

# SENIOR REPORTER

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MAY 2026

"Serving The Needs of Orange County & Long Beach Seniors Since 1974"

# Annie Potts

*"I'm a character actor – always have been, always will be."*

— Annie Potts



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# Annie Potts: You Know Her When You See Her

By Les Goldberg

You've enjoyed her in such major hit films as "Ghostbusters," "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Toy Story," and on TV in "Young Sheldon," "Designing Women," and "Dangerous Minds," to name a few, but 74-year-old Annie Potts is not a headline star and is OK with being a character actress.

For nearly 50 years, Potts' supporting roles have earned her numerous acting awards in categories ranging from drama to comedy to voice in animated films and audiobooks.



Photo courtesy  
Wikimedia Commons.



Photo courtesy Flickr.

Her love for acting, whether on the big screen, television, or as an animated voiceover, is best described in her various media interviews:

"I love series television because it's so much fun to have that much opportunity to paint the character," she said.

About animation work, she said: "It's an interesting and

demanding art to do voices. I have been told I have a distinctive voice, but of course, I don't hear my own voice as others do, so I don't know."

And, speaking about her live stage roles, she said: "I sure do love theater. I mean, that's where I started. I am actually sort of shy, but something happens when the audience comes in. It's something nice for me, but I'm able to do it."

Despite her shyness, Potts managed to pursue her dream at an early age, graduating with a bachelor's degree in theater from Stephens College in Columbia, MO. However, her early career was interrupted tragi-

*Continued on page 6*

# 70s FLASH BACK

## 'The Eyes Have It'

By Randal C. Hill

In Berlin in 1946, a young American named Walter Keane was reportedly heartbroken at what he saw — hungry kids wallowing in rubbish heaps and fighting over food scraps. He later wrote, "As if goaded by a kind of frantic despair, I sketched these dirty, ragged little victims of the war with their bruised, lacerated minds and bodies, their matted hair and runny noses. Here, my life as a painter began in earnest."

There was just one problem with Keane's story: his recollection proved to be a lie.

He may have seen impoverished children, but Keane never did become a painter. It was his future wife, Margaret, who would eventually put in numerous sad-eyed waifs, all created from her Nashville childhood notebooks rather than from European garbage dumps.

Keane, a hard-drinking and canny seller of real estate, met Margaret in 1955 at an art exhibition in San Francisco. "He was just oozing with charm," the future Mrs. Keane recalled. "He could charm anyone."

The hippest hangout in the Bay Area was a beatnik joint called the Hungry I. It was there that Walter first peddled his wife's artwork as his own while she stayed home, creating images of children with eyes three times their normal size.

In time, those paintings became hot properties, and, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, all things Keane (which now included posters and plates) brought in oceans of cash, with originals selling for as much as \$100,000 each.

Walter and Margaret bought a gated California mansion with a swimming pool, all the while with him taking credit for his spouse's artwork while Margaret was kept home in isolation, painting 16 hours a day.

In his 1983 memoir, "*The World of Keane*," Walter quoted his wife saying, "You are the greatest artist I have ever seen ... You are also the most handsome."

Hmm. Really?

She eventually reached the end of her patience with her spouse. She filed for divorce after promising her husband, by now a raging alcoholic, would keep secretly painting for him. But after handing him several more originals, she finally proclaimed, "No more lies. From now on, I will only tell the truth." And she did, explaining everything to an interviewer in 1970.

After the split-up, she moved to Hawaii, where she painted her trademark big-eyed kids swimming leisurely in azure seas amid schools of colorful tropical fish. He moved into a fisherman's shack near San Di-

ego and drank from morning until night.

He later told a newspaper reporter that his ex-wife wanted to defraud him publicly. When the interviewer's article appeared in print, she sued him. This led to a "paint off" in court, where a judge ordered each to create "big eyes" paintings while he watched.

She finished hers in 53 minutes; he claimed he couldn't paint because of a sore shoulder.

She was awarded \$4 million. She never saw a penny of the settlement, though; he had drunk away all the money from the Keanes' heyday.

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## Annie Potts

*Continued from page 4*

cally in 1973 when she and her first husband, Steven Hartley, were in a car crash.

The accident left her with several broken bones and the loss of the heel of her right foot, while her husband's left leg was amputated.

It wasn't until 1978 that her career took off. She made her debut in the movies in the comedy film "Corvette Summer" with Mark Hamill. Her performance earned her a Golden Globe Award nomination, which then led to a follow-up role in the short-lived TV comedy series "Goodtime Girls."



*Photo courtesy Flickr.  
Pretty in Pink.*

In 1982, she won a Genie Award for best performance by a foreign actress for her role in the film "Heartaches," about a young woman married to a stock car racer and carrying his friend's child.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Potts continued her rise to stardom in several roles, both on the big screen and on television. They included: sequels to "Ghostbusters" in which she played a receptionist with her trademark accent; TV's "Designing Women" in the role of an interior designer, and "Love & War," for which she



*Photo courtesy  
Wikimedia Commons.*

was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series.

And for her work in the ABC drama "Dangerous Minds" as well as her role in the Lifetime drama "Any Day Now," she earned nominations for the Screen Actors Guild awards for outstanding performance by a female actor in a drama series.

Other notable career highlights at that time were appearances in the film "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and TV's "Magnum, P.I.," "Joan of Arc," "Two and a Half Men," "Men in Trees," "Ugly Betty," and "Law & Order, Special Victims Unit."

Following several more performances in the early 2000s, mostly for television and once on Broadway, Potts became a series regular in "The Fosters," which ran for five years on ABC, and on the CBS sitcom "Young Sheldon." Starting in 2024, she was a recur-

ring actress on the CBS sitcom "Georgie & Mandy's First Marriage," playing a maternal grandmother.

So far this year, she's appeared on the TV series "Best Medicine."

As a character actress, Potts is comfortable with her role, saying that "character actors don't come into their own until later in their professional and chronological lives."

And, she adds about her career that she feels like "I've won the lottery several times, so I've been awfully lucky."

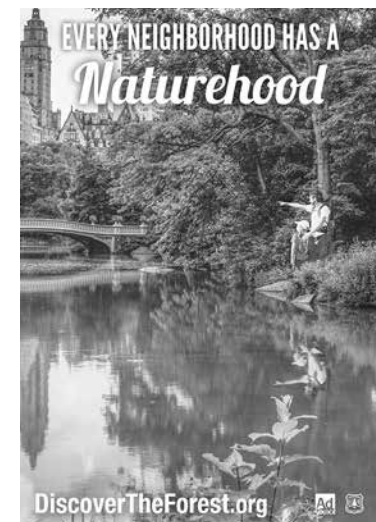
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If you're already receiving Social Security, you'll automatically be enrolled in Parts A and B when you turn 65, and your Medicare card will arrive in the mail. It will include instructions on how to return it if you have employer coverage that allows you to delay Part B.

#### If You're Still Working

Start by talking with your benefits manager or HR department to understand how your employer insurance works with Medicare. In most cases, it makes sense to enroll in Part A since it's free. However, if you contribute to a Health Savings Account, enrolling in Part A will stop those contributions.

Whether you should enroll in Part B usually depends on your employer's size.

#### Small employer

If your employer has fewer than 20 employees, Medicare becomes your primary insurance. In this case, you should enroll in Part B during your Initial Enrollment Period, which lasts seven months: the three months before your 65th birthday, your birthday month, and the three months after.

If you aren't receiving Social Security, you'll need to apply for Medicare. You can do this online at [ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up](https://ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up), by phone at 800-772-1213, or in person at your local Social Security office.

If you miss your Initial Enrollment Period, you'll need to wait for the General Enrollment Period, which runs January 1 through March 31. Coverage begins the first day of the month after you enroll, but a 10 percent penalty is added to your Part B premium for each full year you waited. Signing up on time helps you avoid both coverage gaps and added costs.

#### Large employer

If your employer has 20 or more employees, your group health plan remains your primary insurance while you're actively working. In this case, you generally don't need to enroll in Part B at 65 if your coverage is adequate. If you do enroll, Medicare will serve as secondary coverage.

Once your employment or employer coverage ends, you'll have an eight-month Special Enrollment Period to sign up for Part B without penalty.

#### Check drug coverage

You should also review your prescription drug coverage. Ask your benefits manager if your employer's plan is considered "creditable." If it is, you don't need to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan. If it isn't, you should sign up for Part D during your Initial Enrollment Period to avoid a penalty – typically 1 percent of the national average premium for each month you delay.

You can compare Part D plans at [medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://medicare.gov/plan-compare).

#### Need help?

For free guidance, contact your

State Health Insurance Assistance Program at 877-839-2675 or [shiphelp.org](https://shiphelp.org). You can also call the Medicare Rights Center helpline at 800-333-4114.

Navigating Medicare while you're still working can be confusing, but a quick check with your employer and a clear understanding of the rules can help you avoid costly mistakes. Taking the time to get it right now will ensure you have the coverage you need, without unnecessary penalties down the road.

Send your questions or comments to [questions@savvysenior.org](mailto:questions@savvysenior.org), or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



by Jim Miller

# Savvy SENIOR

## Still Working at 65? Here's How to Handle Medicare

Dear Savvy Senior,

My wife and I are approaching 65, but I'm still working and have good health coverage through my employer. Do we need to enroll in Medicare at this point?

--Almost 65



ever, the rules depend largely on the size of your employer.

First, a quick refresher: Remember that original Medicare has two parts. Part A, which covers hospital care and is premium-free for most people. And Part B, which covers

Dear Almost,

If you or your spouse is still working past age 65 and have health insurance through your job, you may be able to delay enrolling in Medicare without a late enrollment penalty. How-

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*On the Road Again ...*

# Why Not a Weekend in Pahrump?

By Shana McCann

Wondering what to do this spring and early summer? If you are like me, I yearn for a little bit of time away from the big city where life is slower, traffic is lighter and there is a peaceful quiet in the air.

Scavenging through some old travel brochures, I found a place that fits the bill and more – Pahrump, Nevada.

Just 60 miles west of Las Vegas, the town, once a stagecoach station, is known for its rustic Old West appeal, wide skies, desert sunsets and majestic mountain backdrops on the edge of the Death Valley National Park.



*Coffinwood Inn.*

Although it has grown quickly as Nevada and California residents seek more affordable housing and lower costs of living, Pahrump maintains its smalltown charm. It remains a favorite recent destination for weekenders, road trippers, RV enthusiasts and outdoor lovers. My visit was proof of that!

There is plenty to do. In addition to sightseeing and taking scenic photos of the desert landscape and wildlife (one of my favorite activities), you can



*Photos courtesy Pahrump Chamber of Commerce.*

enjoy local museums, outdoor recreation, quaint dining and shopping.

No matter what age you are, and especially if you are entertaining your grandkids, Pahrump's Nature Health Farms Petting Zoo is the place to visit. There you'll find hands-on petting with goats, pigs, llamas, miniature ponies and more. Educational programs and a small produce stand also are provided on a seasonal basis. And if you like to ride horses you can do that too.

If you yearn for a brief return to wilderness environments, you are in the right place. Whether you venture out alone on the winding trails or trek the hilly desert slopes or sign up for the guided Nature and Wildlife Tours, you are likely to encounter protected wild burros, bighorn sheep and tortoises among the more than 26 plants species, including yuccas and desert shrubs. All can be found at the Ash Meadows and Pahranaagat Na-

tional Wildlife refuges within the city limits. Just a short drive east of Pahrump, the Mt. Charleston Wilderness offers some of the region's best hiking, scenic overlooks and cooler mountain temperatures. Trails range from easy forest walks to steep climbs leading to sweeping views of the nearby Spring Mountains.



*The Beatty Museum.*

After all the hiking and walking, you are sure to work up an appetite. While most of the usual fast-food restaurants are present in town, I recommend dining at the cozy mom-and-pop eateries. My favorites are the Living Free Café, known for its healthy fare of homemade baked goods and fresh, lighter meals for breakfast and lunch, and the Dry Creek Saloon, a classic Nevada bar and

grill with a laid-back western vibe where you can hang with the locals and be entertained by live music in the evening hours.

It's not in any travel logs that I could find, but one of the most relaxing and inspirational activities available while in Pahrump is stargazing. If you love looking up into the dark universe to find the North Star, the galaxies, the moon and planets, the best place to do it is in the desert, far away from the city lights and tall build-

ings. The view is, in one word, spectacular.

When your day is through, you can return to your modest hotel, of which there are several in the town, and spend the night knowing that you fulfilled an enjoyable, budget-conscious "staycation."

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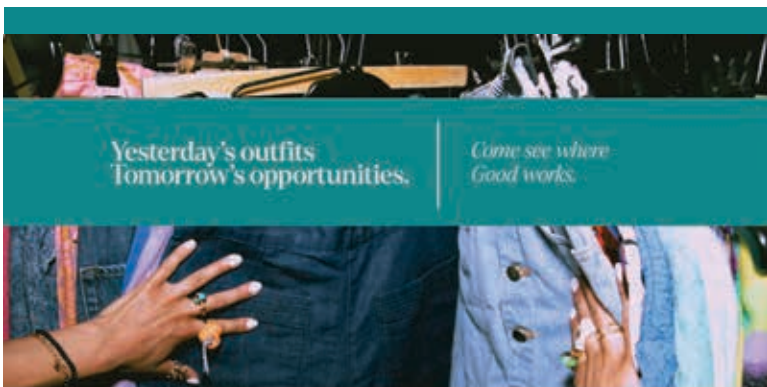


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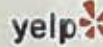
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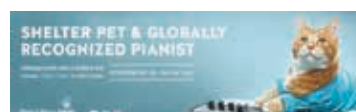
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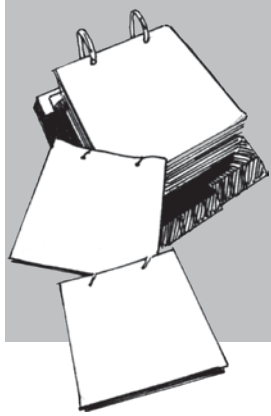
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# MAY Calendar of Events



May arrives in Southern California with longer days, warmer nights, and a calendar that quickly fills with festivals, outdoor concerts, and community celebrations. From coastal events to inland gatherings, the region comes alive with activities that reflect the season's energy and diversity. Here's a look at what's happening across Southern California this May.

## **Rancho Days Fiesta**

**Lake Forest**

**May 2, 2026**

**11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Explore the rich history of Orange County's rancho era through hands-on activities, crafts, music, dance, and more. Enjoy Native American and Folklorico dancing, early California ranching demonstrations, piñatas, horse riding, and historic buildings open for tours. Pets are welcome out-

doors on leashes. Admission and parking are free.

LOCATION: Heritage Hill Historical Park, 25151 Serrano Road, Lake Forest.

INFO: 949-923-2230.

## **Annual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta**

**San Clemente**

**May 2, 2026**

**2 p.m. to 6 p.m.**

Celebrate with live entertainment, a Vendor Pavilion, and a Children's Pavilion featuring inflatables, face painting, Fun on the Run Mobile Recreation, and giant slides. Perfect for the whole family.

LOCATION: Max Berg Plaza Park, 1100 Calle Puente, San Clemente.

INFO: 949-361-8264.

## **OC Marathon**

**Newport Beach**

**May 2-3, 2026**

Join runners and walkers at the OC Marathon, benefiting local children's charities through Run for Orange County Kids (ROCK). Routes begin near the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel & Spa.

INFO: 949-222-3327.

## **Open Garden Day**

**Santa Ana**

**May 9, 2026**

**9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Tour gardens in West Floral Park and Jack Fisher Park. The

event features expert talks, vintage cars, vendor booths, and gourmet food trucks. A one-day community celebration of unique and inspiring gardens.

LOCATION: Neighborhoods of West Floral Park and Jack Fisher Park, North Santa Ana.

INFO: 714-836-9777.

## **Murder Mystery Scavenger Hunt**

**Huntington Beach**

**May 9, 2026**

**11:20 a.m. (arrive by 11:00 a.m.)**

Test your detective skills on a walking adventure through Downtown Huntington Beach, including the Pier, Beach Trail, and Triangle Park. Solve clues, riddles, and puzzles to discover ... Who Done It?

INFO: Promo Code OCNET for 25% discount.

## **Annual Crawfish Festival**

**Fountain Valley**

**May 15-17, 2026**

Enjoy live crawfish flown in from Louisiana, Cajun-style with potatoes, corn, and remoulade. Food, music, and fun for the whole family.

LOCATION: Fountain Valley Sports Park, 16400 Brookhurst Street, Fountain Valley.

## **Greek Festival**

**Anaheim**

**May 15-17, 2026**

Experience Greek culture with food, pastries, traditional danc-

ing, a marketplace, and a Kids Zone with carnival rides and games.

LOCATION: St. John Greek Orthodox Church, 405 North Dale Street, Anaheim.

## **Anaheim Children's Festival**

**Anaheim**

**May 16, 2026**

**11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Families enjoy art booths, projects, musical performances, and hands-on activities. Free to all participants, continuing a 33-year tradition.

LOCATION: Pearson Park, Lemon and Sycamore streets, Anaheim.

## **Tustin LobsterFest**

**Tustin**

**May 16, 2026**

An afternoon of games, music, entertainment, and prizes benefiting local Rotary programs.

LOCATION: Peppertree Park, Corner of First and C streets, Tustin.

## **Magic at the Majestic:**

**David Minkin**

**Anaheim**

**May 16-17, 2026**

**Various showtimes**

An intimate evening of magic featuring a rotating cast of magicians. Enjoy close-up feats, illusions, and astonishment.

LOCATION: Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel, 900 Disneyland Drive, Anaheim.

INFO: 480-359-7469.

## **Santa Ana Zoo's Party for the Planet /**

### **Endangered Species Day**

**Santa Ana**

**May 17, 2026**

**11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Celebrate Earth and endangered species with a scavenger hunt and special activities. Free for FOSAZ members and Santa Ana residents; general public included with admission.

LOCATION: Santa Ana Zoo, 1801 E Chestnut Ave., Santa Ana.

## **Balboa Island ArtWalk**

**Balboa**

**May 17, 2026**

**9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Over a mile of art featuring 90 artists, plus live music on three stages. Free to attend.

LOCATION: 1000 South Bayfront, Balboa Island.

## **Taste of Brea & Business Expo**

**Brea**

**May 21, 2026**

**5 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Enjoy food, drinks, live music, and local restaurant tastings while strolling Brea Downtown.

LOCATION: Downtown Birch Street Promenade.

*Continued on page 30*

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# The Gadget Geezer

By Les Goldberg

## Pet Tech: For Your Peace of Mind

Let's face it: we love our pets. We want to make sure they are healthy, happy, and safe, and we'll go out of our way to meet those goals. Thankfully, technology is helping with new devices that make our lives easier, along with our furry friends.

Here's just a glimpse of the latest gadgets designed for pets:

### Auto Cat Feeder



Photo courtesy OneLsAll.

For those of us who have more than one cat, the **Onals'll Automatic Cat Feeder** dispenses an equal amount of food or customized portions into two bowls. It is designed to prevent waiting – or fighting – when the cats are ready to eat, and the flexible settings help you manage your pets' diet and health.

The feeder also features an anti-clog design to ensure a free flow of food to the bowls. It also has a raised base to prevent food from piling at the outlet, and stores up to 25 cups of dry food in the sealed container,

keeping it fresh and reducing refill frequency. Price: \$49.99.

### Pet Hair Eraser



Photo courtesy OneLsAll.

Caring for a pet means cleaning up after them, and the new **OnelsALL Pet Hair Cordless Hand Vacuum** is designed to do just that.

Designed specifically for pet parents, this cordless hand vacuum simplifies cleaning pet hair and dirt from various surfaces such as carpets, car interiors, curtains, and furniture. It features a motorized tool for tight spaces and an upholstery attachment with felt to attract hard-to-remove hair from soft surfaces.

Lightweight, the vacuum also features a dual-layer filtration system designed to extend filter life and facilitate easier cleaning. Price: \$65.99.

### Pooper Scooper

While we're talking about cleanliness, we must include the always-needed dog pooper scooper.



Photo courtesy Light in the Box.

The **Light in the Box pooper scooper** is sold online and in stores in various shapes, sizes, and volumes. But the one that stood out for me is a small, portable no-touch device that comes with a 15-piece bag attachment and leak-proof waste storage container.

Small enough to carry in a portable carrier or backpack, the pooper scooper features a trigger-activated claw over which the waste bag is attached. When the bag is full, you simply pull the trigger and empty the bag into the container.

Said one user who is 84 years old and moderately handicapped: "Taking my dog for a walk and trying to reach the ground where he pooped, I ended up falling on the sidewalk and calling emergency services. The pooper scooper is exactly what I needed." Price: \$9.99.

### Pet Trackers

Using GPS technology for finding your keys, locating your el-



Photo courtesy Fi.

derly loved ones, or your car in a parking lot is a normal practice in today's high-tech world. However, more and more people are considering it a must-have for making sure your pets are safe and healthy, well within your sight.

One of the most popular pet tech gadgets on the market today is the GPS tracker, and among the crowded field is the **Fi New Series 3+ Smart Dog Tracker Collar**.

This device is multi-tasking. In addition to advanced GPS tracking, it can perform health and behavior monitoring and provide escape alerts. It is waterproof, features an LED display, and is compatible with an Apple Watch. Price: \$99.

### Ball Launcher

In the category of Pet Toy, this device, also from **Light in the Box**, is ideal for keeping your dog entertained for hours. It is an automatic ball launcher. When your dog places the ball inside, snacks are dispensed on both sides, making it perfect for

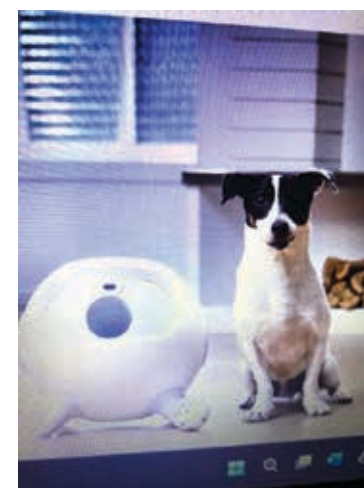


Photo courtesy Light in the Box.

dogs who love to fetch but tire quickly. It's ideal for independent play, keeping your dog active and mentally engaged even when you're busy.

Designed with chew-resistant rubber, the launcher is built to withstand tough chewers and heavy-duty play. Compatible with standard tennis balls and dog fetch toys, it's an upgrade from flimsy alternatives, ensuring long-lasting fun for your furry friend.

The ergonomic ball launcher enhances fetch sessions by enabling throws 50 percent longer than manual tossing and controls throwing rhythm. It provides essential physical activity and mental stimulation for your dog's well-being. Price: \$46.99.





# Marvelous May



Photo courtesy Pixabay.

May is the month when spring hits its stride, and everything feels just a little more alive. Named after the Roman goddess Maia, May has long been associated with growth, fertility, and new beginnings.

It's one of only a few months with no major U.S. federal holidays at the start, but it closes strong with Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday, honoring those who died in military service. The month also includes Mother's Day, celebrated on the second Sunday, making it one of the most sentimental times of the year.

Historically, May has roots in ancient celebrations. The Romans held festivals for Flora, marking the blooming of flowers, while in medieval Europe, May Day traditions included dancing around the maypole and crowning a May Queen.

Birthstones for May include the

rich green emerald, symbolizing rebirth and love. Its birth flower, the lily of the valley, represents sweetness and humility.

In pop culture, May has had its share of notable moments. The Kent State shootings occurred on May 4, 1970, becoming a defining moment in American history. On a lighter note, May is also prime time for blockbuster movie releases and the unofficial kickoff to summer.

Fun fact: May always starts on the same day of the week as January in common years. It's also the only month that can never begin or end on the same day of the week as any other month in the same year.

From blooming gardens to meaningful celebrations, May is a month of color, remembrance, and renewal.

— Debbie L. Sklar

Sources: Various websites



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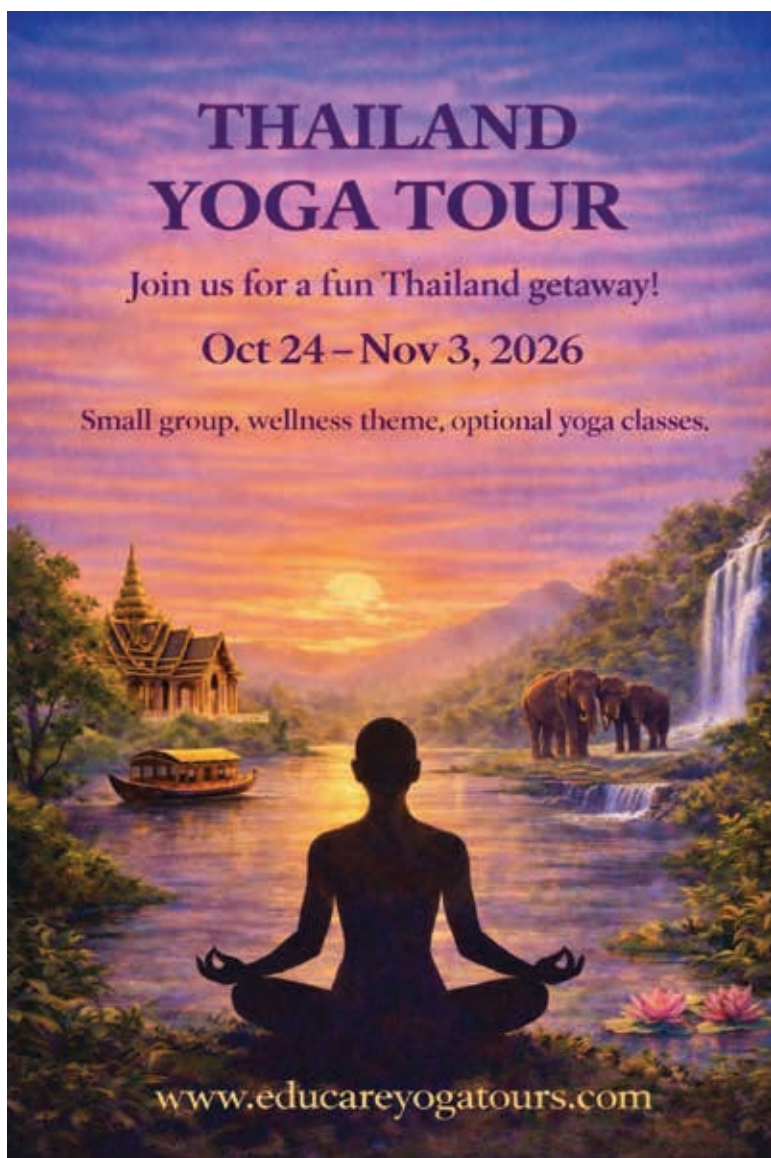


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Then & Now

## How Dental Care Has Changed Over the Last Century

Regarded by many as one of the oldest medical professions, dentistry has been practiced for thousands of years. Over the last century, dentistry has advanced from triaging decaying teeth to focusing on preventive care. Practice and study have built dentists' understanding of how oral hygiene affects not only the mouth, but many different facets of health.



*When you visit your dentist today, you can benefit from decades of knowledge.*

### Understanding tooth decay's roots

Many may be surprised to hear that toothbrushing only began to be widely adopted in the 1940s as a grooming routine to improve the look of teeth.

It wasn't established until the 1960s that bacteria in plaque caused tooth decay, and brushing was the best way to fight plaque.

In modern dentistry, it is un-

derstood that plaque is a living bacterial biofilm, which contains bacteria that feed on sugar. These bacteria create acids that degrade and destroy teeth over time, resulting in cavities. Today, dentists recommend brushing twice a day, flossing daily, and visiting the dentist at least once a year for preventive care (and for some with certain medical conditions, up to four times a year).

### Minerals' role in fortifying teeth

In the early 1900s, products such as tooth powder were popular before the toothpaste commonly sold today. These powders contained abrasive

ingredients including calcium carbonate, powdered charcoal, or baking soda. Vitamins and minerals taken specifically for oral health didn't come about until the early 1900s, when fluoride began to be used in tooth powders to prevent decay.

Today, fluoride is in most toothpaste on the market. Additionally, dentists apply fluoride to patients' teeth in the form of foam, gel, or varnish during checkups. Fluoride is particularly important for children, since their teeth need extra protection as they grow.

### Treating the mouth as the gateway to the body

Though gum disease has been observed throughout history, it wasn't until modern dentistry that it was understood to cause other health complications. In addition to causing gum inflammation, bleeding, and tooth loss, gum disease is linked to respiratory disease, rheumatoid arthritis, coronary artery disease, and diabetic complications.

### Pulling teeth: the rise of modern dental implants

Early in the 1900s, it was not a priority to protect and keep original teeth; often, decaying teeth were simply pulled. To-

*Continued on page 23*

# In The Spotlight

By Debbie L. Sklar

## What No One Tells You About Downsizing — Until You Do It

### More Than a Simple Move

For many adults over 55, downsizing sounds simple in theory: move into a smaller space, reduce expenses, and simplify life. In reality, the process is often far more complicated — emotionally, financially, and logistically — than people expect.

Across Southern California, more homeowners are making the decision to leave long-held family homes in favor of condos, apartments, or senior communities. Some are motivated by retirement, others by rising costs, and many by a desire for less maintenance. But what's often left out of the conversation is what the experience actually feels like once it begins.

It's not just a move — it's a life transition," say real estate professionals who collaborate with older clients. People underestimate how much of their identity is tied to their home.

### The Emotional Weight of Letting Go

That realization tends to hit early in the process. Decades of belongings — furniture, photos, paperwork, and keepsakes — must be sorted, donated, sold, or discarded. What sounds like a practical task can quickly become emotional.

Many who have downsized say

the hardest part isn't choosing what to keep but deciding what to let go. Items that haven't been used in years suddenly feel important. A box in the garage becomes a collection of memories.

### Unexpected Financial Realities

There are also practical surprises. Moving costs can add up quickly, especially when hiring professional movers, renting storage units, or making updates to prepare a home for sale. In some cases, monthly expenses don't drop as much as expected, particularly when homeowners move into properties with homeowners' association fees or higher property taxes.

### Adjusting to a Smaller Space

Another common misconception is that smaller automatically means easier. While a smaller home can reduce upkeep, it can also require significant adjustment. Storage is limited. Layouts are different. And for some, the transition from a quiet residential neighborhood to a more densely populated area can take time to get used to.

### Finding the Benefits

Still, many say the benefits ultimately outweigh the challenges.

Less maintenance is one of the biggest advantages. With-



Photo courtesy Pixabay.

out the responsibilities of yard work, large-scale repairs, or unused rooms, day-to-day life can feel more manageable. For those who relocate closer to family, there's also the added benefit of stronger connections and support.

### Planning Matters

Financially, downsizing can free up equity, which can be used to support retirement or provide a cushion for future expenses. But experts caution that careful planning is essential.

Don't assume you'll save money across the board, real estate professionals say. You have to look at the full picture — purchase price, fees, taxes, and cost of living.

Preparation can make a significant difference. Many recommend starting the process early, even before a move is on the horizon. Gradually decluttering, organizing important documents, and having open conversations with family members can ease the transition.

### Getting the Right Help

Some are also turning to senior move managers — professionals who specialize in helping older adults navigate the downsizing process from start to finish.

### A Personal Next Chapter

At its core, downsizing is more than square footage. It's about deciding what matters most in the next chapter of life.

For those who have gone through it, the advice is consistent: take your time, plan carefully, and expect a mix of emotions along the way.

Because while downsizing may begin as a practical decision, it often becomes something much more personal.

## Dental Care

Continued from page 22

day, dentists use implants to replace severely decayed or damaged teeth. Modern implants attach firmly in place and are topped with a crown that looks and acts like a natural tooth.

### Planning for a healthy future

"The best way to maintain healthy teeth, limit tooth decay, and avoid implants is to maintain an oral health care routine," said Dr. Greg Theis, Chief Dental Officer at Delta Dental of Wisconsin. "In keeping with the latest research, many insurers, including Delta Dental of Wisconsin, have introduced plans with extended benefits for those who need them most."

For example, for those with an intellectual or developmental disability, the Special Health Care Needs Benefit provides additional dental office visits, cleanings, and treatment modifications for patient comfort. The Evidence-Based Integrated Care Plan includes extra dental benefits for those with diabetes, kidney disease, cancer, pregnancy, and other medical conditions.

Dentistry has radically evolved over the last century. Today, people can benefit from years of study and access to modern care with providers to help maintain their best oral health.

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# May Book Club

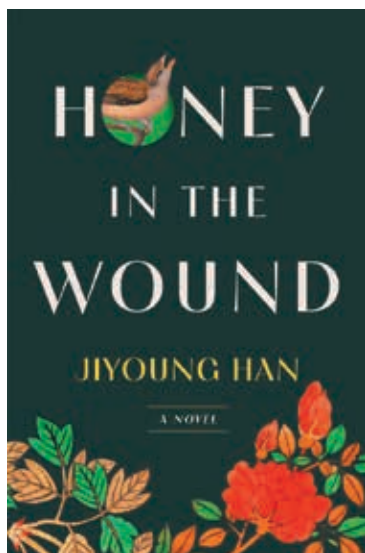
## Four New Reads to Dive Into

Spring has arrived, and there's no better time to pick up a new book and settle in for a story that takes you somewhere completely different. From multi-generational family sagas to suspenseful thrillers and charming romances, this month's picks offer something for every reader ready to escape, reflect, and be entertained. Here are four titles worth adding to your "To Be Read," list.

### *Honey in the Wound*

By Jiyoung Han

Avid Reader Press / Simon & Schuster



A sister disappears and returns as a tiger. A mother's voice draws the truth from anyone. A granddaughter reads the dreams

of others. These women are bound by blood across decades, countries, and the lingering shadow of Japanese imperialism.

At the center is Young-Ja, a girl whose emotions infuse the food she cooks. Her cheerful meals nourish those around her—until 1931, when Japanese soldiers crush her family's defiance. Cast adrift, her cooking turns bitter with grief, until a Korean rebel fighter recognizes her talents and brings her to Manchuria. There, she joins a secret sisterhood of teahouse spies, learning to channel her gifts into acts of resistance—while the Imperial Army still hunts her.

Decades later, Young-Ja lives alone in Seoul, withdrawn from life, until her Tokyo-born granddaughter Rinako arrives with the uncanny ability to glimpse others' dreams. Their tentative bond becomes a path to confronting long-buried secrets, leading to a stirring emotional climax.

From mountain forests where tiger-girls roam, to Manchurian teahouses and opium dens, to the modern streets of Tokyo and Seoul, *"Honey in the Wound"* is a multi-generational saga of survival, resilience, and the hidden costs of colonialism. This debut novel is both tender

and powerful, giving voice to a family that endured the darkest chapters of the twentieth century, all according to the publisher.

### *Year of the Mer*

By L. D. Lewis

S&S / Saga Press



The fairy-tale mermaid Arielle may have found her happily-ever-after, but her granddaughter Yemi faces far darker waters. Years after her father, the king of Ixia, was assassinated, and with her mother slowly dying from a poisoned wound, Yemi contends with whispers, slights, and unrest from her own people. Raised as the kingdom's shield and heir to the throne, she struggles to temper the fury she feels toward a kingdom that has treated her family so cruelly. Only her patient mother and steadfast bodyguard—and fiancée—Nova help her control her anger...most of the time.

When discontent boils over into a full-blown coup, Yemi is

stripped of her throne, her family, and her home, forced into exile. The only one who might help her reclaim what was lost is Ursula.

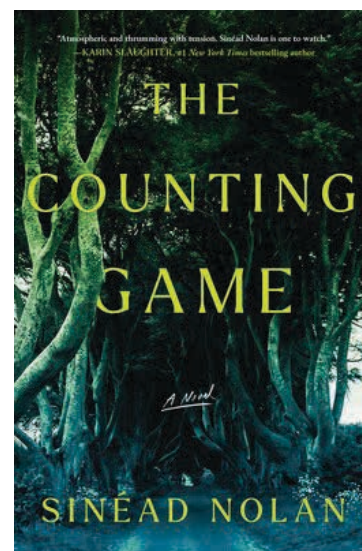
Like her grandmother before her, Yemi faces a dangerous choice: accept the deal of the sea-witch. With ancient and formidable magic at her command, she could avenge her family, reclaim her throne, and protect the man she loves. But the price of such power is steep, and Ursula has waited a very long time for her own revenge. Yemi may discover that vengeance carries consequences greater than she ever imagined—and that even the strongest heart can risk losing everything.

### *The Counting Game*

A Novel

By Sinéad Nolan

Gallery/Scout Press



When 13-year-old Saoirse Kellogg disappears, panic spreads through her rural Irish community. She is not the first girl to vanish in the nearby forest,

rumored by locals to be haunted, and the only witness—her younger brother, Jack—refuses to speak. Saoirse went missing during *"The Counting Game,"* a ritual believed to ward off evil, and Jack has sworn to protect the forest's secrets.

Freya Hemmings, a psychotherapist still grappling with personal loss, is brought in to help investigators break Jack's silence. As the search for Saoirse intensifies, tensions mount within the family and the wider community, and everyone becomes a suspect. The closer Freya and Jack grow, the more danger they face, testing trust, loyalty, and courage.

Haunting, suspenseful, and emotionally charged, *"The Counting Game"* is a gripping debut from a fresh voice in crime fiction, weaving mystery and psychological tension into a story that lingers long after the final page, according to the publisher.

### *How to Fake a Southern Gentleman*

By Mayra Cuevas and Marie Marquardt

Atria / Primero Sueño Press

Proud single mom Holly Simmons and ambitious journalist Luisa Martín Moreno have little in common—until Atlanta's most powerful man, Griggs Caldecott Johnson III, turns both their lives upside down. Griggs threatens Holly's po-

*Continued on page 28*

# May Crossword Puzzle

## Across

1. Subside
4. Meat
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Gay
14. Seek the affection of
15. Component of organic fertilizer
16. Column type
17. Trauma ctrs.
18. Moisten while cooking
19. Things
20. Brief review
23. Oodles
24. \_\_\_\_\_ vivant
25. Playing marbles
28. Cowardly Lion portrayer
30. Barbara \_\_\_\_ Geddes
33. Aired again
34. Man of the hour
35. Shoppe adjective
36. High-speed separator
39. Life stories
40. Lukas of "Witness"
41. Derisive look
42. Big deal
43. Drains
44. Downy
45. Thoroughfares: Abbr.
46. Pluto's tail?
47. Impromptu
54. Kitchen gadget
55. Without a break
56. Paid player
57. Declare
58. Freedom from war
59. Big head

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18						19				
20			21						22					
			23						24					
25	26	27					28	29				30	31	32
33						34					35			
36					37					38				
39					40					41				
42				43					44					
			45					46						
	47	48				49	50					51	52	53
54						55						56		
57						58						59		
60						61						62		

60. Final authority
61. Fudd of cartoons
62. Can be used to catch fish or surf!

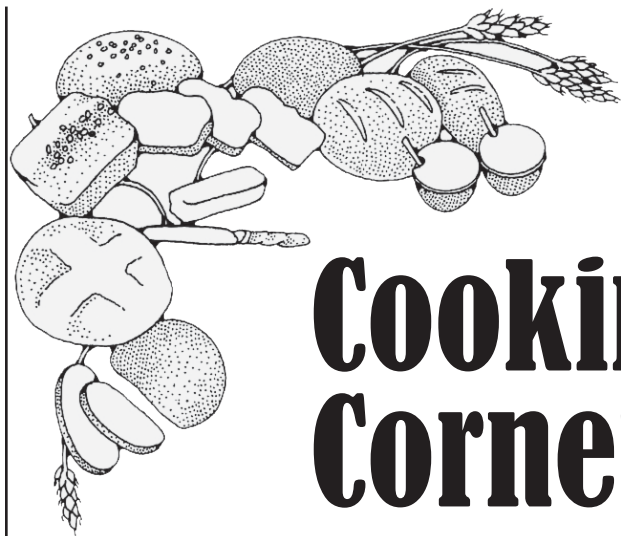
## Down

1. Large pitcher
2. Drill a hole
3. Pear variety
4. Writ

5. Characteristics
6. Bridge positions
7. Westernmost Aleutian
8. Ship stabilizer
9. Newspaper executive
10. Out
11. Black-and-white treat
12. Delineate
13. Cooling units, for short
21. Hitching posts?
22. Detest
25. Island off Venezuela
26. Icy
27. Threepio's pal
28. Horne and Olin
29. Some are liberal
30. Depressed spirits
31. Peripheries
32. Distrustful
34. Pile

35. Important
37. Abyss
38. Inhabitant of Oahu, Mindanao, or Java
43. Sound system
44. Republic in W Europe
45. Cancels a dele
46. Fatty part of milk
47. I could \_\_\_\_\_ horse!

48. Like Superman's vision
49. Bishop of Rome
50. Like Nash's lama
51. Ready for business
52. Impulse
53. Smoke deposit
54. Ltr. additions



## Cooking Corner

# Lemon Blueberry Spring Loaf

As spring settles in and fresh flavors return to our kitchens, this month's Cooking Corner brings you a bright and cheerful treat perfect for May gatherings. Our Lemon Blueberry Spring Loaf is easy to make, beautifully fragrant, and just the thing to share with friends, neighbors, or family.



*Lemon Blueberry Spring Loaf — a light, sunny quick bread bursting with fresh berries and citrus.*

Prep: 15 min  
Cook 55–60 min  
Serves 8–10

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 cup fresh blueberries (tossed with 1 tsp flour)  
2 large eggs  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/2 cup milk or buttermilk  
1/3 cup vegetable oil  
1 tsp lemon zest  
2 tbsp fresh lemon juice  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
Optional glaze: 1 cup powdered sugar + 1–2 tbsp lemon juice

### Prep

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9×5 loaf pan and line with parchment for easy lifting.

### Mix dry ingredients

In a bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, and salt.

### Mix wet ingredients

In a second bowl, whisk eggs, sugar, milk, oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, and vanilla until smooth.

### Combine

Stir dry ingredients into wet just until blended. Fold in blueberries gently to avoid streaking.

### Bake

Pour into loaf pan and bake 55–60 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

### Cool & glaze

Cool 10 minutes in the pan, then lift out. When fully cooled, drizzle with lemon glaze if desired.

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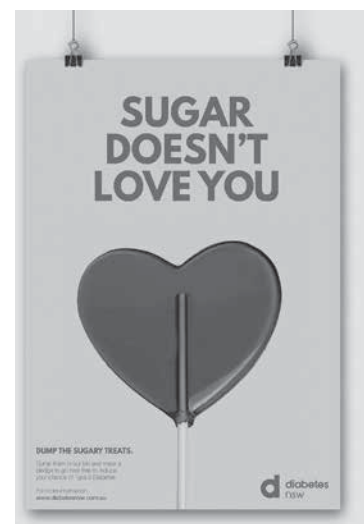
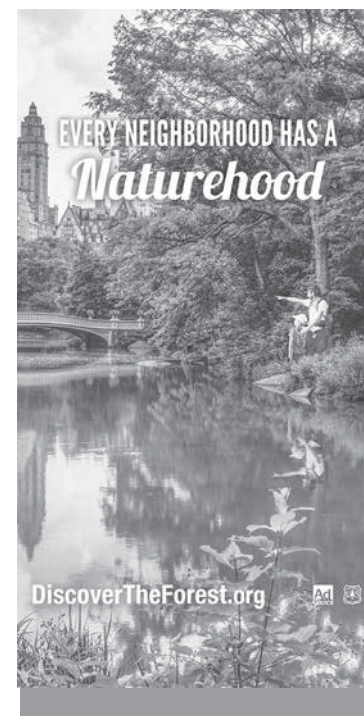
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6-11 kg the per capita food waste for people in sub-Saharan Africa, south, and south-east Asia

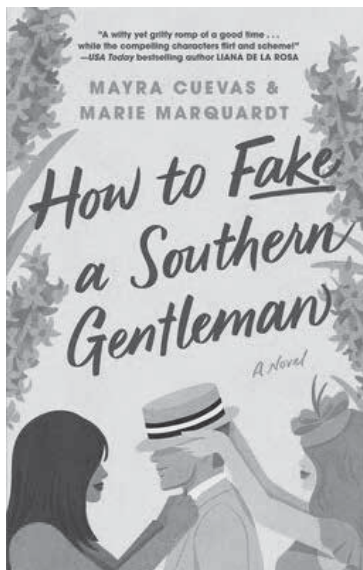
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<http://www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en/>



## MAY Book Club

Continued from page 25



Griggs threatens Holly's position as events manager at the exclusive Dogwood Hills Country Club, while Luisa is fired for attempting to expose his scheme to defraud an immigrant family and seize their land for a luxury development.

Determined to fight back, Holly and Luisa join forces to infiltrate Griggs's inner circle. Their secret weapon is Elijah Denvil Sweet, a charismatic hustler who, with a makeover, etiquette lessons, and guidance from the charming linguistics professor Pridmore, transforms into "Tripp"—a Southern gentleman Griggs might just trust.

As their plan unfolds, unexpected feelings emerge for both women, complicated by the very men helping them seek justice. With sparkling wit, a celebration of female friendship, and slow-burn romance, *"How to Fake a Southern Gentleman"* is a fun, empowering story for anyone who has ever felt underestimated and longs for a love that doesn't play by the rules, the publisher said.

Four fresh, compelling reads—perfect for your May reading list, whether you're curling up at home or enjoying a sunny afternoon on the porch.



Are you ready for a superb film?

Shelby Van Pelt's mega-hit novel *"Reasonably Bright Creatures"* adroitly tackled themes of grief, love, friendship, home, and letting go—all flavored with generous dollops of humor tossed in along the way.

The Washington resident was inspired to write her best-seller after watching a Seattle Aquarium video that featured an octopus trying to escape from the tank he was housed in. When Van Pelt later took a writing class, her instructor told the students to write something from an unusual point of view. She chose that of a giant Pacific octopus—a sea creature with superior intelligence. That assignment became the first chapter of Van Pelt's book.

Two-time Best Actress Academy Award-winner Sally Field (*"Lincoln," "Forrest Gump"*) was handed an early copy of Van Pelt's publication, and Field recalled, "I read four chapters and said, 'Yes, we need to get

this!'...The whole book is surprising and life-affirming, and it's an homage to life, to creatures, and the connection that human beings have to creatures."

Director Olivia Newman (*"Where the Crawdads Sing"*) can't say enough good about Field: "She's somebody that you can't take your eyes off of onscreen ... She's so authentic and always looking for the truth of the moment and the character, and using whatever is at her disposal, in terms of her experience in bringing that to the character."

In Van Pelt's 2-million-selling tale, Tova (Field) is an elderly widow who spends nights cleaning the local aquarium. She feels aimless and alone, her mind often adrift in a roiling ocean of memories about her late husband and their son, who mysteriously vanished many years ago.

One night, when a particular aquarium octopus—he's called Marcellus—leaves his tank in search of snacks, he encounters

life-threatening trouble. Tova comes to his rescue and, in doing so, creates an unbreakable bond between the pair.

Tova's story is augmented by Cameron (Lewis Pullman: *"Top Gun: Maverick," "Lessons in Chemistry"*), a wayward young man who struggles to find his own purpose in life and ends up working alongside Tova at the aquarium. Together, they serendipitously uncover a mystery that proves to be life-altering and restores their long-lost sense of wonder.

"It's a movie that looks at heavy topics like grief and longing for connection and feeling at a crossroads in life," proclaims Newman, who co-wrote the script alongside John Whittington (*"Sonic the Hedgehog 3"*). "This film is the warm hug we all need right now."

And perhaps that's the best recommendation of all.

This Netflix gem premieres May 8. Mark your calendars—in red.





**SOMETIMES MY HUMAN DOESN'T WEAR PANTS AT HOME. IT'S A RIOT.**

—COLBY  
adopted 06-18-11

A PERSON IS THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO A SHELTER PET

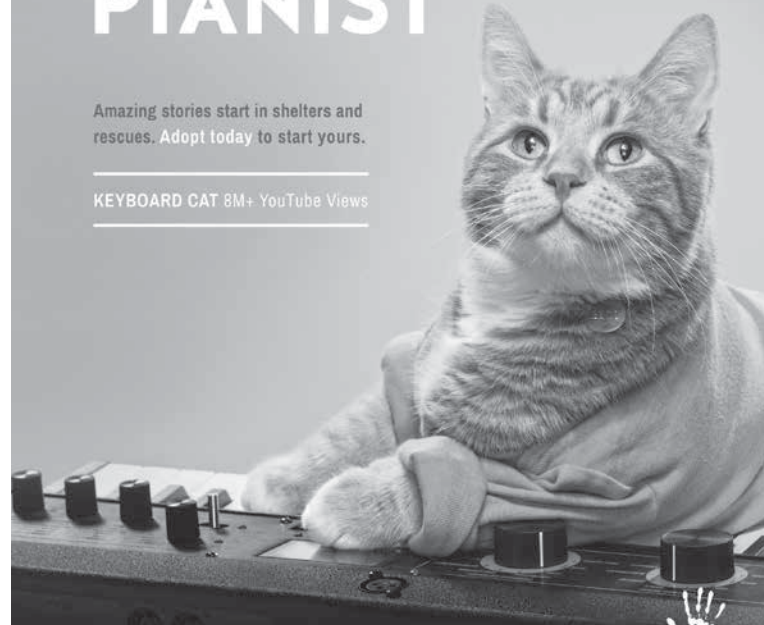
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### Crossword Puzzle Answers from page 26

1	E	B	B	4	S	T	E	A	K	9	E	N	O	L	A			
14	W	O	O	15	U	R	A	T	E	16	D	O	R	I	C			
17	E	R	S	18	B	A	S	T	E	19	I	T	E	M	S			
20	R	E	C	21	A	P	I	T	U	L	A	T	I	O	N			
				23	L	O	T	S		24	B	O	N					
25	A	G	A	T	E	S		28	L	A	H	R		30	B	E	L	
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54	P	A	R	E	R			55	O	N	E	N	D		56	P	R	O
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# Take a HIKE

## To Monument Valley, Utah/Arizona



Monument Valley, one of the many buttes.

If you're a die-hard fan of old western movies, especially those featuring John Wayne, but have never made the pilgrimage to Monument Valley, it's definitely a trip to consider. Five of Wayne's movies contain scenes from the iconic location, including "Stagecoach" in 1939, "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" 10 years later, and what many would argue was his best western, "The Searchers" in 1956.

Dotted with towering sandstone buttes (steep-sided formations with broad, flat tops rising to 1,000 feet), these natural "monuments" stand within a valley that straddles the Utah-Arizona border. Many of the buttes have names, including the West and East Mitten Buttes on the Arizona side, so named because of rock projections resembling thumbs on a mitten. They are

clearly visible just before the Indian attack scene around the 1-hour 9-minute mark into "Stagecoach." The area is also surrounded by some of the American Southwest's most spectacular National Parks, including Arches, Canyonlands, Zion, and the Grand Canyon, all must-see destinations in their own right.

Entry to the park, officially called Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, is \$8 per person (children under 12, free). While there are several trails within the Monument Valley area, only one is self-guided: the 3.9-mile Wildcat Trail that starts near the hotel parking area and takes about 2 hours to complete. All other tours require guides and last from 1½ to 2½ hours and cost extra (\$78 to \$132).

The Wildcat Trail is sandy and begins with a slow descent into the valley, eventually leading to the West Mitten. Calling it spectacular would be an understatement. This is sacred Indian land, so hikers must remain on the trail and not attempt to climb the butte. While summer is a busy season with tourists pouring in from all over the world, it can also be brutally hot in the canyon, so take the necessary precautions (hat, water, sunscreen). The most challenging part of the hike is the return – an uphill climb (with some up and down sections) while walking in sand. So be sure everyone at your party can manage a 2-hour western summer hike.

You can also enjoy Monument Valley from the air-conditioned comfort of your car by taking the 17-mile scenic drive. When we last visited, I would have rated the condition of the road as one of the worst I have ever travelled without a four-wheel drive vehicle. The potholes and bumps along this dirt road meant we could barely go over 5 mph, and if I'd had false teeth, they would have been dropping in my lap throughout the drive. I'm not sure whether the road is periodically maintained or left in a poor state to slow drivers down, but a quick check online revealed comments like "notoriously rough" and "challenging for low-clearance vehicles." Nevertheless, take it slowly, and the views will be amazing.

Whether planning to hike or drive, an especially good time



Monument Valley scenic drive showing the West and East Mitten Buttes. Photos courtesy Nick Thomas.

to visit is on a partly sunny day. It's hard to take a bad Monument Valley photo when the deep blue western sky is sprinkled with white fluffy clouds hovering over the iron-rich red/orange buttes. You'll bring home vivid desert photo memories that are always fun to try to match with scenes from a Duke Wayne film.

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and has written features, columns, and interviews for many newspapers and magazines. His "It's A Wonderful Hike" website describes short trails, hikes, and walks from around the country that seniors might enjoy while traveling. See [www.itsawonderfulhike.com](http://www.itsawonderfulhike.com).

### MAY Calendar

Continued from page 18

#### Strawberry Festival Garden Grove May 22–25, 2026

Celebrate the city's strawberry-growing history with a parade, carnival rides, and family activities. Free admission.

LOCATION: Euclid and Main streets, Garden Grove  
INFO: 714-638-0981.

#### Murder Mystery Scavenger Hunt Dana Point

May 23, 2026

10:45 a.m. (arrive by 10:25 a.m.)

Solve a murder mystery on foot while exploring Dana Point Harbor, Doheny Beach, Lantern Bay Park, and Heritage Park.

INFO: Promo Code OCNET for 25% discount

#### Scottish Fest Costa Mesa

May 23–24, 2026

Enjoy bagpipers, drummers, Highland dancing, Scottish food, vendors, and traditional feats of strength like the caber toss.

LOCATION: OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

#### Magic at the Majestic: David Minkin Anaheim

May 23–24, 2026

Various showtimes

An evening of close-up magic and illusions featuring rotating magicians.

LOCATION: Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel, 900 Disneyland Drive, Anaheim.

INFO: 480-359-7469.

#### Murder Mystery Scavenger Hunt Newport Beach

May 30, 2026

11 a.m. (arrive by 10:40 a.m.)

Walk and solve puzzles through Newport Beach, including Balboa Pier, Peninsula Park, and ferry to Balboa Island.

INFO: Promo Code OCNET for 25% discount.

# Fabulous Finds

By Debbie L. Sklar

## Beauty Must-Haves to Refresh Your Routine

Spring is the perfect time to shake up your beauty routine with fresh, indulgent finds that pamper, protect, and perfect. From luscious lips to glowing skin, these new launches and **Fab Finds** bring luxury, fun, and practicality to everyday self-care. Here are some stand-out products to try this season.

### Spritz Collection



Photo courtesy eos.

Transport your lips straight to an Italian summer with **eos's limited-edition #eosflavorlab Spritz collection**. Inspired by spritz culture, gelato counters, and decadent desserts, the lineup includes flavors like Tangerine Spritz, Raspberry Rosé, Pistachio Gelato, and Vanilla Cannoli. Each balm is infused with sustainably sourced natural shea to smooth, protect, and hydrate lips, while the new Overnight Lip Mask delivers deeply nourishing care for visibly softer lips by morning.

Housed in chic, Italian-inspired packaging made from plastic-free, FSC-certified cartons, the collection blends sensory delight with sustainability. Prices range from \$5.99–\$10.99,

and you can find the products at [www.evolutionofsmooth.com](http://www.evolutionofsmooth.com) and select retailers like Target.

### Revlon Be Unforgettable Campaign & New Launches



Photo courtesy Revlon.

Revlon is celebrating timeless glamour with its “Be Unforgettable” campaign, merging classic style with modern energy. The campaign features today’s most unforgettable women and highlights the brand’s latest beauty innovations, including the reimagined **PhotoReady Collection** for lifted, blurred, and plumped perfection, plus the dazzling Super Lustrous Ultra Lipstick and Glimmer Lip Treat Balm + Mask.

Whether you’re after high-performance skincare-inspired formulas or bold, show-stopping lips, Revlon’s new releases offer something for every modern beauty fan. Discover these products and the full campaign at [www.revlon.com](http://www.revlon.com).

### Aquaphor Baby Sensitive Lotion

Caring for little ones’ delicate skin or your own just got easier with **Aquaphor Baby Sensitive Lotion**. This first-ev-



Photo courtesy Aquaphor.

er baby lotion is formulated for babies three months and up, offering gentle hydration while supporting skin-to-skin bonding moments. The fast-absorbing formula contains Pro-vitamin B5, Ceramide NP, Glycerin, and Hyaluronic Acid to nourish and protect sensitive skin without leaving a greasy residue.

Fragrance-free, hypoallergenic, and NEA-approved, the lotion is ideal for everyday routines

that promote wellness and connection. Available now at Amazon, Walmart, Target, and major retailers nationwide.

### Vanicream Enhanced Moisturizer

Photo courtesy Vanicream.



For sensitive skin that craves long-lasting hydration, **Vanicream** introduces its **Enhanced Moisturizer**. Lightweight yet luxurious, this full-body lotion combines hyaluronic acid, five key ceramides, and glycerin to provide 24-hour moisture. Its silky texture applies like a serum, moisturizes like a cream, and is non-greasy and non-comedogenic,

making it perfect for daily head-to-toe use.


Trusted by dermatologists and free from common irritants like fragrance, parabens, dyes, and lanolin, Vanicream Enhanced Moisturizer is now available at Amazon and Ulta Beauty, priced between \$12.97–\$17.99.

### PanOxyl Acne Cleansing Bar with 2% Salicylic Acid



Photo courtesy PanOxyl.

**PanOxyl** expands its ac-  
*Continued on page 38*



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## The Sound of the City: *Dragnet* and the Birth of the Modern Police Procedural

When “*Dragnet*” moved from NBC radio to television in December 1951, it didn’t just bring a popular character to the screen; it brought a revolution in storytelling. Created by, directed by, and starring Jack Webb, the series fundamentally altered the DNA of the crime drama. Before “*Dragnet*,” fictional detectives were often hard-boiled private eyes or suave geniuses who solved impossible crimes. Webb introduced the world to Sergeant Joe Friday—a man who was neither a superhero nor a noir cliché, but a dedicated public servant who punched a clock and followed the rules.

### The Quest for Authenticity

The hallmark of the 1950s “*Dragnet*” was its obsession with realism. Jack Webb had a profound respect for the Los



Photo courtesy Picryl.

Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and insisted that the show reflect the actual “drudgery” of police work. Every script was based on a real case from the LAPD files, leading to the show’s famous opening disclaimer: “The story you are about to see is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent.”

Webb’s commitment to authen-

ticity extended to the technical aspects of the production. He insisted on using actual police jargon and depicting the mundane paperwork, the endless phone calls, and the methodical door-to-door canvassing that defined real investigations. The show famously showcased the inner workings of the police department, from the crime lab to the records room, giving the American public their first true look behind the “Blue Wall.”



Photo courtesy Flickr.

### The Style of Joe Friday

Jack Webb’s portrayal of Joe Friday was a masterclass in minimalism. Friday was stoic, professional, and famously deadpan. His clipped delivery and rapid-fire questioning—exemplified by the catchphrase “All we want are the facts, ma’am”—became cultural touchstones. Friday didn’t carry a massive arsenal or engage in stylized fistfights every week; he carried a notepad and a badge (specifically LAPD badge number 714, which became the most famous badge in television history).

Opposite Friday was his partner, Frank Smith, played most notably by Ben Alexander. Their relationship provided the show’s heart. While Friday was the straight-edged professional, Alexander’s Smith provided a touch of warmth and domesticity, often chatting about his wife and home life during stakeouts or long drives. This



Photo courtesy Flickr.

banter served a dual purpose: it humanized the officers and emphasized that these were ordinary men doing an extraordinary job.

### Visual and Auditory Identity

The 1950s run of *Dragnet* was visually distinct. Borrowing from his radio roots, Webb utilized tight close-ups and a fast-paced, rhythmic editing style. This created a sense of intimacy and intensity, making the viewer feel as though they were in the interrogation room with the suspect. The black-and-white cinematography of the early years added a gritty, documentary-like feel to the proceedings.

And then, there was the music. Walter Schumann’s four-note theme — *Dum-de-dum-dum* — is arguably the most recognizable musical motif in the history of broadcasting. It signaled danger, authority, and the inevitable march of justice. When paired with the closing shot of the “Mark VII” hammer striking the metal, it cemented the show’s brand as one of strength and craftsmanship.

### A Lasting Legacy

The initial run of “*Dragnet*” lasted until 1959, and its impact cannot be overstated. It was the first “procedural,” paving the way for everything from *Adam-12* (which Webb also produced) to “*Law & Order*” and “*CSI*.”

It changed how the public viewed law enforcement, shifting the narrative toward the “thin blue line” protecting society from chaos.

While television has changed significantly since the 1950s, “*Dragnet*” remains a fascinating artifact of its era. It captured a specific mid-century American ethos: a belief in the system, a respect for authority, and the idea that truth could be found through hard work and adherence to the facts. For those who grew up watching Joe Friday patrol the streets of Los Angeles, the show remains the gold standard for crime drama—a stark, honest, and unforgettable portrait of justice in action.

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# Life After Mother

By Lyn Jensen

*'Exploring probate and estate issues from personal experience.'*

## Cats That Share My Life

I thought I would have to write this column about how my sweet cat Faith disappeared after sharing my life for nearly eight years. Except this story has a happy ending.



*Faith by Sara..  
Photos courtesy Lyn Jensen.*

One Friday last month, Faith was unhappy because I wouldn't let her get on the dinner table and share my chicken. She went outside. She didn't come back, not that evening, or the next day, or the next, and by that time, I'd asked the neighbors, and they hadn't seen her. I drove around looking for her, called local shelters, and posted about her online. I started planning to make flyers and walk around the neighborhood.

When I asked my neighbors on one side about Faith, though, I also asked them about the kinky-tailed cat I call Kinky, who properly belonged to them, but he'd been eating and sleeping in my yard full-time for years. I wrote a column in 2022

about how he could be such a pest, not getting along with my cats, refusing to keep his nose out of my hamburger when I tried to eat lunch outdoors.



*Kinky.*

By now, even the neighbors didn't consider him their cat anymore. They referred to him as their "old cat." They insisted they only had one cat, an indoor cat—along with two big noisy dogs that chased cats, including the kinky-tailed one, out of their yard.

So, I asked them if Kinky could be my kitty from now on. They agreed. I faced the possibility that I might lose Faith, but I'd have Kinky, who I'd come to regard as a furry friend, not a pest.



*Spike.*

Eight days after Faith's disappearance, though, I got up in the morning and went to the kitchen. *Three* cats were looking at me through the sliding glass door—Kinky, along with

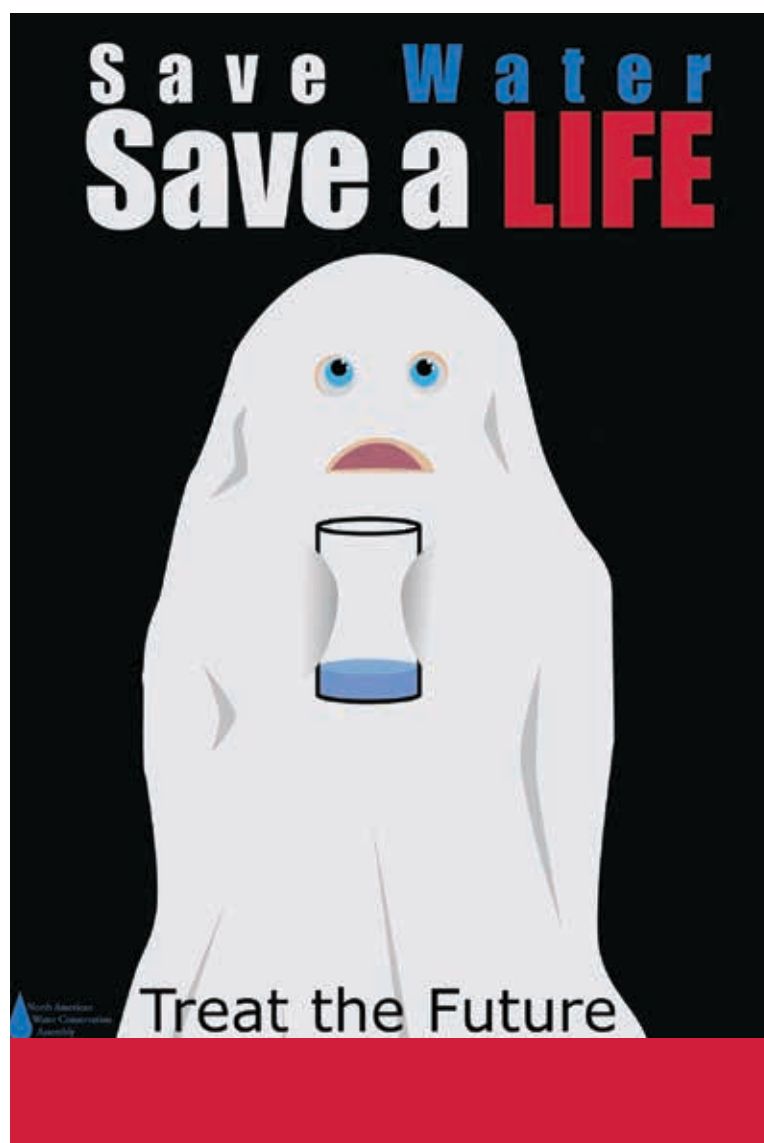


*Ben.*

another neighborhood cat I call Spike, and *Faith*. She obviously hadn't eaten for a while—she'd lost a few pounds—but she was healthy, hungry, and *home*.

I grabbed my smartphone and went online to share the news. Someone suggested she may have been trapped in someone's crawl space, or something like that.

Remarkable how the cats that share our lives arrive, and they never really leave—they stay with us even after they're gone. When I first moved into my mother's house, I inherited her two cats, Faith and an old black neutered tom, Benny, who said his final meow and left us in 2021. I now have two cats again. Kinky adopted me long before I adopted him, and Faith isn't ready to leave just yet.



# Busy Boomers

By Les Goldberg

## The Hunt for Your Roots

When Antonio and Delia Rodriguez, both in their 70s and residents of Stanton, decided to explore their family histories through Ancestry.com, imagine their excitement when they found out that Antonio's great-great-grandfather was part of Pancho Villa's army.

The story of the Rodriguez family is repeated daily as more people, especially seniors, indulge in the hobby of genealogy. According to findings by "Time Magazine" and "USA Today," family history research is the second-most popular recreational activity in America.

Experts attribute this increase in popularity to three factors: 1) the culture wars of the 1960s and 70s, 2) the advent of the



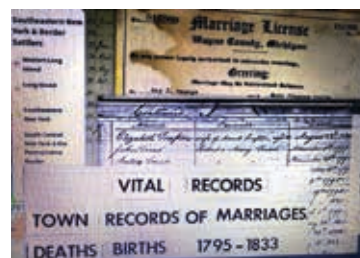
Photos courtesy Ancestry.com.

internet, making billions of records like census data and passenger lists easily accessible online, and 3) an aging population.

According to Ancestry, six million people have taken the company's DNA tests to discover distant cousins and their genet-

ic ethnic mix. TV shows like "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "Finding Your Roots" are also helping to boost interest in the hobby.

For most of American history, genealogy was most popular among people of European descent. Storied old families took pride in a lineage that traced back to the Mayflower, but it was not widely studied.



Government records.

In the mid-20th century, things changed when free thinkers sought deeper meaning, and generations of immigrants had assimilated, their children often had lost touch with their heritage. Many universities began offering courses in genealogy, with some focusing on minority cultures, particularly African American studies.



Newspaper ad.

By the 1990s, advances in digital technology meant that large collections of historical records could be stored and accessed online, allowing millions of people to readily explore their family history. Today, more than 90 million family trees have been created on Ancestry.



1890s family photo.

So, the question is: how can seniors begin the task of building a family history? Here's advice from Joanne Littlefield, genealogy specialist at the Los Angeles Central Public Library:

1. Start with yourself and work backward. Write down our name, your parents, and your grandparents. See how far back you can reach with your memories and family records, such as photo albums, Bibles, birth certificates, and scrapbooks.
2. Talk with your family, gather stories passed down over the years.
3. Focus on four main points – names, dates, locations, and relationships.
4. Stay organized. As the volume of information increases, you can simplify the process by creating a spreadsheet, template, or free family tree software application to manage your notes and data and use a flash drive or other digital backup device, i.e., Google Drive, for safekeeping.
5. Go to your local public library, which typically has an entire section devoted to genealogy.

Continued on page 38

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## 'Silly Love Songs'

Paul McCartney and Wings

By Randal C. Hill

One of Paul McCartney's biggest post-Beatles hits was a retort to an uncalled-for and caustic insult that undoubtedly pained the ex-Fab Four bassist.

John Lennon, the Beatles' founder and one-time writing partner of McCartney, had made the snarky statement that, during their partnership, Paul had merely dashed off sentimental slush that was no better or more important than so-called "elevator music."

Really, John? Let's take a look.

McCartney's early romantic contributions had actually contributed mightily to the Beatles' oeuvre; after all, Paul was responsible for such classics as "And I Love Her," "Here, There and Everywhere," and "All My Loving," the last-mentioned a tune that Lennon once proclaimed, "a fine piece of work."

Lennon had obviously envied McCartney during their years together, 1957 to 1969. McCartney was the most popular Beatle, the best-looking, the hardest working, the most knowledgeable about 20th-century music, and, arguably, the most talented.

Lennon's jealousy-fueled vitriol shouldn't have surprised anyone.

McCartney had no problem standing up for himself,

though. "I'm a fan of old-fashioned writing," he admitted. "I hate silly rhymes, but when they work, they're the greatest little things in songwriting," McCartney states:

*"You'd think that people would have had enough of silly love songs*

*I look around me, and I see it isn't so"*

He later adds

*"What's wrong with that? I'd like to know*

*Cause here I go again*

*I love you*

*I love you ..."*

You get the picture.

Powered by a strong bass line, a pronounced disco "thump" and a cornucopia of disparate instruments, "Silly Love Songs" was a commercial masterpiece. Music critic John Bergstrom called it "an exemplary piece of mid-70s pop production and a pure pleasure."

Wife Linda McCartney gets writing credit on "Silly Love Songs," and she joins her husband on the tune's chorus, although her voice is quite distant in the mix.

McCartney: "Over the years, people have said, 'Aw, he sings

love songs, he writes love songs, he's so soppy at times.' I have thought, 'Well, I know what they mean, but people have been doing love songs forever. I like 'em. Other people like 'em.'

Folks have apparently been "liking 'em" for millennia. In fact, love lyrics have been around for at least 4,000 years, with the oldest known examples having been discovered in Sumeria—modern-day Iraq—and preserved on clay tablets.

"The fact is, deep down, people are very sentimental," McCartney continues. "If they watch a sentimental movie at home, they cry. But in public, they won't. We don't like to show our emotions. We tend to sneer at that. And, in the same way, people may not admit to liking love songs, but that's what they seem to crave.

"The nice payoff now is that a lot of the people I meet who are at the age where they've got a couple of kids and have grown up a bit, settling down, they'll say to me, 'I thought you were really soppy for years, but I get it now! I see what you were doing!'"

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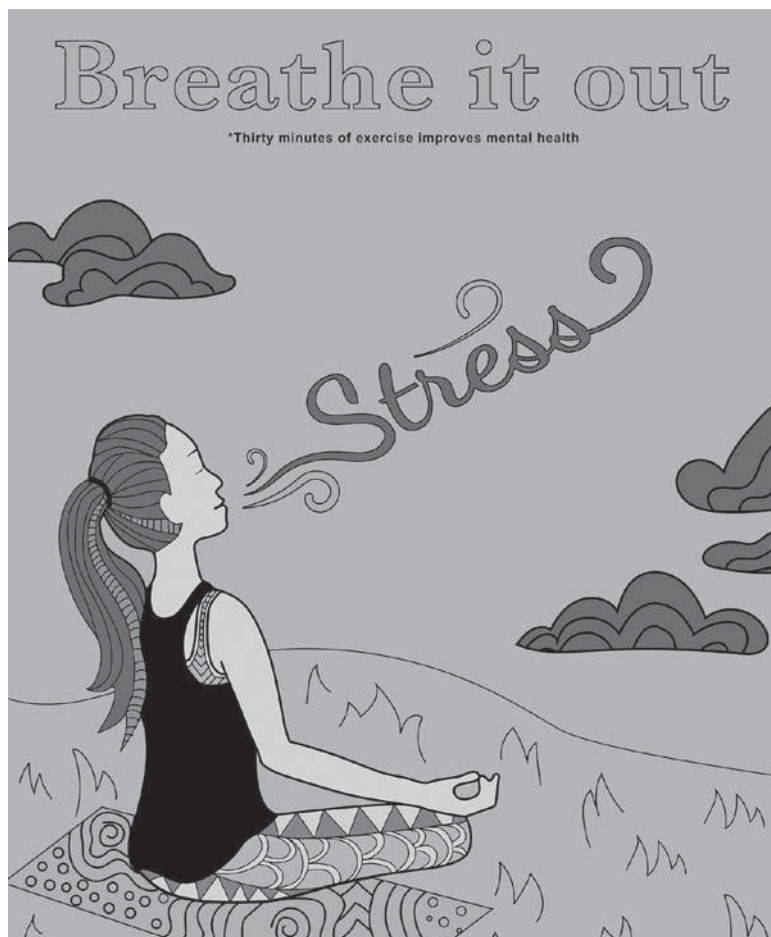
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## Busy Boomers

*Continued from page 36*

alogy and ancestry discovery materials. Some libraries offer classes on the subjects.

6. Visit your local county clerk's office, where you'll find free online databases, marriage licenses going back more than 125 years, birth and death certificates, school census records, and publications.

7. Other resources include the National Library of Congress, which offers a searchable directory of newspapers published between 1756 and 1963, and the Find a Grave website featuring cemetery and memorial information from around the world.

Besides the discovery of your family tree, the quest to locate and learn about relatives far removed offers seniors many benefits that enhance quality of life, ranging from cognitive stimulation to better relationships with family members.

According to William Sturgeon, a doctor of genealogy at Emory University in Atlanta, "spending time carrying out ancestry research can boost a senior's confidence and unlock a whole new world of technology."

Studies show that this research helps people form a sense of identity and self-awareness while providing seniors and their loved ones with exciting talking points every time a new piece of information is discovered or an interesting ancestor is found, he added.

In my case, I learned that my paternal grandfather escaped the Nazi purge of the Jews shortly before the start of World War II and, after a long journey, landed in Winnipeg, Canada. Our research also revealed that my wife's late mother, whose maiden name was Cash, was a distant cousin of country music's legendary singer Johnny Cash.

Julie LeVoy of Downey said:

"My husband doesn't understand my fascination with genealogy because to him, if he can't see a picture of the person, what's the point? Of course, pictures would be great, but the stories are what make them come alive to me. I found that my 3rd great-grandfather was a composer. I found a piano piece he wrote almost 200 years ago. That brought him to life for me and made him real rather than just dates on a page."

She said, "I have found a treasure trove of stories in newspapers and even learned that my mom moved from New York to Florida at age eight because her parents had their house foreclosed on in the 60s, something they never admitted to her while they were alive.

"My biggest recommendation to anyone starting is to find old newspapers and learn to search them. Even if I can't find a ton on someone specific, just reading what was going on in town while my ancestors were living there helps bring them to life," she said.

Forest Gump once said in the role played by Tom Hanks in

the movie of the same name: "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." The same can be said about finding your roots.

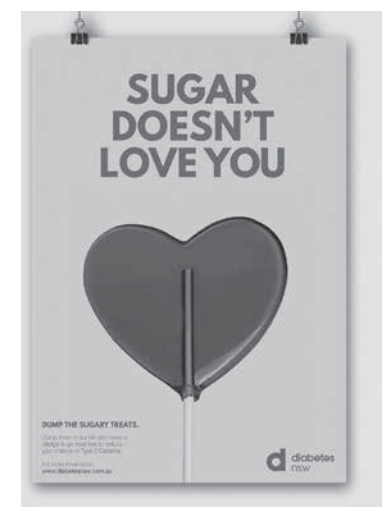
## Fabulous Finds

*Continued from page 31*

ne-fighting lineup with the new **Acne Cleansing Bar**, formulated with 2% salicylic acid for effective pore penetration and breakout prevention. Perfect for face and body use, the bar also features zinc PCA to control oil, mandelic acid for gentle exfoliation, and shea butter to moisturize while cleansing.

Ideal for daily use, the bar leaves skin clearer and smoother without dryness. The PanOxyl Acne Cleansing Bar is now available exclusively at Target. For details, visit [www.panoxyl.com](http://www.panoxyl.com).

Whether you're indulging in playful lip flavors, elevating your skin care routine, or keeping baby's skin soft and nourished, these beauty launches combine practicality with a touch of luxury. Treat yourself—and your skin—to something unforgettable this season.





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by Jim Miller

# Savvy SENIOR

## The Letter Your Loved Ones Will Treasure

Dear Savvy Senior,

*I want to leave something meaningful for my children and grandchildren, beyond just money or property. I've heard about "legacy letters," but I don't really know what they are or how to start one. Can you help?*

--Legacy Seeker

Dear Seeker,

You're asking a wonderful question. A legacy letter, sometimes called an ethical will, is a personal note to your loved ones where you can share your values, life lessons, cherished memories, hopes, and guidance. Unlike a traditional will, which focuses on legal matters, a legacy letter comes straight from the heart.

### Why Write One?

Many people think a legacy is just money or property. But often, it's your words, values, and life lessons that leave the deepest mark. A legacy letter gives your family something to hold onto – your stories, your traditions, and the experiences that shaped who you are. Children and grandchildren often return to these letters for comfort, guidance, or inspiration



long after you're gone. In many ways, it becomes an emotional last will and testament, answering some of the most important questions about your life.

A legacy letter can also help explain the "why" behind your estate plan in a personal, thoughtful way. While a will handles the legal and financial details, a legacy letter adds context – why you made certain decisions or what you hope your loved ones will do with what you leave behind. That added perspective can ease misunderstandings, strengthen family connections, and leave a lasting sense of closeness.

### Getting Started

Take a moment to reflect on what matters most to you. Consider asking yourself:

- What values or principles

have guided my life?

- What moments or experiences am I most grateful for?
- What mistakes or regrets taught me the most?
- How do I hope to be remembered by my loved ones?
- What lessons, advice, or guidance do I want to leave for my family?
- Which family traditions, stories, or dreams do I want future generations to carry forward?

Keep it personal and sincere. You can write one letter or several for different family members. Most letters run one to three pages, though there's no strict rule.

If you'd like a little guidance as you get started, Trust & Will has a free legacy letter writing guide with step-by-step prompts to help you organize your thoughts and begin writing. You can find it at [trustandwill.com/learn/legacy-letter-writing-guide](http://trustandwill.com/learn/legacy-letter-writing-guide).

If writing isn't your thing, consider creating a legacy video. Speak directly to your loved ones, sharing stories, guidance, and heartfelt reflections. Most smartphones now record high-quality video and sound, making it easy to create, store, and share. A video captures your voice, expressions, and surroundings in a way that a letter simply can't.

### Storing and Sharing

Keep letters or videos in a safe, easy-to-find spot. Physical letters can go in a secure file, safe, or with your attorney, while digital files can be backed up to the cloud or an external drive. You can share them now or wait

until later, after you're gone. Be sure to include instructions in your will so family members know where to find them.

When it comes down to it, a legacy letter or video is truly the heart behind your will. It gives you the chance to share your values, tell your stories, and even explain the intentions behind your estate plan, leaving your loved ones with words that will matter long after you are gone. Written with generosity, empathy, and positivity, a few thoughtful pages or a short video can create an emotional imprint that money alone cannot provide.

Send your questions or comments to [questions@savvysenior.org](mailto:questions@savvysenior.org), or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

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## Pass The Love On



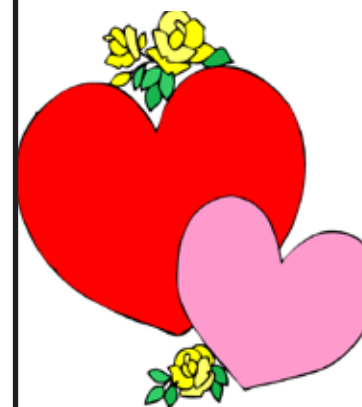
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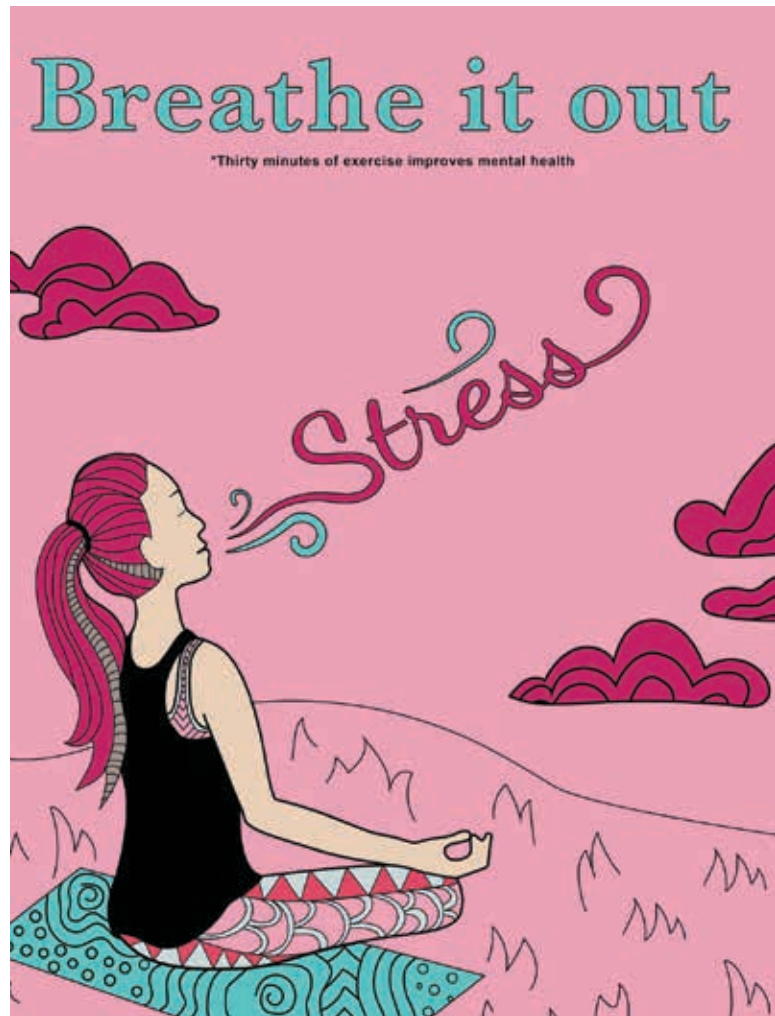
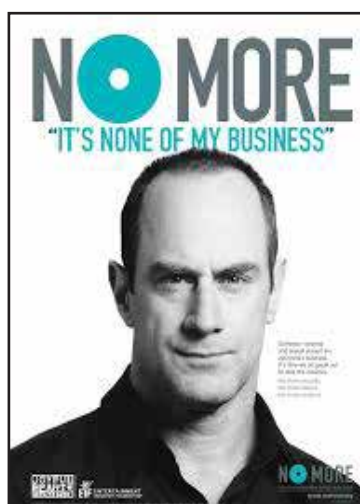
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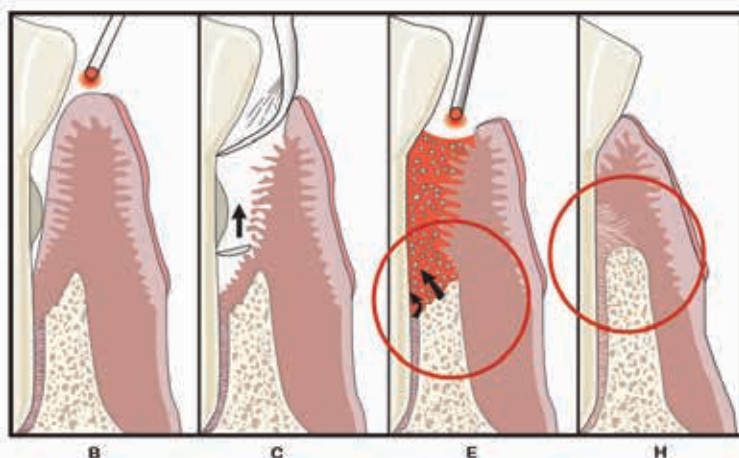
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1. Gregg RH II, Gregg DM. Laser-assisted periodontal regeneration with the LANAP protocol. *Dent Today* 2019 May;38(5):78, 80-83  
2. FDA Clearance K151763



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