

Senior News

Serving AUGUSTA & the CSRA
Information For Ages 50 PLUS!

Celebration of the New Year!

Story on page 5

January 2017
Vol. 31, No. 1

Taking Care

Caregivers can thrive by reducing stress levels

by LISA M. PETSCHKE

Informal caregivers provide practical assistance and enhance the quality of life for medically frail older people who might otherwise require placement in a long term care facility. Typically, they are spouses or adult children, many seniors themselves.

Their role involves physical, psychological, emotional and financial demands. It is a heavy load, exacerbated by the limited availability of community support services. A common phenomenon is caregiver burnout, due to the physical toll and emotional strain of caring for a relative who is chronically ill.

If you are a caregiver, con-

sider these strategies for not only surviving, but also thriving during the year ahead.

Reduce your stress

- Learn as much as possible about your relative's illness and its management, and educate family and friends to help them understand. Knowing what to expect and how to deal with challenges can go a long way to reduce anxiety and foster a sense of control.

- Accept realities you can't change and focus instead on those you can influence.

- Pick your battles; don't make a major issue out of every concern.

- Use positive self-talk. Emphasize phrases such as "I can," "I will" and "I choose."

- Practice relaxation techniques, starting with deep breathing.

- Nurture your spirit. Do things that bring inner peace,

such as meditating, praying, reading, journaling or listening to music.

- Create a relaxation room or corner in your home – a tranquil spot you can retreat to in order to rejuvenate.

- Develop a calming ritual to help you unwind at the end of the day.

- Make healthy lifestyle choices: eat nutritious meals, get adequate rest, exercise and see your primary physician regularly.

- Seek ways to streamline your life. Set priorities and don't waste time or energy on unimportant things. Simplify necessary tasks, letting go of the need for perfection. If finances permit, hire a house-cleaning service or a personal support worker or companion for your relative, to free up some of your time and energy.

- Be flexible about plans and expectations. Take things one day at a time.

- Minimize contact with negative people.

- Don't keep problems to yourself – seek support from family members, friends or a counselor. Join a community caregiver support group, or an Internet group if it's hard to get out.

- Accept offers of help. Ask other family members to share the load. Be specific about the kind of help you need. Also find out about services in your community that may be of help now or in the future.

- Find out about funding sources that may assist with the cost of prescription medication, medical equipment, transportation to appointments, home health services and community programs. Consult the non-profit organization associated with your relative's disease.

- Take advantage of respite services in your community, such as day-care programs and facilities that offer temporary residential care. Inquire at your local office on aging.

Increase your joy

- Stay connected to people who care, through visits, phone calls, e-mail or letters.

- Cultivate a healthy sense of humor. Read the comics, watch a TV sitcom now and then, or rent funny movies. Don't take yourself or others too seriously.

- Do something you enjoy every day, perhaps calling a friend, savoring a cup of tea, reading the newspaper or engaging in a hobby (revive a former pastime or try something new). Make it a priority, even if all you can manage is 15 minutes at a time.

- Put together a pamper kit of items that give you a lift – for example, a favorite magazine or music CD, scented candles, fragrant shower gel or body lotion, a face mask, nail polish, or gourmet coffee or tea – and delve into it when you find your spirits drooping (or better yet, on a regular, preventive basis).

- Bring a bit of nature into your home: get a plant to nurture or buy fresh flowers every month.

- Do something nice for someone who is going through a difficult time. It will bring joy to both of you.

- Create little things to look forward to: a visit with a friend, calling a long-distance loved one, watching a favorite movie, ordering takeout food, buying a book you've been wanting to read or getting something new to wear.

- Plan a special outing with or without your relative – to a restaurant or perhaps a cultural or sporting event.

- Focus on the good things in your life, such as supportive relationships, and seek beauty and tranquility through appreciation of art and nature. Learn to live in the moment, enjoying life's simpler pleasures.

- If you think looking out for your own needs is selfish, remember that you can only take good care of your relative if you take good care of yourself.

Lisa M. Petschke is a social worker and a freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health matters. She has personal and professional experience with elder care.



Lisa Petschke



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AGENCY ALERT: A New Years' Resolution!

by KATHLEEN ERNCE
Executive Director, The Senior
Citizens Council Augusta, Georgia
kernce@seniorcitizenscouncil.org

Happy 2017! Can you believe it is 2017 and most of us were worried that we would not make it past 1999! Now how about a new adventure? One of my readers sent this note to me a few months ago:



Kathleen Ernce

"I picked up the July issue of *Senior News* and saw your picture. I decided to renew our acquaintance again. I wrote

stories, devotionals, poetry, etc., for about a dozen years; but, it was too expensive to self publish. Then I discovered a site that virtually publishes for nothing. The books automatically go on Amazon Books. The site is called Createspace.

I am sure there are some Seniors out there who would like to learn how to do that. (There is no up front charge and if you order a book with about 160 pages it costs about \$3.00 or less plus shipping).

I was over 70 when I began writing, was about 79 when I discovered Createspace, and, this week I published book number 35!!! You can go to my web site

fromdonto you.com and see most of my books; a few of my latest I have not added yet. Like I say, it really is very easy. Thanks, Don Hancock

Why not give it a try? Go to Createspace or contact Don at www.fromdonto you.com for more details. Let me know how many new authors are just waiting to be discovered.

Now that the Medicare Open Enrollment Period has ended, your job of remaining informed about Medicare changes in 2017 has just begun. Here are some important ones to keep in mind:

- Original Medicare's Part B (outpatient) deductible will increase from \$166 to \$183.

The Medicare Part A (inpatient) deductible will increase from \$1,288 to \$1,316 per benefit period.

- Original Medicare premiums will also increase. While increases are not uncommon, an increase with a small Cost of Living Adjustment (just 0.3%) in your Social Security benefit check results in little change to your bottom line. For beneficiaries that already had their premiums taken out of their SS check in Nov. and Dec. 2016, this means paying a little more each month vs. the full premium of \$134.00. You should receive a statement from Social Security outlining the amount of your monthly premium for 2017.

Seventh Annual Jimmie Dyess Symposium Honors Individuals for Valor and Civic Contributions

Special to *Senior News*

Presented by the Augusta Museum of History

The Augusta Museum of History is proud to present the Jimmie Dyess Symposium. The seventh annual Symposium will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2017 at 5 p.m. in the Museum's Rotunda. Three individuals will be receiving the "Jimmie Dyess Distinguished American Award." The symposium itself will end by 6 p.m. but honorees will visit with attendees following the event.

This very special symposium has been created and developed to recognize a native Augustan's courage as both a citizen and a soldier of the United States and to identify others who have shown similar valor or made civic contributions above and beyond the call of duty.

The symposium will include remarks by Major General Perry Smith, who served thirty years in the United States Air Force. He serves on the board of the Augusta Museum of History where he is President Emeritus. Smith is the author of *Courage, Compassion,*

Marine: The Jimmie Dyess Story.

Three individuals will be honored with the Symposium's 2017 Distinguished American Award. Medal of Honor recipient Lieutenant Colonel Harold Arthur "Hal" Fritz who served his country in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969; Beverly Barnhart, an educator extraordinaire who helped establish the following vital schools: C.T. Walker Traditional Magnet, A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet and John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet; and, Ambassador Theodore R. Britton, Jr. nominated by President Gerald R. Ford and served as the U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and Grenada and as the U. S. Special Representative to Antigua, Dominica, St. Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent on November 17, 1974.

In their own way, these individuals have given a lifetime of service to this nation and to their fellow citizens.

Please come and join us and Jimmie Dyess' daughter, Connor Dyess Smith, for this special evening! For more information on the Symposium please contact the Museum at (706) 722-8454 or visit the

Museum's website:
www.augustamuseum.org.
Free.

The Museum will also be

offering free admission the day of the symposium for individuals with a valid active and/or retired military ID.

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Senior News & Views of Georgia

Poets' Corner

Editor's Note: If you have written a "well-worked" poem which you would like considered for publication, please email it to seniornewsga@cox.net or mail it to Senior News, 214 Wilsons Creek Bend, Bonaire, GA 31005. Please include your name and address on your poem. We will publish selected poems (or excerpts) as space permits.

WE THE CHURCH

by Joy Mitchell-Booker

*The collective voice of the Church
Has been silent for far too long
We've neglected our commission
To help keep our nation strong
Our collective voice has been silent
When we should have been shouting
out loud
Have we been quietly asking?
When we should have been
demanding
It is up to us to lend a guiding hand
To assist those in power positions,
help them to take a stand
Our light is no longer shining
bright
Our salt has all but lost its flavor
It's no wonder the world is lost
We've not glorified our Savior
We should be the moral compass;
we speak out God's word*

*Regardless of the consequences,
in spite of what we've heard
We will be held accountable for
not taking a stand
Allowing the world to dictate to
us, when we know they don't
understand
The Word of God is final, no
further discussion needed
Our nation was built on this
foundation
Why has the Church conceded?*

THIS IS TO YOU, JESUS

by Pauline M. Brown

*I love you Jesus, I belong to you.
Never knew love, until you set
me free.

This is to you Jesus, you made
my day,
And my life is better because you
made a way.

This is to you Jesus, thanks for
holding my hand.
I could have fallen if you didn't
help me stand.

Jesus you've been good, you've
been my water
So many times I've fallen, but*

you still remain loyal.

*This is to you Jesus, You've been
a good dad.
When I couldn't make ends meet,
you kept me fed.*

*This is to you Jesus, you died
for me.
There are so many people in the
world, but you choose me.*

*Jesus I love you, not for what
you can do,
But, I love you because you are you.*

IS THERE NO ROOM?

by Shirley Glisson

*A child was born long years ago
In the town of Bethlehem,
A lowly manager was his bed,
There was no room for Him.*

*The star shone brightly overhead
As He nestled in the hay,
And herald angels brought the news,
Messiah is born today.*

*This precious gift to all mankind
Was rejected by His own.
Have you, as they, refused
God's gift,
In your heart is there no room?*

Customer Survey Scam lures victims with Gift Cards

by KELVIN COLLINS
President/CEO, BBB of Central
Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

We have all seen the ads, "Take our short survey and receive a \$50 gift card!" Offers like this claim to be gathering customer feedback for legitimate businesses, however many may really be promoting spammy products or be after your personal information. With the holidays practically upon us, scammers know that more people will be spending time online and looking for a deal.

This scam works when you receive an email or a text message inviting you to complete a customer satisfaction survey. The message says all you need to do is answer a few questions, and you will receive a gift card. The survey seems normal. One scam posing as an Amazon survey, asks where you shop online, how often you visit the website and how much time you spend on the Internet each day.

After you complete the survey, the site says you are now entitled to your prize. Unfortunately, the \$50 gift card is "out of stock," so you are instructed to choose one of several dubious products, often something

like a weight loss kit and wrinkle cream. The survey was just an elaborate hoax to promote these other products.

In another version of this scam, the "customer survey" asks for personal information, such as address and credit card number. In this scam, con artists are really after information that can be used for identity theft.

How to Spot a Customer Survey Scam:

- Don't believe what you see. It's easy to steal the colors, logos and header of an established organization. Scammers can also make links look like they lead to legitimate websites and emails appear to come from a different sender.
- Legitimate businesses do not ask for credit card numbers or banking information on customer surveys. If they do ask for personal information, like an address or email, be sure there's a link to their privacy policy and then read it to see how they plan to use your information.
- When in doubt, do a quick web search. If the survey is a scam, you may find alerts or complaints from other consumers. The organization's real website may also have further information.
- Watch out for a reward that's too

good to be true. If the survey is real, you may be entered in a drawing to win a gift card or receive a small discount off your next purchase. Few businesses can afford to give away \$50 gift cards just for completing a few questions.

Everyone loves a good deal but by taking your time to thoroughly investigate offers that sound too good to be true, you could end up saving yourself tons of time, frustration and money.

For more tips you can trust, visit bbb.org.

Kelvin Collins is president/CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc. serving 41 counties in Central Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the Council of Better Business Bureaus. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: www.bbb.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org or info@csra.bbb.org. For more consumer tips that you can trust, visit bbb.org.

On the Cover

Celebration of the New Year!

by CAROLYN BRENNEMAN

Hey, everyone, here we are already in January of a new year and we have some great ideas about how to begin 2017. What better way to celebrate the start of 2017 than to start up with a great fitness program. There are plenty of opportunities for all of us to engage in some physical movement and activity. Whether we engage in brisk walking, jogging, dancing, or yoga, we can stay healthy and maintain or increase our muscle strength and stamina. Many types of strength exercises will make our muscles stronger, and balancing exercises will help prevent any type of falls. Let's join a gym, fitness center, church fitness group, the local H2U center at Doctors Hospital, or attend a Silver Sneakers group at The Family Y.

We have all heard about the rewards reaped from physical exercise and it is never too late to start. Being physically active is so important to maintaining physical health, mental stimulation, and independence as we age. Even simply taking a daily walk with a group of friends is a great way to get started. After

all, it is the determined efforts of people together supporting and motivating one another that make it work. Also, there are some great programs we can join.

Silver Sneakers, the trademark name of group exercise classes offered for Seniors, gives us one of the best and free opportunities to stay on track toward our health and fitness goals. In Augusta and the surrounding areas, Silver Sneakers classes are held at all of The Family Y centers including Augusta South, Marshall Family Y, Family Y of North Augusta, Thomson Family Y and the Wilson Family Y. The classes and schedules vary, but accommodate everyone, so let's check it out now!

Hey, don't forget about the H2U classes. Joining H2U is only \$20 a year and at Doctors Hospital has many great classes which allow us to increase muscle strength, improve our range of motion and take in cardio exercise. There are morning exercise classes on Mondays and Wednesdays. Or if we prefer, for great flexibility we can take a yoga class.

"I really enjoy low impact aerobics with music," says Rosa about the classes at H2U. "I work out doing some cardio and using light weights for maintaining strength, she tells us. And now I'm starting Tai Chi for range of movement and balance." How exciting is that! So let's get started right away. Also keeping active allows us to do many things that we enjoy in life with our friends and grandkids. Let's jump off the couch and into a great physical routine. Take on the challenge and try one of these programs out. Remember – it is the secret to better health and feeling better.



Group walking keeps us motivated



Jeanette ready for Tai Chi



Cathy is ready to go on a brisk walk



Carmen's building muscle and gaining strength

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Additional Senior Services & Events Information Available at www.seniornewsga.com

AUGUSTA/CSRA METRO AREA Senior Services & Events Directory
For additional Services & Events listings, please visit our website at: seniornewsga.com.

The Senior Citizens Council
4210 Columbia Road, Suite 13A,
Martinez, GA 30907; 706-868-0120
www.seniorcitizenscouncil.org

The Senior Citizens Council is open Monday through Friday for the following services:

- Advocacy Programs Department – including: Caseworker Services - Caregiver Respite, Referral Information and Support (CRRIS); Bill and Money Management (MAP); Senior Health Insurance and Education (SHINE) - the Center for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation.
- The Senior Corps Department: Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Senior Companion Program (SCP) for income-eligible persons age 55 and older who "serve up to 20 hours a week with special needs children or adults." Call us at 706-868-0120 for complete details. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for individuals looking for "fun and rewarding ways to make a difference in the community" or just get out-of-the-house a few hours a month. RSVP recruits individuals age 55 and over for the opportunity to apply their skills, expertise, and experience to help meet critical community needs while meeting other like-minded folks in our community. RSVP pairs talented volunteers with a variety of local nonprofit, health care, governmental, and faith based organizations to assist these groups with meeting the needs

of those they serve. Please call us at 706-868-0120 for details on any of our programs or make an appointment for a needed service. Our physical address is 4210 Columbia Road, Suite 13A, Martinez, GA 30907, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CSRA Senior Centers

Over 60? Enjoy socializing, parties, cards, crafts, Bingo and travel? Interested in staying healthy and active? Tired of eating lunch alone? If you answered YES to these questions, then you need to check out a Senior Center near you!

- Blythe Area Recreation Department Patricia Strakosch; 3129 Highway 88, Blythe, GA 30805; 706-592-6668
- Carrie J. Mays Recreation Center Sheryl Jones; 1015 11th Ave., Augusta, GA 30901; 706-821-2831
- East View Community Center Roberta Sullivan; 644 Aiken St., Augusta, GA 30901; 706-722-2302
- HH Brigham Senior Center Heather Kooms; 2463 Golden Camp Rd., Augusta, GA 30906; 706-772-5456
- McBean Community Center Willamae Shaheed; 1155 Hephzibah-McBean Rd., Hephzibah, GA 30815; 706-560-1814 or 706-560-2628
- Sand Hills Community Center Lillie Rosier; 2540 Wheeler Rd., Augusta, GA 30904; 706-842-1912 or 706-842-1916
- New Bethlehem Community Center, Inc. Millicent E. West; 1336 Conklin Ave., Augusta, GA 30901; 706-722-0086
- Bessie Thomas Community Center Jeff Asman; 5913 Eucree Creek Dr., Grovetown, GA 30813; 706-556-0308
- Burke County Senior Center Jackie Brayboy; 717 W. 6th St., Waynesboro, GA 30830; 706-437-8007
- Glascock County Senior Center Anita May; 568 Brassell Park Ln., Gibson, GA 30810; 706-598-3050
- Grovetown Senior Center Jennifer Thomas; 103 W. Robinson Ave., Grovetown, GA 30813; 706-210-8699
- Betty Hill Senior Citizens Center Cathie Birdsong; 330 Waters Work Rd., Sparta, GA 31087; 706-444-7532

- Harlem Senior Center Tina Sidener; 405 B West Church St., Harlem, GA 30814; 706-449-8400
- Jefferson County Senior Center Marie Swint; 209 E. 7th St., Louisville, GA 30434; 478-625-8820
- McDuffie Senior Center Melinda Hill; 304 Greenway St., Thomson, GA 30824; 706-595-7502
- Jenkins County Senior Center Shirley Chance; 998 College Ave., Millen, GA 30442; 478-982-4213
- Lincoln County Senior Center Pam Parton; 160 May Ave., Lincolnton, GA 30817; 706-359-3760
- Sylvania Senior Center Cathy Forehand; 209 E. Ogeechee St., Sylvania, GA 30467; 912-564-7727
- Taliaferro County Senior Center Allene Oliver; 119 Commerce St., Crawfordville, GA 30631; 706-456-2611
- Warren County Senior Center Gwanda Murray; 48 Warren St., Warrenton, GA 30828; 706-465-3539
- Washington County Council on Aging Jane Colson; 466 Maurice Friedman Rd., Sandersville, GA 31082; 478-552-0898 (Mon., Tues. and Thurs.) 478-552-0013
- Wilkes County Diana Hall; 108 Marshall St., Washington, GA 30673; 706-678-2518
- Shiloh Comprehensive Community Center Elizabeth Jones; 1635 15th St., Augusta, GA 30901; 706-738-0089

H. H. Brigham Senior Center
2463 Golden Camp Rd., Augusta
Contact: Patricia A. Jenner
706-772-5456; 1 a.m.-3 p.m.

Aiken County Parks, Recreation & Tourism
902 Vacluse Rd., Aiken, SC 29801; 803-642-7559;
www.aikencountysc.gov/tourism
Courtney Senior Center
49 Roy St., Wagener, SC; 564-5211
• Senior Bingo: 3rd Fri., 2 p.m., Free
• Canasta Club: Wednesdays, 12 noon, Free
Harrison-Caver Park
4181 Augusta Rd., Clearwater, SC; 593-4698
Aiken County Recreation Center

917 Jefferson Davis Hwy.,
Graniteville, SC; 663-6142
Roy Warner Park
4287 Festival Trail Rd., Wagener, SC;
564-6149

Academy for Lifelong Learning, USC-Aiken
Information: 803-641-3288

Hearing Loss Association of Augusta

Meetings are normally held on the 3rd Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., September-April except for December, at University Hospital, 1350 Walton Way, Dining Rooms 1-3. For information on the organization please contact Gayle Tison at g.m.tison@wowway.com.

Hephzibah Lions Club
Meets the 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7 p.m., Jesse Carroll Community Center, Windsor Spring Rd., Hephzibah. For additional information contact Lion Frank Spinney, President, at 706-592-5618 or Jon Winters at 706-592-9622 or 706-833-0458.

Morris Museum of Art
1 Tenth Street at Riverwalk in Augusta Riverfront Center. Call 706-724-7501 for more information or visit the Museum's website at www.the.morris.org.

• Sierra Hull: Fri., Jan 13
• High Art and Low Country: Thurs., Jan. 26, 6-8 p.m. For costs and to RSVP by Jan. 19 call 706-828-3825

Gertrude Herbert Institute of Art
Located at 506 Telfair Street, Augusta.

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Bill Phillips

706-284-1635



EVENTS

from page 6

Call 706-722-5495 for information.

Caregiver Support Group

Are you caring for a spouse or parent? Join other caregivers to share experiences, gather practical resources and find the support you need. The group meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Friedman Branch Library located at 1447 Jackson Road in Augusta. For more information contact Georgia Jopling, Caregiver Specialist, Area Agency on Aging, 706-210-2000 or 888-922-4464.

Augusta Museum of History
560 Reynolds Street in downtown Augusta. Call 706-722-8454 for events information.

- Voices of the Past Museum Theater: *The Other Tubmans*: Sat., Jan. 14
- Voices of the Past Museum Theater: *A Petersburg Boat Pilot*: Sat., Jan. 21
- Brown Bag Series: *The Distinctive Communities of the River Region, An Overview*: Jan. 11
- *Say Cheese: Historic Photography*: Jan. 16

Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History
www.lucycraftlaneymuseum.com
Call 706-724-3576 for events information.

USA DANCE Augusta Chapter 6074

Every Third Saturday of the Month
The USA Dance is a National Dance Organization. Our Chapter 6074 focuses on the Augusta and Aiken areas. Our dances are held on the THIRD SATURDAY of each month. The dance is held at American Legion Post 63, 90 Milledge Rd., Augusta, from 7:30 to 11 p.m. Lessons at 8 p.m. If you are able, please bring something sweet or savory for the goody table. Tasty food, the best dance floor in the CSRA, great music, a friendly and welcoming atmosphere all add up to a perfect Saturday evening experience. Cost is \$8.00 for USA Dance members or \$10.00 for non-members. For additional information call Kay Cooke at

706-210-8780 or Rudy Brostrom at 803-442-9337. Join us for an evening of fun and fellowship!

Augusta Christian Singles Dance

Dances are at 7:30 p.m. with complimentary dance lessons at 6:30 p.m. Admission will be \$10.00 for guests and \$8.00 for members. Light refreshments will be served.

Located at The Ballroom Dance Center, 525 Grand Slam Drive, Evans, GA 30809.

AARP Augusta Local 266

There is more to AARP than a newspaper and a magazine. The local chapter meets at the Kroc Center, The Salvation Army, 1833 Broad Street, Augusta. For additional information or to join, call Mrs. Catherine B. Butler, Chapter President, at 706-854-0524.

Friday Night Dance

Every Friday, 8-11 p.m., American Legion Post 63, 90 Milledge Rd., Augusta. With band or DJ. \$10 cost. Free coffee and cake. Everyone welcome. Call 706-733-5184.

Service Corps of Retired Executives

The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) provides counseling and mentoring to business people who are starting up a new business or who are expanding one that is ongoing. SCORE is a non-profit, public service organization, affiliated with the SBA. There is never a charge for our services. Call 706-793-9998, Mon. - Fri., from 9 a.m. - 12 noon.

DBSA (Depression Bi-Polar Support Alliance)

Meets the 3rd Tues. of every month at 6:30 p.m., First Baptist Church of Augusta, Walton Bldg., Room 105., 3500 Walton Way Ext., Augusta. Call 706-722-0010 for complete details or the Friendship Center (see Augusta phone book for number).

Pieceful Hearts Quilt Guild

Meets on Monday nights, 7-9 p.m., and Thursday mornings, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Martintown Rd., North Augusta. For details call 803-279-

6456 or 706-790-4975.

Augusta Chapter Of The Embroiderers' Guild Of America
Meets First Mon. each Month, 6:30 p.m., St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 3321 Wheeler Rd., Augusta. Additional information - Call Diana Parfitt at, 706-513-5458 or email: dianalparfitt@gmail.com.

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group
Meets 3rd Tues., 6:30 p.m., Brandon Wilde Retirement Community, Evans. For details call 706-854-3591 or 706-854-3501.

CSRA Parkinson Support Group

Meets monthly, St. John Towers Dining Room, 724 Greene St., Augusta. For details call 706-364-1662.

Area Agency on Aging Offerings

Learn through a 30-Minute session, 3rd Thurs. each month, 1 p.m., KROC Center Augusta, Senior Lounge, 1833 Broad St. Registration not required. Contact Lee Walker, Resource Specialist, 706-922-8348 or 706-210-2018.

ENOPION Auditions in January

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10 Signs your aging parent can't live alone

Special to Senior News

Submitted by Stephanie Fisher

It's a sad reality that, as we age, we become less independent than we once were – but for most blessed with longevity, it's inevitable. With multiple millions of baby boomers throughout the U.S. caring for elderly parents, throngs of adult caregivers struggle with determining if their parent is fit to remain living alone. It's a difficult, multi-faceted decision not to be made lightly as there is much at stake—both the physical and emotional well-being of the parent in question and for the extended family at large.

To help ease the process of determining if an elderly parent should no longer live on their own, here are 10 tell-tale signs that can give you better peace of mind with making this all-important decision as offered by aging and elder care authority and legislation advocate, Carolyn A. Brent, MBA – award-winning author of the acclaimed title, *"Why Wait? The Baby Boomers' Guide to Preparing Emotionally, Financially Legally for a Parents' Death"* – a book that helps caregivers discern, discuss and deal with crucial end-of-life issues within their families (www.CareGiverStory.com).

Mom or Dad has always been a great housekeeper, but the house just doesn't look like it used to: You may remember a parent who was constantly on you about tidying your room or putting things away after you were done with them. The house was always spotless and everything was organized, clean and in its place. There was much pride in this fact. However, upon visiting with Mom or Dad today the home is decidedly cluttered and not nearly as clean as normal. Of course, this can mean a lot of things. Your parent may actually have an active social life and is more concerned with staying busy than tidying up. But, it could be a more ominous sign that your parent is having a difficult time keeping up with all the chores. She may feel overwhelmed or his physical health is slowing him down. Ask your parent if help is needed with the clutter, but do it in a nonchalant way that could prompt a conversation indicating assistance is needed here. Keep a keen eye to discern if the clutter and filth is getting worse with each visit – it's often a key sign.

The bills and other mail are piling up: While we all get busy – even those who are retired – basic tasks that were often dealt with quickly and easily when younger, but that are now falling by the wayside, is a sign that your older parent could be getting overwhelmed and not able to manage their daily

affairs. This may also indicate some signs of forgetfulness and memory issues. Often, especially if a parent is alone without a spouse, they may not have someone to remind them to go through the mail and check to see if it's time to pay certain bills.

The checking account balance is wrong and bills are going unpaid: If the mail, with bills included, is piling up, there is a good chance that the bills are not getting paid. You may also discover amongst mail issues that your parent's checking account ledger balance is wrong or in arrears. These are also signs that your parent is having memory issues or difficulty with simple math cognition. It can also indicate a general apathy – a mindset that can be equally problematic for someone with the glut of responsibility required to effectively live alone.

Your parent is losing a lot of weight: A parent who may have lost their partner or who is generally depressed often loses interest in eating due to a reduced appetite. They may feel that it is not worth the hassle of shopping for and preparing meals if they are now living all alone. Accordingly, pay close attention to your parent's weight. Also, check their refrigerator and pantry to see if there is an appropriate supply of food and that what is there is fresh and edible. If the cupboard is bare and your parent's frame is shrinking, living alone might become problematic. At the very least, you may want to think about bringing groceries by or looking into a service that offers prepared meal delivery. Otherwise, you may have to think about putting them somewhere that helps them eat regular, healthy meals.

They have forgotten the basics of hygiene: If you notice that your parent is wearing the same clothing day in and day out or that their hair or skin appears dirty on a fairly regular basis, they may have lost the motivation, ability and/or forethought to look after them self. Living alone, they may feel like they don't have to dress up or clean up for anyone. Worse yet, they may have forgotten – or simply no longer cares – that such personal hygiene and cleanliness is an important part of daily living and maintaining one's good health.

They appear in inappropriate clothing: While you may not share your mother or father's sense of style, there is cause for concern if your parent dons summer clothing in the dead of winter or leaves the house in a nightgown and slippers for a trip to the store. This often happens when the elderly are suffering from confusion and lose the ability to have discretion in social situa-

tions. In this situation, wardrobe can be the least of the concerns as the problem manifests in other dangerous ways.

There are signs of forgetfulness in the home: Confusion can also show up in the kitchen and can prove to be deadly if not dealt with quickly. All too often there are stories of older people who accidentally burned their houses down because they left a pot on the stove for hours and fell asleep or have flooded the home when they forgot to turn off the tap. Or, perhaps more subtly, the milk is in the pantry and the bread is in the refrigerator. These are all tell-tale signs that it may not be wise for your parent to be left home alone for extended periods of time.

Your parent regularly misses appointments and other important items: Forgetfulness, absentmindedness and memory issues may also show up when it comes to keeping certain appointments, recognizing key dates, or, even more importantly, maintaining medication dosages on schedule. This is a clear sign they need to live with someone who can help them stick to their schedules and stay on task.

They are just acting plain

weird: This is always the sign that families dread the most. No one wants to turn into the "crazy cat lady" or the "man who mutters to himself." But, unfortunately, between aging, mental degradation and the side effects from medication, you may note that your parent has lost their personalities and behavior has taken an odd turn for the worse. If you see signs of paranoia, fear, strange phone calls and conversations and nervousness, this should not be overlooked as it's a blatant sign that living assistance is in order.

They exhibit signs of depression: There are a number of classic signs that can be connected with someone suffering depression. A loss of interest in caring for one's self as well as a lack of participation in socialization and in once-loved hobbies can mean that your parent needs treatment or should reside in an environment where they can be around other people. Sometimes, depression comes from a sense of loneliness or the realization that they can no longer do things for themselves. Putting them somewhere that offers assistance, socialization and activities can help cure the loneliness and put them back on track to a more fulfilling, active and engaged life.

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