

the Rolling Stone

Published Monthly by The Senior Resource Center

VOL 48, NO 11 | NOVEMBER 2021



Knowledge is POWER

Virtual Senior Expo 2021

Thursday, November 4
8:30 am-Noon

Presented by *State Bank*
Freeport, IL

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"Knowledge Is Power," and that's why you should attend the all new Senior Resource Center expanded Virtual Senior Expo 2021. A special interactive session where you may chat with vendors and visit booths will start the event. Each booth will offer more information such as photos, brochures, videos and website links. Sponsors and vendors from insurance, health care, wellness, financial services, and community organizations will be represented. Want to revisit the expo? Booths will remain open until Jan. 1, 2022. See the expo vendor list on Page 2.



PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

**Call the Senior Resource Center
at (815) 235-9777.**



Senior Resource Center

**Serving Stephenson
& Jo Daviess Counties**

Our mission is to grow by enhancing and developing services and programs that inspire community involvement, offer support and resources, and advocate independence and well-being of all seniors and disabled adults.

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[Letter from the Director]

Sonja Shoemaker, Executive Director

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

— Melody Beattie

As November begins, it seems appropriate to focus for a bit on gratitude and thankfulness. The past 20 months have given many of us time to reflect on what and who we are truly grateful for. Of course, the strength and support of family and friends usually top most people's list. I am no exception.

At the Senior Resource Center, we also are thankful for a long list of individuals who enable us to do our work every day. Without our staff, volunteers, board members, funders and donors we would not be able to deliver services to any older individuals in Stephenson or Jo Daviess counties.

We are so grateful to our partners such as NICAA, the City of Freeport, FHN, the University of Illinois Extension, townships throughout both counties and so many others

with whom we work to ensure that programs continue smoothly.

We appreciate the work of organizations that make our days run smoother. Our first responders and our friends in health care, at the post office, banks, grocery stores, restaurants and convenience stores help us tremendously every day. Many of them are putting their lives on the line daily for us, and we are grateful.

I am also extremely thankful this November for a thing: the technology that enabled us to safely serve you even when our doors were closed and that makes it possible to offer programming options now that we are open.

Most of all, I am grateful for all of you. May you have a great November and a happy Thanksgiving!

Before we reach Thanksgiving, our Virtual Senior Expo 2021 Presented by State Bank will kick off on Nov. 4. Please sign up to attend the interactive session from 8:30 a.m. to noon that day. You will be able to live chat with vendors and visit all the booths. To sign up, call the Senior Resource Center office at (815) 235-9777. Remember, our theme is “Knowledge



Is Power.” Attend the expo, learn and become more powerful.

Thank you to all of our amazing expo sponsors and vendors!

Medicare Open Enrollment is under way, and it is running smoothly at the Senior Resource Center. A few appointments remain. Check out the story on Page 9 to learn more.

It's the holiday season! The Senior Resource Center will be closed on Veterans Day, Thursday, Nov. 11, and for the Thanksgiving holiday, Thursday and Friday, Nov. 25 and 26. Pretzel City Area Transit will operate on all of these days except Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 25.

Looking ahead, the Senior Resource Center will be closed on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, and New Year's Eve, Dec. 31. Pretzel City Area Transit will be closed Christmas Day, Dec. 25, and New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 2022. It will close by 6 p.m. Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

Enjoy your November!

2021 Virtual Senior Expo Sponsor and Vendor List

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**Don't miss the interactive
session from 8:30 a.m. to
Noon. Register to attend
today, (815) 235-9777.**

My Friend Finds Her Birth Father

Last month, I began the story of my longtime friend Bonnie Weaver’s search to discover the identity of her birth parents. Bonnie, who lives in Freeport, was adopted at birth and decided to start her search when she retired. Both her adoptive parents had passed away, and she had the time to pursue the goal. Her digging led her to birth mother’s family, even though her birth mother had passed away.

Bonnie was satisfied having found her mother’s identity about 10 years before, but her daughter Kristine suggested Bonnie try another DNA company, 23 and Me, to find her birth father. Kristine brought along the 23 and Me DNA test when she visited two years ago. The results returned two weeks later and clearly showed Bonnie had a previously unknown half sister, who had taken the test three years before, just for fun. Her name is Dale Austein, and she lives in Coram, Long Island, New York. Dale contacted Bonnie by phone.

It was a very exciting call for both women. Dale was surprised her father and Bonnie’s mother had an encounter while they were single, living in Washington, D.C. Her father had been seriously wounded in World War II and was recovering in Walter Reed General Hospital. Bonnie’s mother worked

for the FBI. Both women could place their parents as having been in Washington at the same time, though were unable to figure out how they had met. Bonnie’s also learned that her birth father passed away in 2013 at age 95.

Dale and Bonnie got acquainted by weekly phone visits. Dale’s sister Beth had died two years before she and Bonnie found each other. You may recall that Bonnie’s birth mother had one daughter who also had died two years before Bonnie had located her birth mother’s family. Dale described her father as a very good family man.

Dale told Bonnie her father and his family were Jewish immigrants. There still may be aunts and uncles living in this country who Bonnie has not met. Her sister described her aunts and uncles as having been blondes and redheads with blue or green eyes. Ashkenazi is the name for the German origin of this particular sect. If you are interested, Google will provide detailed information.

Bonnie and Dale made plans for a visit to Freeport 18 months after finding each other. This May, Dale and her daughter, Erica, flew to O’Hare International Airport in Chicago, and took a bus to Rockford. Bonnie’s daughter, Kristine, also flew in, and surprised

everyone by riding the bus with her newly found aunt and cousin.

Bonnie e-mailed TV stations WIFR and WTVO, which sent reporters to meet the bus and interview the women for a human interest spot on the evening news. The group spent 2 1/2 days getting acquainted, visiting Galena and touring the area. Dale and Erica invited Bonnie and Kristine to visit them on Long Island in the future.

Now that Bonnie has found both sides of her birth family, she says that she is settled. When she looks in the mirror, she knows from photos that her high bridge nose is a small version of her father’s, that she’s petite like her birth mother, and that she resembles her half-sister Dale but more closely favors her half-sister Beth, who she never got to meet.



TAIT WEIGEL
Country Lifestyle
Enthusiast

Plus, she knows the people behind these features. All of her questions are answered.

Maybe because Bonnie and I have been close friends for many years, her search for her birth family has meant so much to me. We’ve spent many hours on the phone talking about each part of her search and finally finding her birth family and their stories. I hope readers have enjoyed her story.

Sudoku

SOLUTION ON PAGE 16

				7	3	9	4	
		7						8
	9	4				5	1	
	4			9	7			6
		2				4		
9			1	2			7	
	2	5				7	6	
6						1		
	7	9	6	1				

The Senior Resource Center will be closed on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, and Nov. 25 and 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday. Pretzel City Area Transit will operate all these days except Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25.

Maintenance Extends Life of Garden Tools

MARY FISCHER

Horticulture Educator
University of Illinois Extension

One of the pricier expenditures for home gardeners is quality hand tools. High-quality tools will last longer, but this does mean the tools — whether shovels, rakes, pruners or hand trowels — cost more.

Buy the best you can afford. Take care of your tools, and they will take care of you. This takes time and effort, but can extend the life of your investment.

With winter coming up, make sure to clean, oil and sharpen tools before storing them for the season.

Store Garden Tools Properly

The first step to tool maintenance is proper storage. Do not leave tools outside where they can absorb moisture from wet grass and dew. Instead, store tools off the ground and away from potential moisture, such as in a shed, barn or garage.

Long-handled tools can be stored conveniently on hanging racks or tool holders, which helps prevent damage to sharpened edges and keeps the tools organized. Often more than one tool can be hung in a small area.

Short-handled or hand tools can be stored using a pegboard

system.

An outline of the tool drawn on the pegboard can help identify a missing tool. If a tool is missing, check outside. Attach bright marking tape to the handle of tools to spot them more easily outdoors.

Maintenance and Care

Garden tools are typically exposed to soil and moisture. To preserve tools and keep them in proper working order, it is extremely important for tools to be clean and dry before storing.

Use a wire brush, paint scraper, or a strong blast from a hose to remove caked-on soil from shovels and hand trowels. Wipe small hand tools, such as pruners or shears, to remove any sap or moisture from the blades. Turpentine, alcohol or mineral spirits can remove stubborn sap. Fine steel may be used, if needed.

Once clean and dry, apply an oil-based protective coating to any metal surfaces to prevent rust. If desired, use a good quality spray paint to protect metal surfaces. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment to protect eyes and hands while doing this.

Wooden handles should be free of rough areas. Sanding will help smooth out these spots. To maintain the life of the wooden



Photo by Mary Fischer

Long-handled tools can be stored conveniently on hanging racks or tool holders, which will help prevent damage to sharpened edges and keeps the tools organized.

handles, apply a protective coating using boiled linseed oil, oil from dried flax seeds. Polish smooth with a dry soft cloth.

Good quality hand pruners can be disassembled for cleaning and sharpening. Many pruner manufacturers have replaceable blades. Use a wire brush, sandpaper, or steel wool and a good deal of effort to remove dirt, rust and sap from pruner blades.

It's very important to examine the blades for any damage due to cracks, nicks or burrs. The beveled edge of the blade should be sharpened at the same angle as the bevel.

Before storing tools away for the winter, sharpen any dull tools used for digging or pruning and file down any nicks. When it comes to sharpening, tools, such as whetstones or files, are a matter of personal preference and ability.

Whetstones come in different

gradations and sizes. A longer stone may be easier to use for garden tools. Whetstones require a lubricant such as 3-in-1 oil.

Diamond-coated flat files can last a lifetime and only require water for lubrication. For a quick sharpening job during the season, try a ceramic sharpener. Another quick fix is a bastard file.

It is not advisable to use power grinding stones. Heat generated through friction can make the metal brittle.

Once tools are sharp, coat the blade or metal surface lightly with an oil lubricant such as WD-40.

Reach out to the local Master Gardener Helpline with any of your home gardening questions, call us at the University of Illinois Extension-Stephenson County at (815) 235-4125. To see upcoming program offerings at Extension, visit our website at go.illinois.edu/jsw.



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[recipes]

Caramel Apple Pizza

- 1 tube (16 ½ ounces) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 4 cups sliced, peeled tart apples
- 1 can (12 ounces) lemon-lime soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup caramel ice cream topping
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Press cookie dough into a greased 14-inch pizza pan. Bake for 15-18 minutes or until deep golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. Run a large flat spatula under crust to loosen from pan.

In a bowl, beat the cream cheese, peanut butter, brown sugar and milk until smooth. Spread over the cooled crust. In a bowl, combine the apples and soda; drain well. Toss apples with cinnamon; arrange over cream cheese. Drizzle with the caramel topping and sprinkle with pecans. Cut into wedges.

Jane Bicksler, Senior Resource Center Board Member
Courtesy of Taste of Home

Pumpkin & Cauliflower Garlic Mash

- 1 medium head cauliflower, broken into florets (about 6 cups)
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1/3 cup spreadable cream cheese
- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pack pumpkin
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Place one inch of water in a Dutch oven; bring to a boil. Add cauliflower and garlic cloves; cook, covered, until tender, eight to 10 minutes. Drain; transfer to a food processor or blender.

Add remaining ingredients; process until smooth. Return to pan; heat through, stirring occasionally. Makes six servings.

Nutrition Facts: 2/3 cup: 87 calories, 4g fat (2g saturated fat), 9mg cholesterol, 482mg sodium, 12g carbohydrate (5g sugars, 4g fiber), 4g protein. Diabetic Exchanges: 1 vegetable, 1/2 starch, 1/2 fat.

tasteofhome.com.

What's Your
favorite recipe?

We want to feature some of the community's favorite recipes in upcoming issues of the Rolling Stone. If you would like to submit your recipe for consideration, please email your recipe to jhilliger@srcntr.org or mail to 206 E. Stephenson Street, Freeport IL 61032

Italian Tomato Bean Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups diced carrots
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 1 cup diced yellow squash
- 2 tablespoons dried basil leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cans (14-15 ounces) chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can great northern beans, rinsed and drained
- Heat oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onions, carrots, zucchini and squash. Stir frequently for about eight minutes. Add broth, tomatoes, pepper and basil. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for about 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in beans, heat through.
- For a little variety, add some cooked, sliced Italian sausage. Can be divided into serving-sized containers and frozen. Makes eight servings.

Mary Kendall, Rolling Stone Reader
Courtesy of Chicago Tribune

Marinated Olives

- 2 cups large pimiento-stuffed green olives, drained
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives, drained
- 1 cup pitted medium ripe olives, drained
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary or 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 4 garlic cloves, slivered
- Pepper to taste
- Place olives in a bowl. Combine the remaining ingredients; pour over olives and stir. Cover and refrigerate for one to two days before serving, stirring several times each day.
- Olives may be refrigerated for two weeks. Serve with a slotted spoon. Makes four cups.

Nutrition Facts: 1/4 cup: 98 calories, 10g fat (1g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 572mg sodium, 3g carbohydrate (0 sugars, 0 fiber), 0 protein.

tasteofhome.com.

FUNDING STATEMENT: The Senior Resource Center is a private not-for-profit organization with services made available, in part, with funds provided under Title III-B and Title III-E of the Older American Act, GAP Filing Funds and the Illinois General Revenue Funds through Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging. Funding for transportation is provided under the State of Illinois Donated Initiative from Title XX of the Social Security Act, through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Department of Transportation. Transportation equipment is provided through Section 5310 grant, awarded through the Illinois Department of Transportation. Reimbursement is received from the Illinois Department on Aging for services under the Community Care Program and the Adult Protective Services Program. Reimbursement for transportation services is provided by the City of Freeport. Funding is additionally provided by United Way of Northwest Illinois, First Lutheran Church of Freeport Endowment, Freeport Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois. A significant portion of the budget is derived from townships, donations, bequests, memorials and fundraising.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY: It is the policy of the Senior Resource Center that photographs of program participants will be used for marketing materials such as newsletters, website, bulletin boards, framed photos and newspapers. If a participant does not want their picture taken, they need to notify the photographer before the photo is taken. Children under 18 years old must have their parent or legal guardian's permission before their photograph can be used in marketing materials produced by the Senior Resource Center.

ADVERTISING POLICY: The Senior Resource Center does not assume any responsibility for advertisers' work performance. Remember to obtain references, determine work performance and fees involved. The Senior Resource Center does not favor or endorse any advertiser, political candidate or political party. The SRC considers itself politically independent. It follows long-held journalistic rules regarding political advertising. Any political advertising that is printed in The Rolling Stone is paid for by the candidate or their representative. The opposing party has been given the opportunity to place an ad as well. As a not-for-profit organization, the Senior Resource Center's first priority is to the people it serves. The issues that affect their lives are the ones the center represents.

[

NICAA Golden Meals

]

Experience Golden Meals! Meals that taste as good as they look and are healthy too.

Golden Meals offer a warm and caring atmosphere with friendship and fun. Come for a visit and see for yourself!

Golden Meals is for persons 60 and older and their spouses. Everyone is welcome.

The congregate meal site is closed until further notice because of COVID-19 concerns.

An announcement will be made when it reopens.

Meals for home delivery are available with 24-hour notice. Call (815) 232-8896 to order a meal.

NOVEMBER				
1 Sloppy Joe Oven Potatoes Peas and Carrots Bun	2 Spaghetti Green Beans Peaches Wheat Bread	3 Salisbury Steak Mashed Potatoes Corn Wheat Bread	4 Turkey Tetrazzini Peas Applesauce Wheat Bread	5 Swedish Meatballs Wild Rice Green Beans Wheat Bread
8 Chili Dog Oven Potatoes Baked Beans Wheat Bun	9 Baked Chicken Mashed Potatoes Carrots Wheat Bread	10 Beef and Noodles Green Beans Fruit Wheat Bread	11 Ham Loaf Sweet Potatoes Mixed Vegetables Wheat Bread	12 Tuna & Noodles Peas Fruit Wheat Bread
15 Stuffed Green Peppers Carrots Fruit Wheat Bread	16 Chicken Noodle Casserole Veggies In Casserole Fruit Wheat Bread	17 Scalloped Potatoes & Ham Peas Fruit Wheat Bread	18 Ham Steak w/ Maple Glaze Sweet Potatoes Spinach Wheat Bread	19 Italian Sausage Sauerkraut Mashed Potatoes Fruit Wheat Bun
22 Beef Stew Corn Bread Fruit	23 Chicken Alfredo/Pasta Spinach Wheat Bread	24 Turkey Mashed Potatoes Stuffing, Wheat Bread Green Beans Pumpkin Pie	25 <div>Closed for Thanksgiving</div>	26
29 Pulled Pork Sandwich Cheesy Potatoes Peas and Carrots Bun	30 Spaghetti Peas Peaches Wheat Bread			MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE Bread, Margarine & Milk offered with every meal

How will you be remembered?

A planned gift to the Senior Resource Center is an opportunity to create a legacy benefiting seniors in our community.

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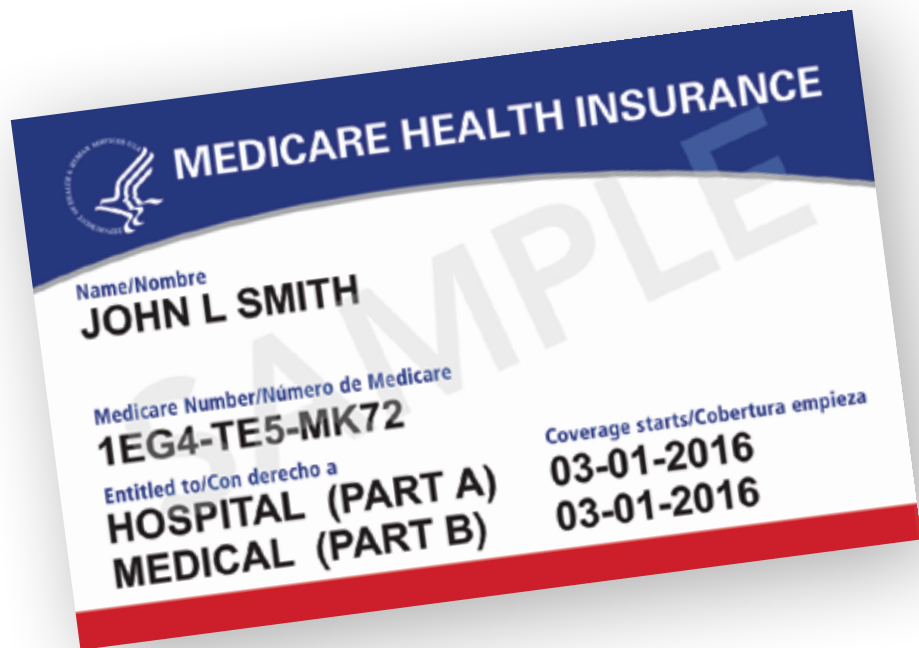
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Senior Resource Center

MEDICARE ENROLLMENT

AEP October 15-December 7

Why Does This Matter?



What's your premium for next year?
Is your doctor still in network?
Are your drugs still covered?
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Want to include Dental and Vision*?
Have your needs changed?
Is your agent still helping you?

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Remember When?

Hello again! Just like all the billionaires are flying to the edge of space these days, it seems the days are flying by as well. It is hard to believe that November is here already. Seems 2021 just started. Speaking of those space flights, I have to admit it was pretty cool to see someone even older than me step out of one of those ships the other day. Again it proves that history is being made every day, everywhere. We just have to look for it.

Conversations about local and area history are one of my favorite pastimes. You can reach me at (815) 232-3846 with your comments, questions, more information or just to chat. We are doing this for fun, and hopefully we can all learn from each other. I do ask that all conversations remain civil. Without further ado, here are the October answers, along with the questions to refresh your memory.

Remember when the popular television comedy “Cheers” entertained us from 1983-1993? A former Freeporter had a small part in the series. Who is this actor and where was he raised?

The actor was Tim Cunningham. Tim acted in “Cheers” as a patron, sitting alone at the end of the bar. He appeared in 15 shows, but had no lines. Tim was raised on Chicago Avenue across from Union School. He was an Aquin High School graduate and excelled in three sports. A great Chicago Cubs fan, he played a mean shortstop at Henney Park and Read Park. Tim was not the only noteworthy personality to hail from Freeport. Tim’s brother is Pat Cunningham, a retired journalist at the Rockford Register Star.

Remember when, as we entered sixth grade in the 1950s, a new challenging competition faced us in Stephenson County that many enjoyed? This competition involved boys, girls and words. What was the challenge and what was it a

prologue to?

The competition was a boy versus girl spell down. The girls were on one side of the room, boys on the other. The winner was the last person standing. The boys would freak out if they saw a girl was winning. It was a warm up for the big countywide spelling bee in Pearl City. The best spellers in the class competed in the room. The teachers served as judges. A gong started the event, followed by silence. You also heard the gong if you missed a word. The first round was very easy for most kids, but not for me. My first round word was appetite. I was the first one to miss. One gong too many. Joan Mullarky was our class champion, and she also won the county spelling bee. For a while she was our hero.

Remember when, in 1958, the city of Freeport had a special celebration? What was the celebration and who was the parade marshal?

The special celebration was the Lincoln-Douglas Debate centennial, held in August 1958. The celebration included a parade, speeches, a ball, period costumes and great media coverage. What other activities do you remember? Gov. William Stratton served as the parade marshal, appearing in a convertible. In a recollection from my youth, he appeared to be bored by the whole thing.

Remember when, in 1989, the movie “Field Of Dreams” was released to the general public? This iconic film was shot in Dyersville, Ia. Grit, determination, and faith were hallmarks of the show. A farm couple, a house, great relatives and supporters, were all part of a decision to build a baseball field of dreams. Primary actors were Amy Madigan, Kevin Costner, James Earl Jones and Burt Lancaster. A little known fact was that a Freeport business played a part in this film. What business was it and what did they supply?

The business was Raccoon Hollow Antiques, which I owned. I supplied the dining room furniture (cupboard, six oak chairs and an oak six-leaf table.) The sale took place when the assistant set director, Karen Handle, visited my shop looking for props to place in the house on the farm.

The 14 oak pieces were arranged in a set, which she found interesting. After pleasantries were exchanged, Handle asked if I would consider renting the set to the show producers. I declined, after which she bought it outright. The movie which was originally called “Shoeless Joe,” was soon changed to “Field of Dreams.”

Arrangements were made to deliver the pieces when it was time to film the scene. It took seven months to complete the movie. The anticipation of when and if the pieces would show up in the film were great.

The conclusion ... sneak preview at Rockford in September 1989 ... waiting, waiting, waiting. Bang. There it was all of 10 seconds. And then, gone. The props were removed from the house, put in storage, but no one knows where. I would have liked to have bought them back. But, suffice it to say, it was exciting to be part of the Hollywood scene. I do have a framed print of the dining room scene.

Remember when, during the fall, a special hourlong event took place at schools during the day throughout Freeport in the 1950s and ‘60s that involved first responders? What was this event and what was special about it?

The special event was the yearly arrival of a Freeport Fire Department fire truck. When the school bell rang, all classes stood and slowly moved to the classroom door. Was it a fire? We walked single file, no talking, to the exit. The fire marshal used a stop watch to see how long it took all classes to leave the building. The special event was when the aerial was raised after everyone was out. Then back to class.



CHUCK KLECKNER

Chuck Kleckner loves the past, present, and future.

NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1) Remember when, at one time, Freeport had six independently owned drug stores? All are now out of business. Name the six and where they were located.

2) Remember when Freeport had two companies that sold their products door-to-door and were very competitive? Their products were sold not only in this area, but also across the country and worldwide. What were the names of these companies and what were some of their sundry items?

3) Remember when, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was a hangout where kids could dance and listen to music on the corner of Main Street and Walnut Avenue in Freeport? Name this facility and its acronym.

4) Remember when Freeport was a hot bed for bowling? Name some of the old bowling alleys and where they were located.

5) Remember when, in the 1930s, a bank, a boy, a wagon and a gangster were involved in a money-making enterprise in Freeport? What was this all about?

Take a trip down memory lane and spend some time pondering these questions from the past. Take care, stay well and enjoy November!

What is Fall Open Enrollment?

Fall Open Enrollment began Oct. 15 and ends Dec. 7 each year. During this time, you can make changes to your health insurance coverage, including adding, dropping or changing your Medicare Advantage and Part D coverage for next year. Even if you are happy with your current health and drug coverage, Fall Open Enrollment is the time to review what you have, compare it with other options and make sure that your current coverage will meet your needs for the coming year.

You can make as many changes as you need to your Medicare coverage during Fall Open Enrollment. The changes you can make include:

1. Joining a new Medicare Advantage plan.
2. Joining a new Part D prescription drug plan.
3. Switching from original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan.
4. Switching from a Medicare Advantage plan to original Medicare (with or without a Part D plan).

You should consider:

- Your access to health care providers you want to see.
- Your access to preferred pharmacies.
- Your access to benefits and services you need.
- The total costs for insurance premiums, deductibles and cost-sharing amounts.
- You should review any increases to original Medicare premiums, deductibles and coinsurance charges.

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan or a stand-alone Part D plan, read your plan's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and/or Evidence of Coverage (EOC). If you do not receive these notices by the end of September, contact your plan to request them. Review these notices for any changes in:

- The plan's costs.
- The plan's benefits and coverage rules.
- The plan's formulary (list of drugs your plan covers).

Additionally, make sure that your drugs will still be covered next year and that your providers and pharmacies are still in the plan's network. If you are unhappy with any of your plan's changes, you can enroll in a new plan. If you want assistance reviewing your options, contact the Senior Resource Center at 815-235-9777 to go on a waiting list for an appointment.

Even if you are happy with your current Medicare coverage, consider other Medicare health and drug plan options in our area. For example, even if you do not plan to change your Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, you should check to see if there is another plan in our area that will offer you better health and/or drug coverage at a more affordable price. Research shows that people with Medicare prescription drug coverage could lower their costs by shopping among plans each year; there could be another Part D plan in your area that covers the drugs you take with fewer restrictions and/or lower prices.

Home Maintenance Program Grants Available

Thanks to grants from two different organizations, the Senior Resource Center has funds available to assist older individuals in Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties with home repair and maintenance projects.

The Senior Home Maintenance program was launched in late 2020 with a grant from the Freeport Township and received boosts this year when the Freeport Community Foundation and the Freeport Township awarded additional grants to continue funding the project. The foundation grant extended eligibility to Jo Daviess County residents.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must meet income guidelines and apply for assistance through the Senior Resource Center.

"This program has been designed to assist our older residents with four potentially problematic areas of home maintenance for seniors," shared Patrick Sellers, Freeport Township supervisor. "Tasks such as landscaping, gutter cleaning, leaf and snow removal, along with the purchasing of fans/window air conditioner units are covered.

Successful implementation of this program could result in fewer senior-related accidents involving such tasks while ensuring that properties occupied by seniors are well maintained. Last but not least, this program will help lift the burdens of such tasks off the minds of our older residents."

Home repairs are often low on the priority list for seniors, not by choice, but primarily due to issues with mobility, availability of assistance from family or friends, or lack of funds to complete needed maintenance. This can lead to unsafe conditions at home for the older homeowner, a scenario the program is seeking to eliminate.

By disbursing funds to local seniors for such tasks as gutter cleaning, roof repair, heating and air conditioning, plumbing and other home maintenance items, the services provided by the Senior Home Maintenance Program will aid older individuals in living independently in their homes.

"We are so pleased to partner with the Freeport Township and the Freeport Community Foundation for this program and thankful for these organizations' generosity and their dedication to the well-being of our local seniors," said Sonja Shoemaker, Senior Resource Center executive director. "We share that dedication and are committed to the health and safety of our older adults and appreciate the opportunity to help provide a much-needed service for those we serve."

For more information on the Senior Home Maintenance Program, to determine eligibility, or to apply for assistance with home repairs or maintenance, call the Senior Resource Center at (815) 235-9777 and ask for Information & Assistance.

The Kernel and the Walnut

BUDDY T. SQUIRL

Resident Squirrel of
Walker Mortuary

I have to admit I'm getting slightly addicted to researching my family history. This time, what I discovered not only puts a whole new spin on Thanksgiving, but it also uncovers a wonderful love story. You probably think you know the "real" story about Thanksgiving, where the Pilgrims and the native inhabitants shared a harvest feast in gratitude of their blessings. Hold on to your hats, because I'm going to tell you what really happened.

Eeky, a red squirrel, is my many-times great-grandmother who traveled with her human friend, Constance, on the Mayflower. Eeky is short for

Eekhoorn, which is the Dutch word for squirrel. Constance, her family, and most of the Pilgrims lived in Holland before they decided to travel to America to establish a settlement.

The trip across the ocean from England to Plymouth, Mass., took 66 days. Eeky's store of English walnuts was almost exhausted once they dropped anchor. She was eager to get off the ship and see what her new life had in store for her. By December 1620, the Mayflower was anchored in Plymouth Harbor, so Eeky climbed up on one of the tall masts and jumped to a towering tree on the nearby shore.

The first thing Eeky noticed was that it was bitterly cold, something to which she was not used. She also realized there wasn't much to eat in

the cold, snow-covered woods of Massachusetts. She scampered back to the ship, concerned about the harshness of the New World.

Things didn't seem to get any better for Eeky. Constance, like many of the colonists, was weak and sickly, and Eeky was very worried about her friend. Eeky saw that as many as two or three people died every day during the first two months, so Eeky decided she needed to do something about it.

Eeky set out one cold winter morning, hopping from tree to tree, trying to find someone who could help the Pilgrims in their plight. She carried with her one of her last English walnuts to trade for provisions for her friends.

She had traveled for about an hour when she saw another squirrel

scampering up a tree. She called out to the strange, grey-colored squirrel. He paused mid-tree-trunk, turned, saw her, and then darted towards her.

By this time, Eeky was shivering and cold. The cold, wet weather had soaked her fur and chilled her to the bone. So, the other squirrel immediately led her to his nest, high in a nearby tree. Gratefully, Eeky climbed into the dry and warm hollow, and her shivering subsided.

The squirrel introduced himself as Shanny, short for Shannucke, the Wampanoag word for squirrel. Shanny lived among the Wampanoag tribe, who had lived in this area for more than 100 years. Eeky explained that she had traveled from a far-away country with her friends, and they wanted to live here too, then she offered

BUDDY CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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For more information on ads or subscriptions contact Julie Hilliger at the Senior Resource Center, (815) 235-9777, ext. 254, or at jhilliger@srcntr.org.



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HOCKEY

ACROSS

- 1. Instagram handle, e.g.
- 6. Faux one
- 9. Floor cleaner or haircut, pl.
- 13. No such thing as a free one?
- 14. Middle-earth dweller
- 15. Like Halloween night
- 16. Binary digits code
- 17. Biathlon glider
- 18. Take without asking
- 19. *Hockey’s ____ Cup
- 21. *Start of play
- 23. End of White House URL
- 24. 1,000 grams
- 25. Spot for a massage
- 28. Chemistry Nobelist Otto ____
- 30. *The oldest U.S.-based team in NHL
- 35. Bar bills
- 37. Denials
- 39. Thin Mints group, e.g.
- 40. Just one of British Isles
- 41. Low landform
- 43. Not in favor of
- 44. Slap landing
- 46. Dutch cheese

- 47. Property right
- 48. Kismet-related
- 50. “All for one, one for all” sword
- 52. Shed tears
- 53. Old in Scottish
- 55. Time period
- 57. *Sandler as hockey player
- 61. *”The Great One”
- 65. Radio show host: “Hello, you’re ____”
- 66. Sea in Spain
- 68. Witchy woman
- 69. Pore in a leaf
- 70. *1980 Olympic “Miracle” winner
- 71. Ringworm
- 72. Gardner’s gear
- 73. Dashboard acronym
- 74. Same as sakis

DOWN

- 1. “Sad to say ...”
- 2. A deadly sin
- 3. Ancient Peruvian
- 4. Breezing through
- 5. Civil War battle

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69						70				71				
72						73				74				

SOLUTION ON PAGE 16

- 6. Nosegay
- 7. Biblical boat
- 8. “The Terminator” genre
- 9. Dole out
- 10. Black and white treat
- 11. “La Vie en rose” singer
- 12. Ego’s domain
- 15. Bodyguard, e.g.
- 20. *14-year NHL player, coached Whalers to playoffs, Jack ____
- 22. Priest’s vestment
- 24. Worked the dough
- 25. *Hockey club
- 26. Ottoman title
- 27. More competent
- 29. *Great Gordie
- 31. Europe/Asia mountain divide
- 32. Not Doric nor Corinthian
- 33. Post-it user
- 34. Like a sea urchin
- 36. Give an impression
- 38. *____ shot
- 42. Arabian chieftain
- 45. “Hats off,” in New Zealand (2 words)
- 49. Mixed breed puppy
- 51. Builds
- 54. Madagascar primate
- 56. Skylit lobbies
- 57. “Gee!”
- 58. Keen on
- 59. Cambodia’s neighbor
- 60. Marcel Marceau, e.g.
- 61. 1/1000 of #24 Across
- 62. Fall asleep, with ‘out’
- 63. Between femur and tibia
- 64. Confirmations
- 67. Nile viper

TELL US YOUR STORY

Our funding sources occasionally need to hear from those we serve. We are seeking people who use our services to provide a positive testimonial about their experiences. This assistance may have come from the Community Care (Case Management) Program, Information & Assistance, Transit or Education & Activities.

How have our services helped enrich the quality of your life?

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon. Please call Julie at (815) 235-9777, ext. 254, with any questions.

Please submit your testimonial to:

- Email: jhilliger@srentr.org
- Mail: Senior Resource Center ATTN: Julie, 206 E. Stephenson St., Freeport IL 61032
- Drop off to the Senior Resource Center: 206 E. Stephenson St., Freeport

Thank you for supporting us with your stories!

SRC Receives Grant for Medical Rides

Many older individuals in Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties could qualify for free rides to medical appointments, thanks to a grant awarded to the

Senior Resource Center from the Freeport Community Foundation.

The \$6,200 grant funds in part the Healthcare Access Transit (HAT) Project, operated by the Senior Resource Center, which will provide the free rides to individuals who meet the income criteria.

“Medical appointments can mean the difference between life and death for many people,” said Sonja Shoemaker, Senior Resource Center executive director. “We are so grateful to the Freeport Community Foundation for continuing to provide funds to make safe, affordable rides available to these appointments.”

Shoemaker said that the HAT program takes individuals to medical appointments across town and out of state. Fees, which just cover the Senior Resource Center’s cost, can range from \$27 to \$150 a trip.

To apply for a HAT grant, people should contact the Senior Resource center at (815) 235-9777.

The Senior Resource Center’s grant was awarded from the Freeport Community Foundation’s Community Needs/Marvin Unrestricted Fund during the



**FREEPORT
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

fall grant cycle. The foundation Board of Directors awarded grants totaling \$118,691 to 14 organizations in Stephenson, Jo Daviess and Carroll counties.

The Freeport Community Foundation has a 46-year history as a community-based charitable organization guided by community leaders who are dedicated to providing financial solutions for current and future community needs. During that time, the FCF has awarded over \$3.5 million in grant funding to non-profit organizations and projects throughout northwest Illinois.

The Senior Resource Center offers programs, education and activities for older individuals, their families and caregivers in Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties. The programs include Adult Protective Services, Information & Assistance, Money Management, Case Management, Transit and Education & Activities. For more information or other questions about the Senior Resource Center, call (815) 235-9777 or go to the center’s website, www.seniorresourcecenter.net.

BUDDY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

him the walnut.

Shanny had never seen a strange-looking nut like Eeky’s walnut, so she showed him how to open it and eat the delicious nutmeat inside.

Shanny loved the walnut. In turn, Shanny dug down beneath the leaves that layered the nest and pulled up several kernels of red, black and yellow corn. Eeky had never seen anything like it and when Shanny held one out to her, she tentatively bit it and tasted the sweetness of the dried grain. She squeaked her approval, and Shanny handed her several more kernels until her stomach was full and she was feeling warm and dry. If only Constance and her family could feel this way too.

She explained the circumstance of the Pilgrims to Shanny and discovered that he had a human friend named Squanto who he thought could help. Squanto had spent time

in England and understood the language of the Pilgrims.

The two squirrels quickly made their way to the Wampanoag camp and Shanny scurried over to Squanto, offering him the other half of the English walnut.

“Where did you get this, little shannucke?” Squanto asked. “This is not from here; it is from England.”

Following the two squirrels as they led him away from camp, Squanto soon found the Pilgrims settlement and was able to provide them with food and help. Several months later, after their first harvest, the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims celebrated the very first Thanksgiving.

Of course, Eeky and Shanny were also present, with their new little family of three kits: one red kit, one grey kit, and one black kit. And now you know the true squirrel history story of the first Thanksgiving.

WISH LIST

The Senior Resource Center appreciates financial contributions, but also values the donation of supplies that keep our agency running smoothly. Please call Julie at 815-235-9777, ext. 254, if you would like to donate. Thank you so much!

Storage unit space • AA batteries

New vacuum cleaner with bag

Locked upright storage cabinet • Post-It notes

Disinfectant wipes • Reams of copy paper

Paper towels • No. 10 plain envelopes • File folders



Zoom In On Squash Program

One of the fall's most popular and versatile vegetables is winter squash. It encompasses various squash, such as acorn, buttercup, butternut, hubbard, sweet dumpling and spaghetti squash.

Probably the most well-known squash seen throughout the fall is pumpkins. Not only are they perfect for adding a splash of color to your autumn décor, but they are also delicious.

Join University of Illinois Extension Educator Diane Reinhold for a fun fall program, "Getting the Scoop on Winter Squash!" During this virtual workshop, we will discuss a variety of common and not-so-common

types of winter squash. Reinhold will cover how to select and store winter squash, offer great ideas on how to prepare and use these culinary favorites, and best of all, you'll receive delectable recipes.

If you'd like to learn more, then please join this virtual workshop. "Getting the Scoop on Winter Squash!" will be held Tuesday, Nov. 23, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. To receive your Zoom link to join, preregister before Monday, Nov. 22. For more information on this program, or if you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact the extension office at (815) 235-4125, or online at go.illinois.edu/jsw.



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Social Security Announces 5.9 Percent Benefit Increase

Social Security
Administration

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 5.9 percent in 2022, the Social Security Administration announced in mid-October.

The 5.9 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to approximately 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2021. Some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$147,000 from \$142,800.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be able to view their COLA notice online through their personal my Social Security account. People



may create or access their my Social Security account online at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Information about Medicare changes for 2022, when announced, will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, Social Security will not be able to compute their new benefit amount until after the Medicare premium amounts for 2022 are announced. Final 2022 benefit amounts will be communicated to beneficiaries in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated.

To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

Shop Local this Holiday Season

NICOLE HAAS

Brand Director
Greater Freeport Partnership

Whether you enjoy seeing the holiday decorations being placed in local stores or it is an unwelcome reminder of the passing calendar, the holidays are soon approaching! As you make and shop for those on your holiday gift list, please remember the local stores in Freeport and Stephenson County that truly appreciate your business.

Local boutiques and gifts stores have been opening all across the county offering unique ideas for those who are hard to shop for and require a little more thought. Home décor, jewelry and accessories, clothing and more can be found in beautiful shops in every corner of the county. The helpful associates in every store are excited to assist in find the perfect gift and make recommendations to all who enter.

Still unsure what to buy? Grab a gift card or certificate from the business owner and introduce your gift recipient to a new business in the area!

Restaurants are also looking forward to meeting new guests during the holiday season with purchases of gift cards, holiday parties, catering opportunities and meals out with friends and family. A purchase from a local restaurant helps to employ our community, support local farms and create new dining experiences in our area. Gift cards to local restaurants are always welcome by family and friends for a night out with no meal prep and no dishes!

According to the Small Business



Economic Impact Study from American Express, consumers' local impact during the important holiday shopping season is significant, because an average of two-thirds of every dollar (67 cents) spent at small businesses in the U.S. stays in the local community. Every dollar spent at small businesses creates an additional 50 cents in local business activity as a result of employee spending and businesses purchasing local goods and services.

If you are interested in making your holiday shopping an event, plan to attend the Mistletoe Walk in downtown Freeport Nov. 20-21 for shopping, music and the unveiling of holiday décor in stores and streets. You can also attend the Holiday Parade/Walk in Lena on Dec. 3-4. Make shopping a treat in itself while celebrating with family and friends during local events or on trips you make all on your own.

The holiday season is all about giving -- and this year it is not just about giving gifts! Give your attention, your recognition and your holiday shopping dollars to local businesses. Your investment is returned in the multitude of joyous smiles you see personally as you support our community.

Take Steps to Prevent Falls

November is the last month of autumn and often a frosty month. With the changing of seasons and as temperatures drop, we need to pay close attention to our health and the needs of our bodies, especially as we head outdoors.

Slips, trips, and falls can happen any time of year. However, healthcare facilities see a rise in fall-related injuries, such as fractures, concussions and sprains during the winter months. While these injuries are dangerous to everyone, they are especially dangerous to older adults.

Falls are the leading cause of injury among adults 65 years and older and account for 95 percent of the 300,000 hip fractures in the United States each year.

Many factors increase our risk of falling, such as reduced muscle strength and overall weakness, poor balance, impaired vision, delayed reaction times, changes in cognition, use of multiple medications, chronic health conditions, poor footwear

and fear of falling. There are also environmental hazards that increase our risk of falling such as slippery floors, loose rugs, unstable furniture, inadequate lighting, obstructed walkways, pets’ under foot, ice and snow.

Consuming a healthy, well-balanced diet and intentional exercise will help give your body the nutrients and activity needed to maintain muscle strength. Unfortunately, national nutrition surveys indicate most people are not getting adequate calcium needed to grow and maintain healthy bones, putting them at increased risk for osteoporosis and fractures.

In addition to being aware of fall risks, you must also be intentional about consuming foods rich in calcium and vitamin D. There are three ways you can consume vitamin D. You can get it through the skin from sunlight, in your diet, and from a dietary supplement. Since the cold weather often keeps people indoors

over the winter months, including foods that have been fortified with vitamin D and taking dietary supplements are a great way to help keep your bones strong. Natural sources of vitamin D are limited. However, salmon, herring, sardines, canned tuna, cod liver oil, egg yolks and mushrooms are excellent natural sources.

Calcium is not only important for your bones. It is also needed for your heart, muscles and nerves to function properly and for blood to clot. Not getting adequate amounts of calcium increases your risk of developing osteoporosis, low bone mass and increases the risk of fractures. The recommended daily calcium intake is 1,000 mg per day for most adults, though women over 50 and everyone over 70 should get 1,200 mg per day, and children aged 4–18 should consume 1,300 mg. Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt, are rich in calcium. However, seafood, leafy greens,



DIANE REINHOLD
University of Illinois Extension
Nutrition and Wellness Educator
and Registered Dietitian

legumes, dried fruit, tofu and foods fortified with calcium are also great sources.

There are many steps we can take to prevent falls from occurring.

Consume a balanced diet.
Consuming a balanced and varied diet will help your body to get the nutrients needed to maintain health. Being intentional about including foods rich in calcium and vitamin D is a cornerstone to good bone health. However, you may need to include dietary supplements to ensure you are getting adequate amounts of

WELLNESS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

PUZZLE ON PAGE 12

A	L	I	A	S		P	A	S		M	O	P	S	
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SUDOKU PUZZLE ON PAGE 3

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1	2	5	4	3	8	7	6	9
6	8	3	7	5	9	1	2	4
4	7	9	6	1	2	8	5	3

WELLNESS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

calcium and vitamin D.

Limit sodium intake. High sodium intake increases calcium excretion through the kidneys. If you already struggle to get adequate amounts of calcium in your diet, limiting the amount of sodium in your diet will help preserve the calcium you are consuming.

Slow down. Take small, slow steps if you are walking on icy or slick surfaces. Watch for ice on steps and walkways and use caution when getting in and out of vehicles. Clear walkways. Remove snow and ice from walkways. Adding sand or

salt will improve traction on slippery surfaces.

Wear proper footwear. Whether indoors or out, wearing proper footwear is a must. Wear footwear that fits properly, provides ankle support and adequate traction.

I hope your wellness journey is going smoothly and that you are enjoying your fall. As we enter into this holiday season, you still need to be intentional on this journey. You cannot simply throw caution to the wind because it's the holidays. Remember how far you have come, and you do not want to lose any of the progress you have been making.

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The Book Lady

Carol Redmore



In the Dust Bowl years, as the heat, wind and drought devastated the land, Elsa, a young woman in west Texas, nourished her treasured calico aster, the last living plant in the small garden. Like Elsa, the plant is tall and thin, with “defiant green leaves.” Elsa’s nemesis is the Dust Bowl that swept away the precious dirt of their farms.

Kristin Hannah’s “The Four Winds” details life during those difficult years, with images of the desolation. The fields, which should have been glowing with golden wheat waving in the wind, were now bare, the earth cracked in the hot wind that swept mercilessly, all color of the landscape whitened under the relentless sun.

Elsa, raised by strict, humorless parents who sheltered her from any exertion because of a childhood illness, was not only lonely but felt unloved. Alone in her room, she nourished herself with books. The world beyond that room tantalized her. She bought red silk -- with which she sewed a dress as bright as her home life was dull. She wore the magnificent dress on evening walks, but Elsa’s naiveté is quickly exploited by an Italian boy, Rafe. All too soon, she is pregnant and, predictably, her parents summon Rafe, who must marry her.

Rafe’s parents had been proud that their son was about to set off for college but they accept the situation stoically when Rafe turns up with a terrified Elsa. One great joy blooms as Elsa finds acceptance and then love from Rafe’s parents, Rose and Tony. She works hard to learn the

farm chores and to cook the foods Rose creates for her family. Elsa and Rose form a close bond. For the first time, Elsa feels wanted and loved. She thrives even as she works hard. Rafe, however, is resentful. When their daughter Loreda is born, Elsa feels such joy and love; at last life seems promising.

Her dreams begin to wither as drought sets in year after year, and her daughter, by the time she is 12, is fiercely attached to her dad, whom she sees as adventurous while she just as fiercely rejects her mother, who is so drab, who seems to have no spark of fun. Loreda and Rafe are a tight pair, while Loreda finds fault with everything Elsa says or does. At one point, Loreda bursts out to Elsa, “This is all your fault!” “Everything?” says Elsa with uncharacteristic bitterness. “The drought? The Depression? All my fault?”

As the Depression deepens and the land slowly dies, more and more families join the trek to California. So much is promised there! It truly is a journey through the wilderness to find the Promised Land. Rafe chafes to join the procession and presses Elsa to flee with him. Elsa is tempted but resists; her tie to the family and the land is strong; any dreams she may have had have dissolved long ago. To be constant, to forge on in hope that hard work will save them: that is where she finds hope, along with her last dream, that the rains will come and the earth will flourish once more. She tells Rafe she will consider it, and they part for the night.

By morning Rafe is gone. Elsa is hardly surprised and bears his abandonment with her usual deep and patient sorrow. Rose admits that she had been far too easy on Rafe. He has no resilience. For Loreda, her father’s desertion is an eye-opener. She has her mother’s resilience. She is hard and bitter, but also skilled at survival.

Elsa and her children remain on the farm, with much grumbling from Loreda, but when Elsa’s son

Ant develops life-threatening dust pneumonia, Elsa makes the decision to head for California with her children.

Upon arrival, they find a promising green land with fruit trees. But those parts are closed to them and other migrants. Elsa’s small savings to buy a home are useless. No one will sell to them. They end up like the others in a camp with a ditch for a communal supply of polluted water. The camp stinks of sewage. Elsa has a small camp stove and boils the water before they use it.

Elsa puts her children in school, which has to take them but makes the experience as miserable as possible. She goes out every day to look for work and very occasionally earns a quarter for cleaning or washing. They all wait for fall when the cotton will be ready for picking. However, what they earn from the cotton they picked sunrise till sundown, is not enough to sustain them through the winter. Elsa qualifies for relief by April---bread, milk, beans---and they get what they can from the company store. When they can’t pay, all of them are put on “the bill”---which puts them further in debt each month.

Their comfort is that all the migrants help each other. When they first arrive in the camp, neighbors in the next tent bring them one red potato---all they have.

Their best hope, though they do not realize it, is in the books Loreda finds at the library; her long walk to town is rewarded by a sympathetic librarian, who gives Loreda a library card. Loreda had left school that day in disgust when the teacher proposed a project in which the girls would learn how to make red bows.

On her travels to the library, Loreda meets Jack, who takes her to a union meeting. This is a revelation for her, one which Elsa fiercely rejects when she learns of it. But when a great storm floods their camp by the ditch, a stream of cars from the fledgling union comes, loaded with men and equipment, to take them into shelters in town.

From that point, Elsa joins Loreda and Jack. She finds her voice and learns to speak out. The

townspeople dislike them and call them Communists. A number of reviews fault the book for this. In the context of the story, knowing the extreme suffering of the Depression itself, greatly amplified by the landowners who found every way possible to prevent the workers from making more than pennies, the labor movement is easily understood. At last the migrants had some means to organize, support, speak out and demand.

However, as so often happens with such movements, the migrants are doomed to be shot down --- quite literally. And as the California dream evaporates for them, Elsa faces a bitter end. Nevertheless, her voice is forceful as she takes the platform to cry out, “We say ‘No more!’”

Tony and Rose fare better back in Texas; as Rose tells Elsa in a letter, the wind had eased at last, the government had sent in water, and they had learned contour farming. The farmers loved their land, but they had not known they were tearing it up when they plowed up the prairie with its long, strong roots to keep the soil in place. With much of the topsoil vulnerable, the wind could sweep it away; there was no protection from heat and cold. The wheat would grow again, but the vision of the land being restored so quickly is fanciful.

This is not a perfect book; it does not reach the standards of “The Grapes of Wrath.” I found the beginning weak and the ending questionable in several ways. If one considers the book as a sandwich, the bread of beginning and end seems too thin, but the meat of the sandwich is rich, flavorful and filling. It would be interesting to hear other readers’ interpretations, especially of the end.

The title “The Four Winds” comes from a Korean tale of the winds from every corner of the earth: the Wolf of the North, the Lion of the South, the Dragon of the East, and the Falcon of the West. The winds blow where they will: they can nourish or destroy.

Humans must deal with all of it as best they can. As Cesar Chavez said, “We drew our strength from the very despair. We have been forced to live. We shall endure.”

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Medicare Enrollment Periods: What You Need to Know

There are several enrollment periods when people can sign up or make changes to their Medicare plan.

Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)

This is a 7 month window. It includes your birth month plus the 3 months before and the 3 months after. If you were born on the first of a month, your IEP begins and ends one month earlier. If you become eligible for Medicare due to disability, your 7 month IEP includes the month you receive your 25th disability check plus the 3 months before and the 3 months after.

During your IEP, you may enroll in Part A, Part B, or both. You may select a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C) or you may join a Part D Plan.

The effective date of your plan depends on when you enroll. It typically begins on the first of the month of your birth.

Annual Enrollment Period (AEP)

This is an annual window that runs from October 15 to December 7. During this time, you can join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Prescription Drug Plan. You may make as many changes as you want during this timeframe.

The effective date of these plan changes is January 1.

Open Enrollment Period (OEP)

If you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may make one change between January 1 and March 31. You may switch from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another, or you may drop a Medicare Advantage Plan and go back to Original Medicare and add a Prescription Drug Plan.

The effective date of this plan change would be the first of the following month.

Special Enrollment Period (SEP)

A Special Enrollment Period allows you to join, change, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan or Prescription Drug Plan outside of the Annual Enrollment Period in certain situations. These situations are called "qualifying events." Common events are moving, qualifying for extra help paying for prescriptions, and retiring.

The effective date of these plan changes vary, based on circumstance.



What's The Bottom Line?

There are many opportunities throughout the year to make plan selections and changes. Call any time to ask about your situation.



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