signs of cataracts, as well as examine the retina and optic nerve for signs of eye damage and other problems such as glaucoma.

Treatment

When cataracts are in their early stages, patients can find some relief with new eyeglass prescriptions, brighter lighting, antiglare sunglasses or magnifying lenses. But once the cataract progresses and symptoms are interfering with the activities of daily living — reading, driving, watching TV — then surgery to remove the cataract is the only alternative.

“Don’t get fooled by scams,” says UCLA’s Bartlett. “I’m constantly seeing ads for eye drops that purport to get rid of cataracts. The only treatment to remove cataracts is surgical.”

Before surgery, your surgeon may have you see your family doctor to have a thorough medical exam to make sure you’re stable enough for surgery, says Ravi Goel, a New Jersey eye surgeon and clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Certain heart and lung conditions, as well as dementia, may make patients poor candidates for surgery.

Surgery — what to expect

Preparations: A week before surgery, your doctor will test your eyes to measure the curve of the cornea and the size and shape of your eye. The information will help the surgeon choose which type of artificial lens — known as an intraocular lens (IOL) — is right for you. You may also need to temporarily stop taking certain medications. If you have cataracts in both eyes, each eye will be treated at a separate time to allow for healing.

Procedure: The surgery itself, which usually takes less than 30 minutes, is generally done on an out-patient basis under local anesthesia that numbs the nerves in and around the eye. The procedure involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with a clear, plastic one. The eye surgeon makes a tiny cut in the cornea, the clear dome-shaped surface that covers the front of the eye. A tiny probe is inserted through the cut. Using ultrasound, the probe breaks up the cloudy lens into very small pieces, which are suctioned out.

The artificial lens is inserted through the cut and positioned inside the lens capsule, which holds the new lens in place. Sometimes, the cut in the eye will need a stitch, but it is normally small enough to heal on its own. The operation can be done using traditional surgical tools, or it may be laser-assisted.

Complications: After surgery, most people’s vision improves quickly and colors will be more vivid. They can resume their normal activities when they get home, although they may need to wear a patch over the eye. Itching and mild discomfort are normal and eyes may be sensitive to light and touch. But within a day or two, unpleasant aftereffects should diminish. For a week or so after surgery, patients will need to use eye drops to help with healing and decrease the risk of infection, and may wear an eye shield or eyeglasses to protect their eyes.

As with any surgery, there is a possibility of complications, such as infection, bleeding, inflammation, double vision and high or low eye pressure. In rare instances, retinas can become detached. However, these problems can usually be treated with prompt medical attention. Occasionally, the eye tissue that encapsulates the IOL can cloud the new lens — a condition that is called after-cataract, which can develop months or even years after the surgery. This normally can be corrected with a laser.

Prevention

If you smoke, stop; limit alcohol consumption and keep diabetes under control. When you’re outside, wearing a hat and sunglasses with UV400 or 100 percent UV protection to block harmful ultraviolet sunlight may help delay their onset. “Long-term exposure to UV light does increase risks,” says Shahzad Mian, an eye surgeon at the Kellogg Eye Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. “People who live in equatorial climates get more advanced cataracts and at a younger age because of the more intense sunlight.”

Doctors recommend cutting out sugary carbohydrates and consuming green, leafy vegetables, fruit and other nourishing edibles that contain natural antioxidants because many believe oxidative damage from sunlight and environmental exposures damages the lens of the eye.

By Linda Marsa, AARP Bulletin, January 7, 2019
Take Charge of Your Medical Care: 
Make Sure You Understand

SEEING A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL
Being a patient is stressful. These strategies will keep your mind clearer when you are dealing with a medical diagnosis.

PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT
To ensure you have the best possible experience with your doctor, it’s best to come prepared. Ideally, you’ll already have your medical history and list of current medications ready to go, but there are a few more steps that could make your visit even more productive.

- Set goals of what you’d like to address with your doctor.
- Make a list of all your symptoms and concerns about your health concern.
- Try not to overdo internet research before you get to the doctor’s office.
- Keep in mind that your doctor is only human, and has probably worked a long day.
- Advocate for yourself, but also be respectful of your medical team and their time.

ASK QUESTIONS
We’re taught to listen to what the doctor says, and while in most cases that’s a good idea, in order to be our own advocates, we also have to speak up and ask questions. Remember: There is no such thing as a stupid question. If something comes up that you hadn’t considered, ask about it. If you don’t understand something, say so. This includes having the doctor explain any complex medical terminology.

But direct your questions appropriately.

Questions about scheduling appointments? Ask the front desk. Getting ready for a hospital stay? Ask the nurse (not the doctor) about what clothes to bring. Have a specific medical questions about your diagnosis or treatment? Ask your doctor. Chances are you’ll come up with additional questions as soon as you leave the appointment. Ask the doctor or nurse for the best way to contact them with these follow-up queries.

KEEP TRACK OF THE ANSWERS
When you’re in the doctor’s office because of a health problem, you may feel anxious or rushed — either way, it’s helpful to record the answers to the questions you ask your medical team, as well as the other information they give you. Bring paper to your appointment (or if you forget it or a pen, just ask the receptionist) to take notes of everything that is said during the appointment. If you’d feel more comfortable having an audio recording of the appointment, ask your doctor if you have their consent to record the office visit. There’s no need to purchase any equipment: most smartphones come with a free recording app, like Voice Memo. Depending on the nature of the appointment, it may be helpful to have a family member, friend or partner either

go with you for a second set of ears, or call in on speakerphone so they can hear and take notes on everything being discussed.

MAKE SURE YOU ARE HEARD
A doctor’s appointment should feel like a conversation, and it’s important for both you and your physician that your voice is heard. Asking questions is one thing, but it’s also necessary to speak up when you don’t think you’re being heard or understood. There is no rule saying that the doctor’s opinion is the be-all and end-all. They are capable of making mistakes or, in some cases, simply ignoring patients and their concerns, which can be especially true when the patients are women or people of color. Therefore, it’s very important that you leave the appointment believing that your doctor is taking your pain seriously.

Be as specific about your symptoms as possible. The more information you’re able to provide to your medical team, the better your chances are of getting an accurate diagnosis. If the doctor is still being dismissive, calmly and respectfully express your concerns, and let them know that you don’t feel as though you’re being fully heard. If this doesn’t work, it may be time to change doctors or get a second opinion.

MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND
If the doctor ends up making a diagnosis in the appointment and you don’t understand what it is or what it means, feel free to ask additional questions. Don’t hesitate to ask the doctor to refrain from using medical jargon when explaining what is happening to you. Some medical professionals will even draw pictures or diagrams to help illustrate exactly what is going on in your body. If you’d like more information than the doctor is able to provide during the appointment, ask them where you can read more about the condition. This way, they’ll point you to a reputable book or website, so if you’re going online for information, it will be accurate. You can also ask if there are any online groups for people with the condition.

Along with your diagnosis, it’s important that you also understand how the doctor plans to treat your condition. Don’t leave until you know the plan.

Making decisions regarding your health care or treatment can be difficult.

- If you are faced with having to choose from multiple options, you can ask to speak with a bioethicist or counselor. While not all medical facilities have them on staff, your medical team should be able to point you in the direction of someone who can help walk you through the decision-making process.
- Make a list of the risks and benefits of each option, taking into consideration what is best for treating your
Senior Spirit Editor: Joseph Major

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Jim Clark, Senior Center Director

By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

Oasis

Sometimes in the evening
I study my life as though it were important
and not just a fleeting rise of vapor
on the mist of a moment.

I recall all my homes.

I go through the crowded rooms
and touch all the beloved faces,
now long gone,
who are still there,
in the three story tenement flat-top,
listening to the radio, washing dishes,
cheering as Joe DiMaggio scores a home run,
working the tomatoes in the backyard garden,
strolling to the corner store,
tuning in on Milton Berle
and the men from Texaco
who work from Maine to Mexico,
lighting up a Lucky Strike as they read
all the news that’s fit to print.

I see myself as a small child
in braids running free,
a teen in flowing
hippie hair running wild,
an 18-year-old mother collecting
milk from the front stoop
of her first married home,
hanging cloth diapers on the line,
making meals and love,
going back to college to be a teacher
while taking care of three kids in the next home,
a lakeside cottage.

We move to the old colonial at forty
and I find myself in dark corners
yet still loving the husband
I’ve spent my soul to keep.

Now I’m looking back from seventy,
retired and writing.

I smile wryly at it all,
realize it doesn’t count for a
fig leaf to anyone but me.

But in my evening oasis it seems to turn
from water into sparkling wine.
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<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Mardi Gras Party @ Meal Site!</td>
<td>TRIAD (Wednesday Special!)</td>
<td>Chair Caning</td>
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**March**
TRIAD
Senior-Centric!

"...about as far as I can throw it!"

Kate Alexander,
of Berkshire Consumer Services Program,
will describe her agency's protective agenda
and provide tips on how to thwart scams and frauds!

Listen. Suggest. Discuss. Refreshments!

Wednesday, March 6th
9:30 a.m.

Ralph J. Froio Senior Center 499-9346