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# Parker Dam to host fall festival

By Andy Stine  
astine@altoonamirror.com

The 20th annual Fall Festival and Pumpkin Float at Parker Dam will be held from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 17 in the day use area.

There will be local arts and crafts vendors, as well as heritage and educational activities for all ages.

Kids are invited to don their Halloween costumes for a costume parade through the festival grounds at 4:30 p.m. The parade starts at Pavilion 4 and will be followed by a trunk-or-treat event.

There will also be evening activities, including a campfire and stories, on the beach beginning at 6:45 p.m. where lit jack-o-lanterns will be set afloat on Parker Lake.

Those attending are urged to bring a chair or blanket for seating.

Parker Dam is a 968-acre state park that offers a scenic lake, rustic cabins, a campground, and plenty of forest. It is part of the Moshannon State Forest.

Parker Dam State Park offers year-round environmental education and interpretive programs. Through hands-on activities, guided walks and evening programs, participants gain appreciation, understanding, and develop a sense of stewardship toward natural and cultural resources. A small-scale, interpretive maple-sugaring operation runs



— Courtesy photo

Parker Dam State Park will hold its 20th annual Fall Festival and Pumpkin Float from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17. Those attending are urged to stay for the day and into the evening as lit jack-o-lanterns will be set adrift on the lake. The day will end with a campfire and stories throughout March. Apple-cider- For more information, visit Festival event page on Facebook. Parker Dam's 20th Annual Fall book.



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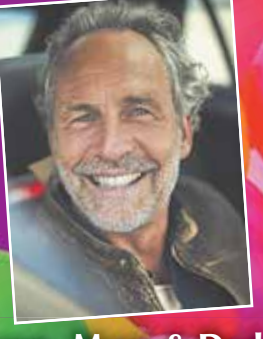
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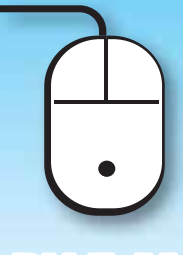


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## AD BARGAIN™

### ESTATE GUN AUCTION

**Friday, October 16, 2026 – 9 a.m. (Centre Co., PA.)**  
**[www.rgilliganauctions.com](http://www.rgilliganauctions.com)**

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public Estate Auction located at the **Ferguson Township Lions Club 424 W. Pine Grove Rd. Pine Grove Mills, PA. 16868.** From State College, take Rt. 45 West to Pine Grove Mills & continue 1 mile to auction on left.

**Incredible Collection of (27) Sako Deluxe Rifles** From 17 Rem. to 416 Rem. Mag. Including 7 x 33, 218 BEE, & 22 Hornet - Weatherby Mark V Rifles – Anschutz Rifles – Winchester Rifles & Shotguns – Colt/Sauer Rifle – Browning Rifles & Shotguns – Husqvarna Rifles – Krico Rifles – Kimber 22 Hornet - Heckler & Koch USC AR 45 ACP Semi-Auto Rifle – Remington Model 1100LW 410 ga. Shotgun - (109) Nice Guns - (26) Scopes Incl. Swarovski, Leupold, & Zeiss, Lyman Super Target Spot, & Redfield Wide Vision – Rifle & Shotgun Ammo – Knives..... No Internet, absentee, or phone bids will be accepted - no buyers' premiums. Terms: Cash or Check only by conclusion of auction. Food & Restrooms Available day of auction – Auction will be held indoors – Chairs will be provided. Auctioneers: Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner, #AU339-L & #AU3430-L & #AU5442-L.

All oral info day of auction takes precedence over any & all written ads.  
Owner & auctioneers not responsible in case of accidents.

### PUBLIC AUCTION

**Friday, October 9, 2026 (Blair Co., PA.)**  
**Contents: 10 AM - Real Estate: 12 Noon [www.rgilliganauctions.com](http://www.rgilliganauctions.com)**

**Nice Collection of Garden Gauge Trains In Original Boxes**  
**Cast-Iron Caboose Stove – Train Books – Commercial Counter**  
**Top Appliances LED TV Sets – Toledo Scale – Clean Kitchen & Household Items - National Mt. Airy Roll-Top Desk - Collectibles**

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public Auction for Sharon Seymore due to moving located at 5120 Broad Ave., Altoona, PA. 16601.

SSR Motorsports SRU170RS Side-by-Side w/ 1,137 miles, No. 1 cast-iron caboose stove.....Large collection of G-gauge trains in original boxes from REA, Lionel, & LGB incl.: LGB 22301 passenger steam loco set, LGB Rio Grande loco & caboose, LGB #2045 electric engine, (2) LGB 2017 steam loco w/ tenders, LGB #2051 DB switcher, LGB #2085D steamer, LGB 2017 steam loco, LGB Restaurant car, LGB Furka-Oberalp passenger car, Lehmann Grossbahn 20 Year Anniv. double 2-car passenger set, LGB Coca-Cola boxcar, LGB X4049 searchlight car, LGB Union Pacific tanker, LGB 4040B BP tanker, LGB 4031 Pepsi boxcar, LGB 4032 Nestle boxcar, Lionel NYC gondola, REA PRR caboose, REA caboose, Lionel 700 caboose, LGB log car, LGB 1997 Christmas caboose, LGB OEG ore car, LGB Kabel-Union car, LGB Dodge City caboose, LGB dining car, LGB BASF tanker, (2) LGB Denver & Rio Grande passenger cars, LGB Denver, South Park, & Pacific passenger car, LGB D&RGW flatcar w/ lumber, LGB D.&R.G. box car, LGB REA refrigerator car, LGB 3060 dining car, (2) LGB Denver, Rio Grande, & Western passenger cars, LGB Cardinal beer car, (3) LBG Circus cars, LGB 2-rail track, G-gauge display case, O-gauge display case, MRC Pure Power Dual transformer in box, (2) MRC DC transformers, LGB train books, Texaco 1931 Stearman die-cast airplane....National Mt. Airy roll-top desk, vintage Toledo 250# scale, Hitachi 55" Roku 4K HDR TV (NIB), Insignia 55" LED TV, Insignia 42" flat screen TV, (2) oak bourbon barrels, 5-gal. glass wine bottles, round metal patio table w/ (4) chairs, Bunn Model VPR Commercial SS coffeemaker, Bunn Commercial SS iced tea dispenser, Nemco commercial NSF juice press, Hamilton-Beach counter-top deep fryer, (2) lrg. SS nesting mixing bowls, Bell & Howell 1227 Filmosonic XL camera in case, (2) Tramolina cast-iron & enameled Dutch ovens w/ lids, Cuisinart SS toaster oven, clean kitchen items, household related items, cleaning supplies.....

**Real Estate:** very nice condition all-stone 4-bedroom two-story home situated on a large level approximate 1.1-Acre lot with many outbuildings...No Internet, absentee, or phone bids will be accepted - no buyers' premiums. Terms: 10% down day of auction - balance due in 45 days. Auctioneers: Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner, #AU339-L & #AU3430-L & #AU5442-L.

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## AD BARGAIN™

### ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES AUCTION

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026 @ 5:00 P.M.**  
**DOUBLE K AUCTION HOUSE**  
**1821 DORSEY AVENUE, IRVONA PA 16656**

**ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES:** 19th Century American Primitive Pine Settle Bench, Wooden Storage Box, Mission Oak Style 4 Tier Shelf, Plant Stand, Mission & 1 Other Coat Trees, Art Deco Twisted Iron Floor Lamp, **CAST IRON TOYS:** (Arcade Horse Drawn Wagon, Asstd. Cast Iron Toy Parts), Royal Miniature Cast Iron Stove, Wallace & Tiernan U.S. Corps of Engineers Altitude Gauge, Bell System Model 592-A Phone Ringer, Made in Germany O Gauge Passenger Cars, Pre War Tin Plate O Gauge Passenger Cars, Paper Letho On Wood 19th Century Bliss U.S. Grant Locomotive & Passenger Car, Pre War Marklin RV 890 O Gauge Steeple Cab Locomotive, Bliss 19th Century Golden Gates Special Coal Car, Pre War O Gauge Tin Plate Cab Car, Bliss Tin Plate Adirondack Passenger Car, (Tin Plate Caboose, Box Car & (2)Tenders), Box Lot of Lionel Track, Switches & Cars, (2)Metal 3 1/2' Tall Christmas Candles, Cast Iron Griddle, **CAST IRON SKILLETS:** (10 D Skillet, Martin Cast Iron #5, No Name #7 & #8 Chicken Fryer, Erie #11, Wagner #13, Griswold #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, (2)#9's & #10 Chef Skillet Cast Iron Skillets), #8 Cast Iron Dutch Oven, Dutch Oven Lid, Gilt Brass Plated Cast Iron Desk Lamp, 3 Blade Slaw Cutter, Made in Germany Grinder, ES&B 2 Gal. Crock, Starrett Steam Boat Chopper, Art Nouveau Figural Table Post Lamp, Hand Operated Wet Wheel, Skeleton Keys, Sanitary Johnstown Pt. Milk Bottle, Cream Skimmer, Cast Iron Fireplace Model, Wooden Laundry Paddle, AMT 1978 Ford Model, Hooked Rug, Rock N Roll & Assorted Country Western LP Records,1958, 59, 60, 61 & 72 Ford Car Owners Manuals, 1957 Plymouth Car Manual, 1968 In Time of Emergency Nuclear Attack Manual, Corn Cob & Other Smoking Pipes, Sewing Box, Teddy Bear, 1964 Popular Science Magazine, Handmade 19th Century Cloth Folk Art Doll, Asstd. Tobacco Tins, Marine Hair Clippers in OB, Cuff Links & Tie Clasp Set, Adv. Tins, Lightning Glider & Flying Arrow Runner Sleds, Wooden High Chair, 1960's Burnt Orange & Other Asstd. Vintage Dresses, Asstd. Rag Rugs, White Enamel Stock Pot, Home Fire Pot Belly Stove, 100's of DC, Marvel, Valiant Superman, Spiderman, X Men, Avengers, Aquaman, Spider Woman, Hulk & Other .20 Cent & Up Comics, Lg. Asst. of 45 Records, Metal Picnic Basket, Replogle 10" World Globe, 1957 Astro Rocket Bank, Marx 1950's Tin & Plastic Delux Delivery Truck, (Lumar Pressed Steel Road Grader & Rocker Dump), Tootsie Toy Dozer, Hubley Tow Truck, Ertl Tractor, (5)Argo Lithograph Tin Cars, Wonder Wheel, Rocket Man Spin Top, Gilbert #7 1/2 Erector Engineer Set, Brown Glazed Stoneware Crock, Robin Hood Docking Tracing Set, Carbide Can, Autolite Carbide lamp, New Dockers Wallet/Money Clip, Adv. Key Fobs, New Old Stock Auto Lite Carbide Lamp in OB, (3)Zippo & Other Asstd. Lighters, Grey Enamel Ladle, (2) Wendel August Forge Brass Eagle Plates, JC Higgins 1950's Nelie Fox & 1 Other Baseball Glove, Tasco Microscope Set in Wooden Box, Alphabet & Number Stamp Set, 1950's Nicholas Ind. Stallion 45 Mark II 6 Shooter Toy Revolver in OB, Wooden Wash Tub, Rayo & (3)Other Kerosene Lamps, (2)Finger Kerosene Lamps, Detecto Beam Scale, Cowboy & Indian Action Figures, 1958 PA Fishing License Badge, Train Bridge & Tunnel, Niner Made in Germany #275 Kerosene Lantern, (6)Disney McDonalds Toys, GE Transistor Radio in OB, Ross Transistor Radio, 1st National Bank Tyrone & 1 Other Bank, 1945 WWII I Fought With Combat Command R by Richard F. Conn Story Book, Hodaka 125 Wombat Owner's Manual, Enamel Light Reflector, Atlas Dovetailed Powder Box, Brass & Chrome Gasoline Torches, Brass Vase, Spittoon, Bowl & Bird, Tin Type Photos, Reproduction Cast Iron Car.

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**1821 DORSEY AVENUE, IRVONA PA 16656**  
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### PUBLIC ESTATE AUCTION

**Wednesday, October 14, 2026 - 9 AM - [www.rgilliganauctions.com](http://www.rgilliganauctions.com)**  
**2000 Volkswagen Beetle - Case 60 Farmall Wide Front**  
**4 Wheel Drive Tractor – Case 1840 Diesel Skid Loader**  
**- Antique & Modern Furniture - Antiques**

Ron J. & Ron S. Gilligan & David C. Zentner will conduct a Public Estate Auction for the David & Janet Hileman Estate located at 1393 Hileman Rd., Tyrone, PA 16686 (Sinking Valley).

**2000 Volkswagen Beetle** w/ sunroof, w/ 33,256 miles - Vin 3VWCC21C3YM464852, **Case 60 Farmall Wide Front 4 Wheel Drive Tractor** (85th Anniv.) year round cab - 3 pt. hitch – good rubber – w/ L360 front end loader – 1055 hrs., **Case 1840 diesel Skid Loader w/ enclosed cab** – 1148 hrs., **Very Nice Furniture:** Beautiful oak 5 pc. bedroom suite, Beautiful 4 pc. antique oak bedroom suite, antique 2 pc. oak high back bed & dresser w/ mirror, pine double bed & dresser, 4 pc. Vaughn Bassett white bedroom suite w/ like new mattress & boxsprings, Nice 4 pc. bedroom suite w/ like new mattress & boxsprings, 4 pc. pine bedroom suite w/ like new mattress & boxsprings, Nice Oak Seller's Hoosier kitchen cupboard, Knickerbocker cute size antique oak ice box, vintage Arts & Crafts mission oak chair, unique & nice antique oak "S" rolltop desk w/ paneled sides, Beautiful fancy antique oak buffet w/ beveled glass mirror top, antique chestnut low back drysink, antique doughtray, large wooden linen closet, oak dressing mirror, 3 pc. wicker sofa & arm chair set, oak tall chest, (2) oak dinette sets w/ 4 chairs, maple single bed w/ good mattress & boxsprings, Sheraton cherry 1 dr. stand, oak pedestal extension dining room table w/ chairs, nice Harvest dining table w/ 4 chairs & 2 benches, Beautiful rose carved Victorian sofa & matching chairs, Victorian arm chairs, Large variety of beautiful lighted curio cabinets in a variety of sizes, 2 marble top harp stands, flame mahogany 4 dr. chest, modern dining table w/ 8 chairs, antique plant stands, 4 painted plank bottom chairs, new leather lift chair w/ heat & massage, upholstered lift chair, (2) Marshfield like new sofa & arm chair sets w/ wildlife motif, 2 matching upholstered arm chairs, glass enclosed quilt rack, telephone stands, Lane cedar chest, maple dinette w/ 6 chairs, maple hutch, modern drysink, nice Lazy Boy recliners, Flexsteel sofa w/ chair & ottoman, 4 pc. wicker set, 3 pc. wicker set, Flexsteel Sleep Haven tapestry flexsteel sofa, oak press back rocker, Cochran like new sofa, cherry coffee table set, antique oak chairs, glider rocker & ottoman, Maytag Epic front loading washer & dryer w/ risers, Whirlpool duet front loading washer & dryer w/ risers, like new Fridgidaire refrigerator, Maytag washer & Hotpoint dryer, Elec. Treadmill, Variety of Oriental rugs from throw to runner to room size, Gardall floor model fireproof combination safe w/ 1 1/2 hr. fire rating...

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## MAXIMIZING YOUR COLLEGE VISIT

### When it comes to selecting the perfect college, there's no substitute for firsthand experience.

College visits are exciting and practical ways to explore campus life, meet with faculty and students, and get a feel for the campus culture.

Sometimes tours are arranged as part of a group while other times individual students can set up tours with colleges, usually starting with their website and contacting the admissions office.

However, making the most of a college visit requires careful planning and preparation. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your college visit as part of making an informed decision about your future.

#### PREPARATION

Before embarking on a college visit, research the schools you plan to visit. Familiarize yourself with their academic programs, extracurricular activities, campus amenities and admission requirements. Make a list of priorities and preferences to help guide your decision-making process.

Many college experts tell you to ignore college rankings as they are typically based on surveys of students attending those schools and not any useful comparison of data that helps you determine whether a school is a good fit.

Find out ahead of time what sort of activities can be included in a college visit. Ask whether you will be able to attend a class, visit dormitories, eat in a dining hall, meet with students or visit nearby attractions. Learn whether you have the option to stay overnight. Ask

- for some time to explore the campus on your own and walk around public areas.
- #### SAMPLE QUESTIONS
- During your college tour, don't be afraid to ask questions. Here are some sample questions to consider:
1. What sets your school apart from other colleges?
  2. Can you tell me more about the academic programs I'm interested in?
  3. What opportunities are available for undergraduate research or internships?
  4. What support services are available for students, such as tutoring or academic advising?
  5. What is the student-faculty ratio, and how accessible are professors outside of class?
  6. Can you describe the campus housing options, and are there any special-interest housing communities?
  7. What extracurricular activities and clubs are available on campus?
  8. How diverse is the student body, and what efforts are made to promote inclusivity and diversity?
  9. What career services are available to help students secure internships and job opportunities?
  10. Can you provide information about campus safety and security measures?



#### PACKING AND ARRIVING

Dress comfortably and wear appropriate footwear for walking. Bring a notebook or smartphone to take notes and jot down any questions that come to mind during the tour.

Be sure to arrive on time and allow plenty of time to explore the campus and its surroundings. Approach the tour with an open mind and a positive attitude, and be prepared to engage with faculty, staff and students.

College visits are one of the top ways to gain insight into each school's offerings and determine which one is the best fit for your academic and personal goals. There are few better ways to learn about a school's culture and what it will feel like to actually attend.

## Consider Renters Insurance

With all the expenses of college life, renter's insurance often fails to make the list of things students need. However, that can be a costly oversight.

Renters policies provide financial protection for personal belongings and liability coverage in case of unforeseen events like theft, fire or accidents.

**MISCONCEPTIONS:** College Confidential reports there are several misconceptions that college students have about renter's insurance. The primary one is that they are covered by their landlord's insurance or the college's insurance. However, that insurance typically covers only the building and injuries. It does not cover a student's personal property.

Other misconceptions students have are that they don't own enough property to cover, that the insurance is too expensive or that their roommate's insurance covers them both. College Confidential points out having to replace everything — from clothing to laptops to bikes to textbooks — can get costly without insurance and typically a policy can be found for as little as \$10 to \$30 a month. Also, renter's insurance is personal; it does not cover everyone living at a property.

**PROS AND CONS:** One of the key benefits of renters insurance is that it covers the cost of replacing personal belongings, such as electronics, furniture and clothing, in case of damage or theft. Additionally, renters insurance typically includes liability coverage, which can help cover legal expenses and medical bills if someone is injured in your rental unit and sues for damages.

Depending on the policy, it may protect your belongings if they are stolen or damaged while you are away from your living space such as in a classroom or the library.

However, renters insurance also has some drawbacks to consider. One potential downside is the cost of premiums, which can vary depending on factors such as location, coverage limits and deductible amounts. Additionally, renters insurance may not cover certain events, such as floods or earthquakes, so students should carefully review their policy to understand what is and isn't covered.

**FINDING A PLAN:** Purchasing renters insurance for campus housing is relatively straightforward. Students can typically obtain coverage through insurance companies that offer renters insurance policies, either online or through local agents. When shopping for renters insurance, compare quotes from multiple insurers to find the best coverage options at affordable rates.

Consider factors such as the coverage limits, deductible amount and any additional coverage options available. Choose coverage limits that adequately protect personal belongings without paying for unnecessary coverage. Review the policy's deductible amount, which is the out-of-pocket expense a policyholder has to pay before the insurance kicks in.

Once you have purchased insurance, create an inventory of items you have. Some agents recommend taking pictures of what you own and backing it up to a cloud storage. This will help you file a claim in the event of fire, theft or other disaster.





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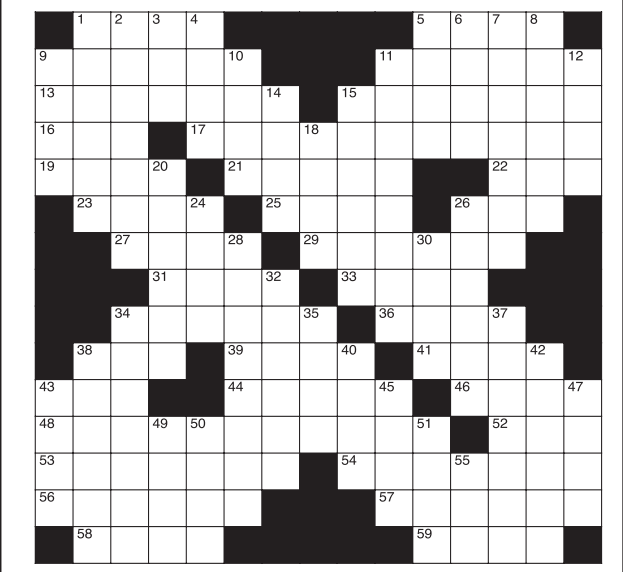
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**AD BARGAIN Crossword Puzzle**  
Solution on page 7



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Difficult
  - 5. Coarsely ground corn
  - 9. A group of similar things ordered one after another
  - 11. Loved Romeo
  - 13. Something to solve
  - 15. Pelvic areas
  - 16. Informal debt instrument
  - 17. Ineffective
  - 19. A device attached to a workbench
  - 21. Related on the mother's side
  - 22. "Fresh Prince of \_\_\_ Air"
  - 23. Astronomer Sagan
  - 25. C. Utah city
  - 26. Turkey
  - 27. Informal terms for money
  - 29. Awakens
  - 31. Those who favored Prohibition
  - 33. Blabbed
  - 34. Looked through
  - 36. Rhode Island rebellion
  - 38. A type of "cast"
  - 39. One's duty
  - 41. Where golfers begin
  - 43. Make a mistake
  - 44. Semitic Sun god
  - 46. Ancient Greek City
  - 48. Removed someone's head
  - 52. A place to stay
  - 53. Unwise
  - 54. Most unnatural
  - 56. "Dennis" is a notable one
  - 57. Ointments
  - 58. Examination
  - 59. Leaked fluid

- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Brave
  - 2. A state of excitement
  - 3. Jest at
  - 4. Sandwich store
  - 5. Chapter of the Koran
  - 6. Dismounted from a horse
  - 7. Small vehicle
  - 8. Irked
  - 9. A disreputable man
  - 10. Monetary unit of Samoa
  - 11. A list of woes
  - 12. Weight unit
  - 14. Alone, single
  - 15. Broadway legend Bernadette
  - 18. Monetary unit of Serbia
  - 20. Worn by exposure to the weather
  - 24. A body of traditions
  - 26. Students seek one
  - 28. Hydrophilic amino acid
  - 30. Nasal mucus
  - 32. Branch of U.S. Congress
  - 34. Swinish
  - 35. Russian assembly
  - 37. Grant an exemption to
  - 38. Set up in advance
  - 40. Satisfy
  - 42. Felt
  - 43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
  - 45. Witnesses
  - 47. Strong insects
  - 49. Gasteier and de Armas are two
  - 50. One of an ancient people inhabiting Scotland
  - 51. Cheerless
  - 55. Unhealthy

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# Breast Cancer Screening Frequently Asked Questions

Preventive health care emphasizes healthy lifestyle choices like eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet and avoiding a sedentary lifestyle. Screening for various diseases, including cancer, is another important component of preventive health care that encourages individuals to be proactive in relation to their overall health.

Women may hear about breast cancer screening as early as adolescence. Despite that, it's not uncommon for women of all ages to have questions about breast cancer screening.

**When should breast cancer screening begin?**  
This is not a one-size-fits-all answer. The American Cancer Society advises women at average breast cancer risk to begin screening between the ages of 40 and 44. Women are considered at average risk if they have no personal history or strong family history of breast cancer. Women also are considered at average risk if they do not have gene mutations linked to breast cancer or a history of chest radiation therapy prior to age 30. While the ACS notes women at average risk have the option to begin screening prior to age 44, the organization advises women to schedule annual mammograms beginning at age 45

and to continue getting them through age 54. If screenings do not show anything by age 54, women can then choose to get a mammogram every other year beginning at age 55.

**What if I am at elevated risk for breast cancer?**  
Women who do not meet the criteria for average risk due to personal or family history will need to begin screening much earlier. The ACS recommends women at high risk for breast cancer get a breast MRI and a mammogram every year beginning at age 30. But the ACS also advises women to make this decision after careful discussion with their health care team. It's also notable that the ACS indicates an MRI should never be substituted for a mammogram, as it's possible an MRI will miss cancers a mammogram will find.

**What is a 3D mammogram?**  
3D mammography is a relatively new screening option that has piqued many women's curiosity in recent years. Brown University Health reports that a 3D mammogram rotates in an arc and takes X-rays of the breast at different angles, ultimately producing a more detailed view of the breast for radiologists to examine. By contrast, a 2D mammogram takes

single X-rays at two different angles. But the ACS notes many breast imaging centers do not have 3D mammography. If given the choice between a 2D mammogram or none at all, women should always get the 2D mammogram. If 3D imaging is available, then that might be the way to go, as Brown University Health notes 3D mammography tends to detect more cancers and produce fewer false positives.

**Are mammograms foolproof?**  
While mammograms are highly effective at detecting breast cancer, they are not perfect. The O'Neal Cancer Center notes that dense breast tissue can make breast cancer detection more difficult. Because no screening is perfect, it's imperative that women adhere to screening guidelines even if results are consistently negative and they do not feel anything unusual during self-examinations.

Screening for cancer is an integral component of preventive health care. Women are urged to make breast cancer screening part of their preventive health care routine.

## Treatment and Early Menopause

For many women, menopause arrives gradually as part of the natural aging process. For some breast cancer patients, however, treatment can bring menopause on suddenly and years earlier than expected.

Chemotherapy, hormone-blocking medications and surgical removal of the ovaries can all affect the body's estrogen production. The result may be a range of symptoms that can significantly impact quality of life, including hot flashes, sleep disturbances, mood changes and vaginal dryness.

Understanding why these changes occur and knowing what options are available can help patients manage symptoms while continuing lifesaving treatments.

**Why Treatment Can Cause Menopause**  
Menopause occurs when the ovaries stop producing significant amounts of estrogen and progesterone. Some breast cancer treatments can disrupt or permanently halt that process.

Chemotherapy may damage the ovaries, particularly in women who are closer to natural menopause. Some women experience temporary menopause during treatment, while others enter permanent menopause.

Hormone therapies, including aromatase inhibitors and ovarian suppression medications, intentionally reduce estrogen levels because many breast cancers rely on the hormone to grow. Surgical removal of the ovaries also causes immediate menopause.

**Managing Common Symptoms**  
Hot flashes and night sweats are among the most frequently reported complaints. These symptoms can interfere with sleep, contribute to fatigue and affect daily activities.

Patients may find relief by dressing in layers, keeping bedrooms cool, avoiding known triggers such as alcohol or spicy foods and practicing stress-reduction techniques. Some nonhormonal prescription medications may also help manage hot flashes.

Sleep disruption often becomes a challenge as well. Establishing a consistent sleep schedule, limiting caffeine late in the day and creating a relaxing bedtime routine may improve sleep quality.

Vaginal dryness and discomfort are common but are sometimes overlooked. These symptoms can affect comfort, intimacy and overall well-being. Water-based or

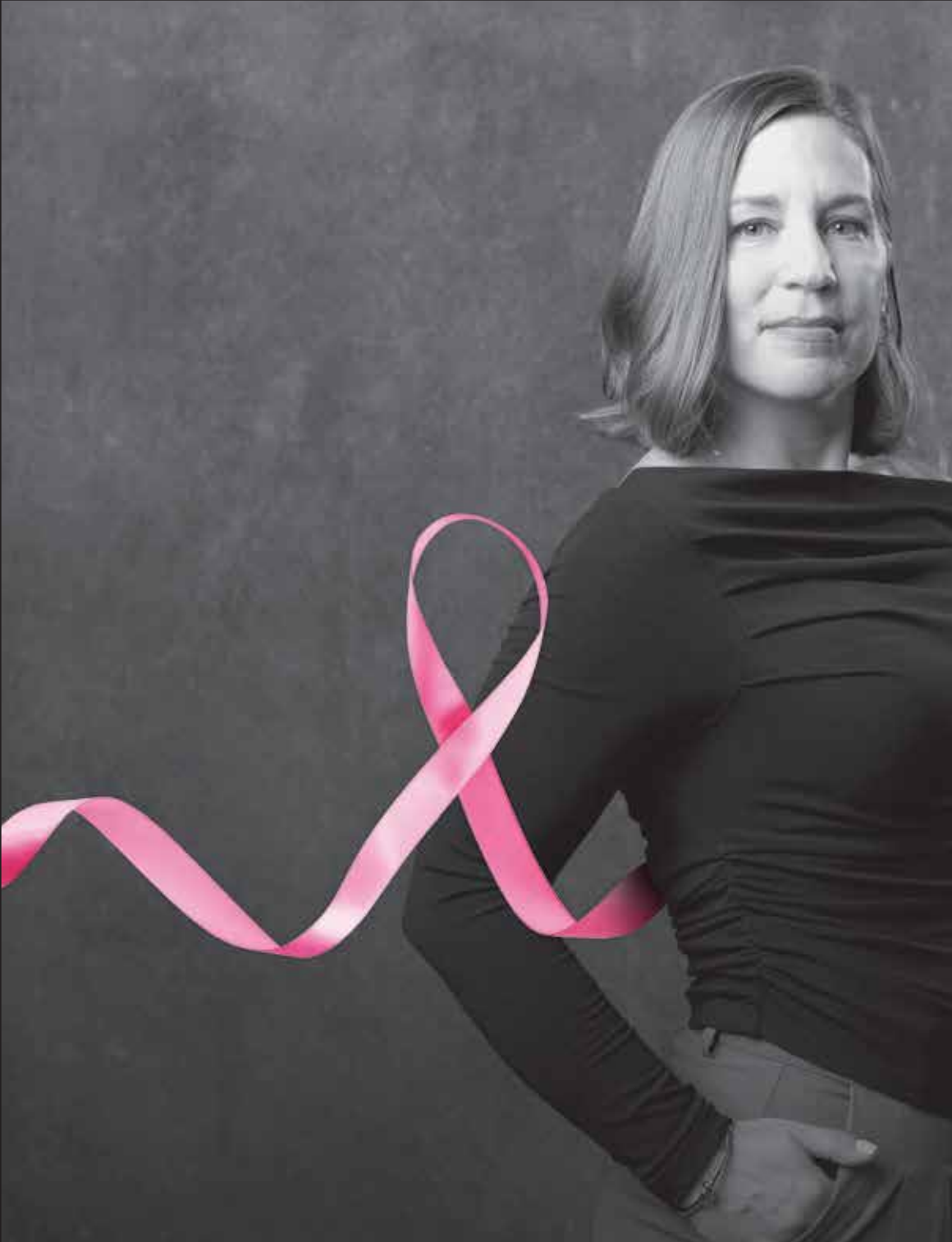
silicone-based lubricants and vaginal moisturizers may provide relief. Health care professionals may be able to suggest additional treatment options.

Other possible symptoms include mood changes, joint pain, decreased libido, memory concerns and changes in bone health.

**Finding Support and Solutions**  
Many women are surprised by the emotional effects of treatment-induced menopause. The experience can be particularly difficult for younger patients who had not expected to face menopause for many years or who are coping with fertility concerns.

Because some breast cancers are hormone-sensitive, treatments commonly used for natural menopause may not be appropriate for breast cancer survivors. That makes communication with the oncology team especially important.

The good news is that patients do not have to simply endure their symptoms. Physicians, gynecologists, menopause specialists, physical therapists and mental health professionals can all play a role in helping women manage treatment-related changes.



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# The effects of breast cancer on the body

The World Health Organization reports that breast cancer was the most common form of the disease among women in 164 of 186 countries in 2024. The footprint of breast cancer is significant, and millions of women and their families confront that impact each year.

Breast cancer affects women in different ways. While each woman’s experience will be different, the following are some of the ways breast cancer can affect the body.

- **Increased feelings of tiredness:** Fatigue is a side effect of breast cancer and the treatments for it. WebMD notes that the fatigue women may feel while battling breast cancer can last for months after treatment, and sometimes even longer than that. But women may not be helpless against breast cancer-related fatigue. In fact, WebMD notes that eating a well-balanced diet, getting sufficient sleep and staying as physically active as possible are some ways women may be able to

alleviate the tiredness that can appear during and even after treatment.

- **Changes to the skin:** According to Breast Cancer Trials, which is an organization made up of breast cancer doctors and researchers devoted to finding better treatments for the disease, the underlying tumor can affect the skin, blood vessels and the lymphatic system. That can lead to an assortment of skin changes, including some that might be the first sign of breast cancer. Redness, dimpling, thickening of the skin on the breast or underarm, scaliness, and persistent itching are some of the skin changes women may experience while battling breast cancer.
- **Swelling in the upper body:** WebMD notes that the lymph nodes from the arm near the breast containing the tumor are sometimes removed during surgical treatments. That removal may be vital, but it also can contribute to a buildup of fluid

that leads to swelling in the arm, chest, and even abdominal region. Stiffness and soreness in these areas also may develop. Chemotherapy drugs also can lead to the buildup of fluid that eventually can contribute to swelling in the arms and legs.

- **Bone loss and vulnerability to fractures:** The Endocrine Society notes that hormonal therapy for breast cancer can make patients vulnerable to fractures. Fracture rates may be as high as 20 percent, and post-menopausal

women may be particularly vulnerable to broken bones after hormonal therapy for breast cancer. Bone loss also may occur because treatments for breast cancer can decrease estrogen. Lower levels of a type of estrogen hormone known as estradiol has been linked to osteoporosis.

No two women experience breast cancer in the same way. But the disease and treatments for it can produce some similar side effects that women can work to address with their health care teams.

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## Obituaries

### James Keeler Lucas

James Keeler Lucas, 67, passed away in the loving care of his wife, Lori, at his home in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, on September 21, 2026. Jim was a Christian and died assured of his salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jim was born August 6, 1959, in Lock Haven. He graduated from Bellefonte Area High School, where he wore #63 on the football team. After completing plumbing training at Williamsport Area Community College, he worked as a pipefitter for the Electric Boat division of General Dynamics in Groton, Connecticut; where he took pride in building submarines for the United States Navy. He later returned to Pennsylvania and worked for the Pennsylvania State University, Office of Physical Plant until his retirement. He retired from Penn State with over 25 years of service. Jim enjoyed hunting and served as an official for local youth sports. A lifelong fan of Penn State Football, he had the honor of working on the chain crew at Beaver Stadium on several occasions. Jim was preceded in death by his father and stepmother, Raymond and Charlotte (Stahl) Lucas; his mother and stepfather, Pamela (Lange) McCloskey and her husband, Robert; and his Godparents, James and Margaret Keeler. Jim is survived by his wife, Lori; his children, Craig, Daniel, and Amanda; and his grandson, Ezra. He is also survived by his sisters, Shelbi Lucas, Rebecca Shull, and Terri Saeger; and his brothers, Bradley Lucas, Douglas Lucas, and Darrin McCloskey. As well as his stepchildren: Larry[Rhonda] Clark, Steve Clark, Jon[Tabitha] Clark and Josh Clark; numerous step-grandchildren: Brooke Clark [Steven], Liz Clark, Steve Clark, Gracie Clark, Addy Clark and Megan Clark; as well as step-great-grandchildren: Kasen, Syrus, Kori, Wrenlee and Greyson. Per his wishes, there will be no funeral service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in his name to Centre/Mifflin County Toys for Tots. Private arrangements are under the direction of the Beezer-Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Philipsburg. Online condolences and memories may be shared at [www.beezerheathfh.com](http://www.beezerheathfh.com) Jim you will always be loved and cherished, we will miss you dearly.

### Ruben Allen Ralston

Ruben Allen Ralston got to meet his Heavenly Father Sept 27, 2026 after spending 87 years on this earth living for and awaiting the eternal reward that he shared his path of with so many during his time with us.

He was born August 18, 1939 in Philipsburg, to Walter Frances and Elverta (Walstrom) Ralston. He spent every day with his wife Delores, who he loved and cherished deeply. He is survived by his wife Delores, along with their daughter Delores “Moe” Bainey and her husband Tim. They had 3 Grandchildren, Timmy & his wife Nikki, Dan & his wife Jenn, and Randy – and 2 Great Grandkids Starcia & Bentley. He was a lifelong student of God’s Word. His passion in living a life full of faith was evident to all he met, and his main goal during his time on this earth was to share that faith with others in the hope that one day they would join him in receiving God’s gift of eternal life. He lived a life full of God and his family. Hosting memorale Thanksgivings (& thanksgiving eve) with his very extended family was always one of his most cherished times of the year. So many brother and sister in-laws, along with their nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews would visit... it was always a memorable time of the year for everyone. He enjoyed his childhood and loved to share stories of adventures he had growing up with his brothers and sisters Francis, Bob, Kay, Sammy, Janice, and Bucky. He enjoyed each and every “season” of life in his earthly body and allowed us to understand what “living a life for Christ” was for those who knew him . From his childhood with family and friends, to sharing the truest love you could imagine with his wife, being a dad and sharing memories with his daughter “moe”, to being the best “Pap” you could ever imagine to his Grandkids, he truly influenced us all in the most meaningful ways. He will be missed, but as he would say “our time on earth is but a blink of an eye when compared to eternity” – and his morning and nightly prayer every single day was for us to believe in Christ, have faith, and live a life that would allow us to look forward to spending our eternity together with him in heaven. Funeral services took place on Saturday, October 3, 2026 at the Parsonship Assembly of God Church, 45 Bulka Rd., Houtzdale, PA Rev. Ron Korzeniowski officiated. Heath Funeral Home & Cremation Services, LLC, Osceola Mills, PA handled the arrangements. TO SIGN THE ONLINE GUESTBOOK – GO TO: [www.heathfuneral.com](http://www.heathfuneral.com)

### John W. “JWally” Dixon

John W. “JWally” Dixon, 80, of Philipsburg and formerly of Zion, died Friday, September 25, 2026, at Harmony at State College.

John was born on March 23, 1946, at his family’s homestead in Philipsburg, a son of the late Donald Elmer and Pearl (Blake) Dixon. He was a 1964 graduate of the Philipsburg – Osceola Area High School. Early in his working career, he was employed with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for about ten years. He then accepted a position with the Pennsylvania State University as a writer / editor / web developer in the IT Services Department. He retired from Penn State after 30 years of service. Ever since high school, one of John’s ambitions in life was to be a sports writer. During his working career, he was a part-time writer for a number of area newspapers including: The Progress, the Centre Daily Times, The Daily Journal, the Altoona Mirror, the Lock Haven Express and the local Hometown Sports Magazine. He also enjoyed working as a statistician for the Penn State Football program. John was a member of St. John Lutheran Church, Bellefonte. Among his favorite pastimes, he enjoyed spending time out golfing. He was married on December 9, 2000, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lanse, to the former Deborah K. “Debbie” Folmar. Debbie survives at home in Philipsburg. He is also survived by a daughter, Jennifer Fisher and her husband, Bryan, of Huntingdon, Pa.; one granddaughter, Amber Varner; two great-grandchildren; four sisters: Donna Mae Larson, of Redding, California, Janet Arlene Sweeden and her husband, Gary, of Sonoma, California, Jennie Mary Makaiwi, of Kaunakakai, Hawaii, and Kim Marie Barney, of Mississippi; one brother, Ronald L. “Doodle” Dixon and his wife, Linda, of Wallaceton; and numerous other family members and friends. John was preceded in death by a sister, Geraldine Ann Thomas; two brothers, Kenneth Edmund Dixon and James Earl “Cousy” Dixon, Sr. and an infant brother, Donald Thomas Dixon, in addition to his parents. Memorial contributions may be made in John’s memory to the St. John Lutheran Church, 216 N. McAllister Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823; or to the charity of the donor’s choice. Online condolences and memories may be shared at <http://www.beezerheathfh.com>.

### John “John John” Robert Myers Jr.

Mr. Myers, 56, Fallentimber, died Wednesday, September 30, 2026 at UPMC Altoona.

He was born July 27, 1970 in Altoona, a son of the late John R., Sr. and Deborah A. (Leach) Myers. On August 15, 2025, in Ft. Myers Beach, FL., he married Mariann T. Sheets who survives along children Travis J. (Natasha) of Hustontown, Karissa L. of Altoona, Shaun T., Hanna M. and Paige M., all at home and grandchildren Sophie, Micah, Paizleigh, Jazzlynn, Zoey and Ivy. He was also preceded in death by a sister Edwinna. He was a 1988 graduate of Glendale High School and was a truck driver and mechanic for Mustang Carriers, LLC. out of Palatka, FL. and Fallentimber. John John enjoyed being a truckdriver, working as a mechanic, dirt track racing, cutting firewood, four-wheeling and making hay. He was a life member of the Reade Volunteer Fire Company. But his greatest enjoyment was spending time with his family.

### Michael S. Peoples

Michael Steven. 62, of Coalport, passed away on Saturday, September 26, 2026 in Ebensburg.

Born on Sunday October 20, 1963 in Philipsburg, son of the late Roy C Peoples and Linda L. Smith. He married the former Margaret Mary (Palmer) Peoples in 1985 and enjoyed 41 years of marriage. He is survived by his wife, Mary; his brother, James (Sue) Peoples, and step-siblings: Diana (Kirk) Nelson-Winchell and William Nelson, Jr.. Mike is preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Mary and Carl Peoples, who raised him and his maternal grandparents Virginia and James Smith. Michael began his career right out of high school at Leyo’s Supermarket in Coalport, retiring as the market’s butcher with 37 years of service. He was a life member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and served as the Central Pennsylvania Elk Chapter chairman for 33 Contributions in Mike’s memory may be made to the charity of your choice. Condolences for the family may be left at [www.gibbonsfunerals.com](http://www.gibbonsfunerals.com)

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2026

# Local historian publishes book on WWII veteran

Waite shares war stories of veteran Roger Bowers in recent novel

By JAYLA NARTATEZ  
jnartatez@altoonamirror.com

Philip Waite has been a World War II history buff for most of his life. Everywhere he's gone, he's been influenced by WWII veterans who have further blossomed his interests. In seventh grade, Waite recalled having WWII veteran Melvin Bennet as a substitute teacher who asked his class questions about the war. When Waite

answered, he expressed his interest in history, and a week later, Bennet gave Waite an envelope full of items he brought back from WWII. The moment was special for Waite. "Holding that packet of military items that he brought home really brought it alive for me. I thought, 'Man, this is real history,'" Waite said. "The fact that someone went out of their way to share that with me, that's really cool." Waite grew up in Martinsburg and graduated from Central High School. He eventually earned his degree in history and a minor in secondary education and political science from

Saint Francis University. He has a wife, Julie, three biological daughters and one adopted daughter. At a young age, Waite was surrounded by history and veterans, as his father and most of his uncles served in the military. Growing up, Waite and his father watched WWII movies together and developed a strong bond. He appreciated the love and respect his dad had for history, which grew his eagerness and curiosity to learn more about the past — so much so that he decided to join the Navy and serve his country like the heroes he looked up to. Now, Waite is a pastor, Navy veteran and a retired teacher who devotes himself to teaching the younger generation about the heroes of America who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Over the last 20 years, Waite's passion for WWII has "tremendously" developed as he has put together events and taken veterans on trips to the WWII veteran memorial in Washington, D.C. However, Waite took a particular interest in one WWII veteran who was born and raised in Roaring Spring: Roger Bowers. After meeting in 1996, Waite has been documenting Bowers' stories about war and recently self-published a nonfiction novel, "Through My Eyes," an eyewitness account of WWII told by a combat medic and prisoner of war (POW). "It's a real testimony of what I'm calling one man's war experience. From the time Roger first told me he first heard about Pearl Harbor being bombed, to the time when he left high school and got drafted, from his basic training and in combat," Waite said.

**Preserving a legacy**

Bowers previously asked Waite to throw a few of his stories together, but Waite got the idea to take it a few steps further. Over a period of about 25 years, he gathered stories from Bowers about his life before, during and after the war with the desire to write a book, sharing Bowers' story with the world. "I think it's important that people see history from the men who served it. It's important to hear it in their words and to see what they saw," Waite said



Courtesy photo  
Philip Waite (right) poses for a photo with veterans Roger Bowers (left) and Joe Reasy. Waite recently published a book detailing Bowers' war stories from serving during WWII.

While it took a while for Bowers to fully open up, Waite took notes on just about anything he talked about because it was so interesting to him. No matter where they were, Waite would jot down information in a notebook, on a napkin, his phone or anywhere he could. During their conversations, Waite listened intently and in awe as he said Bowers shared some of the most heart-breaking details of being a combat medic in WWII. Even at a young age, Bowers wanted to serve his country by going overseas in the military. Waite thought Bowers' resilience and selflessness should be made public after everything he'd been through. In 1944, Waite said Bowers was captured at an aid station where he was working and was brought to a German prison camp. When he went into prison, he weighed 225 pounds, but when he was liberated, he only weighed about 105 pounds. Waite said his doctor said if he had been in that prison camp for two more weeks, he would have died of starvation and malnutrition. Having great respect for Bowers and his dedication to serving the country, Waite considered him to be a hero. However, Waite said Bowers reserved the hero title for all the men who never returned home from battle. "He is one of the many unsung heroes of WWII. There'll never be a monument made to guys like Roger, there'll probably never be a movie made," Waite said. "The best thing we could do is

honor his legacy with this book." While Bowers shared a lot of details about what he faced in combat, Waite said Bowers encouraged him to pursue writing the book, but had one request — to wait and publish the book until after he passed away. Waite said Bowers didn't want all the glory or recognition from people because he believed the true heroes were already gone. In 2020, Bowers passed away at the age of 96. Dwight Bowers, Roger Bowers' son, was very close with his father and said he's grateful that Waite is writing this book. "He told me some stories, not a whole lot. That's something I didn't really question that much," he said. "But I think it's important to let stories like that be told. Where the generations came from and where the country was formed." Dwight and Waite said Roger Bowers was a humble and modest man. Having his own life and living away from home, Dwight was happy to know that Waite was there for his father. As Bowers' son, Dwight is proud that people like Waite still care and want to know what transpired during that time in history. He's thankful for Waite's knowledge and holds onto his father's legacy. "He taught me life lessons that I still live by today and that your word is your word," Dwight said.

**A relationship beyond history**

Throughout the years

of knowing each other, Waite and Bowers developed a strong relationship. Bowers opened up to Waite, telling him stories about what he saw and experienced in war that he'd never told anyone else. "The more I invested in him, the more he really poured and invested back in us. I think he trusted me to the point where he knew I was asking him questions because I really wanted to know what his legacy was and be able to honor him," Waite said. When Bowers was drafted to the military, he hadn't graduated high school yet and never did until 2001, when Waite approached Central High School with an idea. Waite helped organize a graduation ceremony in a park for Bowers, and several other veterans who never graduated, where they received their diplomas from Central High School. "I didn't realize how many WWII veterans got drafted before graduating and never graduated," Waite said. "Once that happened, I think Roger realized I really had an interest in him and veterans." For several decades, Waite was a social studies teacher at Central. During that time, Waite would bring in Bowers to speak to his class about WWII and everything he experienced. Waite said he was amazed at how engaged and focused his students were while listening to Bowers. Students would walk up to him, shake his hand and thank him for his service. One of Waite's favorite moments as a teacher



Roger Bowers stands in uniform outside his home in June 1945.



Roaring Spring native Roger Bowers is the subject of Philip Waite's novel, "Through My Eyes," about Bowers' experiences in WWII as a combat medic and prisoner of war.

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6371

# BOOK: ‘I want to pass on these stories’ from WWII veterans

(Continued from Page 8)

was when Bowers came to share with one of his classes. After speaking with the students, Waite said one of them asked Bowers about his thoughts on what was happening overseas when the United States got involved with Afghanistan and Iraq.

Waite said Bowers responded by saying, “I would enlist and go fight if they would take me. Extending freedom to others and defending it for our own people is the greatest gift you can give anyone. At my age, I would go today, so none of you guys had to.”

Bowers was 80 years old at the time.

“That’s what I want to do. I want to pass on these stories and interest in history because most of our WWII veterans are gone. The students of today and the children of tomorrow just don’t have that chance to meet these guys and interact with them,” Waite said.

## Bringing history into the workspace

From 1985 to 1988, Waite was recalled to active duty in the Navy and in 1990 to 1991, he served during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Waite bonded with Bowers over serving the country, but said he experienced nothing compared to what Bowers did.

After retiring from the Navy, Waite spent 35 years teaching and retired at the end of the 2026 school year. He started his teaching career at Juniata Valley for two years and ended

## The Waite file

**Name:** Philip J. Waite

**Age:** 62

**Hometown:** Martinsburg

**Education:** Central High School; bachelor’s degree in history and minor in secondary education and political science from Saint Francis University

**Family:** Wife, Julie; four daughters

a 33-year tenure at Central High School, where he introduced Bowers to hundreds of students for 15 years.

“My favorite thing about teaching was being able to allow the students to see that the men and women who served were just like they were. People who went off to war and served did so because they loved their country. They had a duty, but in the long run wanted to come home and spend time with their families,” Waite said.

Dave Crumrine, Central principal from 1998 to 2018, said Waite was an outstanding teacher and person. Crumrine taught Waite in his problems of democracy class when Waite was in high school and said he was always very focused on recognizing veterans for their service.

After decades of teaching, Crumrine believes that Waite had a great impact on his students and that listening to Bowers gave those students a hero to look up to.

“He knew an awful lot and was able to not just stand up front and recite names and dates and places, but he was able to tell the stories that made it more interesting to the kids, and he used Roger and other veter-

ans to do the same kind of things,” Crumrine said.

For the last 14 years, Waite has been focusing his time as a full-time pastor at Target One Ministries. His love and passion for history has merged into his teachings in church, as some of the illustrations he uses have a military aspect or relation to them.

Now that he’s no longer a teacher, Waite said the biggest challenge for him is finding avenues or groups of people who share his knowledge and similar interest in history as he does.

## Moving history forward

Since publishing his book in July, Waite has sold well over 100 copies. Through the book, Waite hopes that people understand the “extraordinary” actions of veterans and respect the fight that they fought.

“He ran toward fire to save guys, he ran right into action to pull men out. I just hope they take away a realization that our freedom isn’t free and it’s men like Roger Bowers who paid the price for us to live in the free country we live in today,” Waite said.

With more veterans out there, he hopes to be



Courtesy photos

**Philip Waite, in uniform, stands with his parents after returning home from Desert Shield and Desert Storm.**

able to tell their stories as well. In the future, Waite wants to write another book using the interviews he conducted with Bowers’ friends as they shared some of their stories from the war.

Moving forward in life, Waite said he will follow Bowers’ example by waking up each morning and making every day count, no matter what he goes through.

“He lived a great life and he never asked for anything, never complained and just overcame any adversity he had. So I’m going to take that into my life and pass it onto my children. I tried to pass it on to my students, go and



**Philip Waite speaks at a school assembly with Roger Bowers.**

use his example to help people live a victorious life,” Waite said.

Anyone interested in reading Waite’s book can purchase it on Amazon or visit his website <https://www.throughmyeyesww2.com/>.

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Visit [www.tyroneboropa.com](http://www.tyroneboropa.com)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

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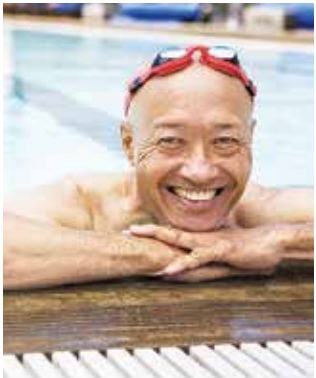
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# Dementia blood test isn't totally necessary

Be Well: Focus efforts on addressing preventable risks

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD  
*The Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — New blood tests that might predict Alzheimer's years before symptoms begin may sound tantalizing for people who worry about later-in-life dementia. But doctors say they aren't quite ready yet — and besides, you don't need a test before trying to lower your risk. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has cleared four blood tests to help doctors diagnose whether Alzheimer's — not another kind of dementia or something else — is behind someone's memory problems or other cognitive symptoms. Some laboratories and online services offer their own tests. Faster diagnosis can help people with early-stage Alzheimer's qualify for drugs that can modestly slow the worsening of their symptoms.

Yet dementia specialists say people without symptoms also seek those tests even though they're neither approved nor recommended for that population. For now, "the worried well should not be getting those tests" outside of a research study, stressed testing expert Nicholas Ashton, of Arizona's Banner Health.

Instead, focus on addressing potentially preventable brain risks. One large study found people who reached middle age without high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking lived dementia-free for a lot longer — nearly 13 years longer — than people with all three of those common health problems in their 50s. "Be aggressive," advised Dr. Josef Coresh of NYU Langone Health, the study's senior author. Even delaying those risky conditions "has a huge payoff."

## What Alzheimer's blood tests can and can't do

Like many people who have watched a loved one succumb to Alzheimer's, Mark Yost wonders about his own risk even though he doesn't have symptoms. "I want to know what my status is," said Yost, 60, of Phoenix. And if signs of trouble develop, "what I can do about it to either avoid it or slow it down." It's not clear what causes Alzheimer's, but its telltale markers are abnormal forms of two proteins. Sticky beta-amyloid can build into brain-clogging plaque over decades, eventually spurring neuron-killing tau tangles that lead to symptoms. Blood tests that measure a tau type called p-tau217 seem particularly good at reflecting amyloid buildup in people with symptoms. As for the symptom-free, a study led by Mass General Brigham researchers found older adults with very high p-tau217 levels had a 38% risk of developing cognitive impairment within five years, and a higher risk over 10 years.

See **Dementia**/Page 5

# Fading Family Craft



## A traditional Chinese coffin maker in Malaysia preserves ancient customs

Associated Press photos  
Goh Khuay Par works on a Mei Hua coffin at his family's workshop on Sept. 3 in Muar, Malaysia.

BY VINCENT THIAN AND MARIA TERESA HERNANDEZ  
*The Associated Press*

MUAR, Malaysia — It's been 52 years since Goh Khuay Par carved his first Mei Hua coffin. The traditional Chinese design takes its name from the plum blossom, or "mei hua" in Mandarin, and has been part of his family's trade in Malaysia for three generations. "My father was my master," said Goh, now 69, at the modest workshop he runs with his brother in the town of Muar, about 110 miles southeast of Kuala Lumpur. "He taught me for two and a half years."

Goh no longer recalls details of his first coffin. It was most likely a small, thin piece, like the ones his father had him make when he was just starting out. His products became thicker over time for a more striking appearance. Each coffin is made by hand and requires extensive work. Years ago, when the workshop had more craftsmen and more orders, they could turn out up to five a month. These days Goh and his brother make about two every six to seven weeks.

"In the past there weren't newer styles, so people used this kind," Goh said. "Now there are many different kinds to choose from." His workshop has long served Malaysia's Chinese community, where coffins are intertwined with traditions related to death and burial. Ethnic Chinese currently make up about 22% of Malaysia's population, according to the country's Department of Statistics.

On occasion, Goh's workshop also made coffins for clients in Singapore, home to another large Chinese diaspora



The Associated Press

Goh Khuay Hou applies red paint to a Mei Hua coffin at his family workshop.

community. Those orders have ceased. "Times have changed," he said. "This line of work will eventually be phased out. There's no one to take over."

## Traditions maintain bonds between the living and the dead

Traditional Chinese beliefs envisioned an afterlife that in many ways mirrored the world of the living, rather than the Christian or Islamic conception of heaven or hell as a person's ultimate destination. Over time, Buddhism introduced ideas of reincarnation and karmic retribution, linking a person's fate after death to their actions in life.

"Chinese funeral rituals, burial practices, and tomb designs must almost all be understood through this lens," said Ling Tek Soon, a scholar at the Universi-

ty of Malaya's Institute of China Studies. Ling said Taoist funeral rituals include the symbolic crossing of the "Naihe Bridge," or Bridge of Helplessness. The rite symbolizes the deceased's final departure from the world of the living and helps the family come to terms with the loss. Other traditions, however, provide ways for the living to maintain a connection with the dead. During the Qingming Festival, observed each year in April, families visit ancestral graves with food offerings and burn incense and paper replicas of everyday goods for their ancestors. "The symbolism behind this practice is that burning transfers these physical worldly goods to the deceased," Ling said. "These actions are all modes of communicating with the ancestors."

See **Craft**/Page 4

# Centenarians in Japan exceed 100K for the first time

BY MARI YAMAGUCHI  
*The Associated Press*

TOKYO — The number of people aged 100 or older in Japan surpassed a record 100,000 this year, the latest government figures show, underscoring the country's rapidly aging and declining population. The Health and Welfare Ministry statistics released Tuesday show Japan now has 107,677 centenarians, up 7,914 from the previous year and exceeding the 100,000 mark for the first time. Nearly 88%

of them are women. Kyoto resident Fuyo Kishimoto was recently recognized as the oldest Japanese woman at age 114. Japan's oldest male is 112-year-old Hikaru Kato from Kumamoto in southern Japan. The figures were released to mark this year's Sept. 15 Respect the Aged day, when healthy and active centenarians are honored by the government with a letter from Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and a silver sake cup. "I'm very pleased that many

people are living a long, healthy and active lives," Health Minister Kenichiro Ueno told reporters Tuesday, citing progress in medical technology, healthy lifestyle and diet as contributing factors. Ueno noted the importance of maintaining a sustainable social security system as the population continues to age and decline. Many younger people, however, are not optimistic about their future.

See **Japan**/Page 3

Elderly people rest under the shade of a tree on Sept. 14 in Tokyo, Japan.



The Associated Press

# Shannon dedicated to her work

By **GEORGE THOMAS KATTOUF**

For the Mirror

Many of you reading the Fitness Track are involved in volunteerism.

Perhaps you have retired and have the time to devote your skills and compassion to help others. You may not be retired yet still support others even though your time is limited. In either case, you should be proud of what you have done to improve the lives of others. Evelyn Shannon, better known as EJ, has committed most of her adult life to helping others. Her dedication has become even more pronounced as a 62-year-old retiree.

Growing up in Hollidaysburg, Shannon did not participate in sports or pursue a fitness lifestyle. She graduated from Robert Morris College with a degree in computer programming.

"I did that for several years, and then once I had my first child, I took some time off. I started a business with another person and we did fundraising for over 25 years," said Shannon. The name of the business was Total Concepts and Fundraising.

Shannon was raising children and actively involved in helping others, though she was not devoting time to any aspect of fitness.

"I did not get involved in fitness until my children were older. When they were in the senior high level, both of my boys were very active in sports, and I had a little bit of time for myself. I started with Zumba, and they were called the Zumba Sisters. I also went to the Groove. I had a few friends who asked me to go to class with them, and so that's how it all started. I was a little bit overweight and started going in the evenings three times a week," said Shannon.

A friend who was in her Zumba class asked Shannon to try a program offered at Gorilla House in Altoona.

"It was called the Silverbacks, and it was for anybody in their 50s and over. I started going there and it was more weightlifting. We did cardio with skiers and bikes. Boxing was also part of the program. When COVID hit and everything closed, a few of them decided to have class outside at Hollidaysburg Senior High. We would meet at six in the morning, three days a week. We'd bring weights to use during exercise and run around the school," said Shannon.

Those early morning routines continued when Gorilla House reopened. She has maintained her consistency and dedication to fitness ever since.

"I joined Barbells at the Gorilla House. It's an intense strength training program. We do deadlifts, cleans, presses, bench presses and other free weight exercises," said Shannon who trains three days a week under the direction of Angela Ross.

Unsolicited, Shannon praised Ross. "Honestly, she has the best programs for all ages. She is always so encouraging to seniors. If you can't do it, she always has a modification. Personally, she has been a great mentor and has always been encouraging. She's the reason I get up at 4:30 in the morning to get ready to go to Barbell at 6:30 three times per week."

Ross, owner of Gorilla House Gym, returned the praise without hesitation. "She (Shannon) donates a large amount of her time to our community to serve others. On Saturday mornings, she is at the gym bright and early as soon as we open with a few friends and puts them through a workout. She brings positive energy, and a great workout ethic. She lifts oth-



Courtesy photos

Evelyn "EJ" Shannon leads an exercise class at Blair Senior Services, where she teaches twice a week. Below, Shannon works as a volunteer cook at Saint Vincent de Paul soup kitchen.



ers up, while continually working on herself."

Shannon has seen dramatic changes in her physicality since embarking upon strength training. She realizes the utility of having strength, particularly since she continues to donate her time and energy to helping others.

"I'm stronger, more defined, and now have muscle mass. I used to be very thin, but I had no muscle mass. I need strength because I volunteer as a cook at Saint Vincent De Paul soup kitchen. I am lifting 20-to-40-pound trays of food and don't have any problem lifting. I need to be strong to be able to help at the soup kitchen," Shannon explained.

Her spirit of helping others is not limited to cooking for others. She also is providing a valuable service to seniors in the community based upon her newly developed strength and level of fitness.

"I teach two times a week at Blair Senior Services. I provide a half hour of stretch and mobility. On Tuesdays, I call it Fun Day because I do something different each week. We might do a half hour of hula hooping, kettlebell, drumming, or you use sticks and perform routines. Thursday is all strength training. That's when we'll do squats, bicep curls, triceps, and shoulder presses. Everything that I teach at both classes can be done in a chair or standing" said Shannon.

Shannon emphasizes the need to have leg strength. She is well aware of the negative consequences of seniors falling. She has the class practice squatting to build leg strength and balance. The senior members learn to drop their weight to bring them closer to the ground and minimize or prevent damage from falling.

"I also teach them how to get up if they fall. I had

a lady that fell in a parking lot and there was nobody around. She told me she was able to get up on her own and would have had to lay till somebody came and provided assistance," said Shannon.

She emphasizes the need for her members to walk a minimum of five thousand steps per day. Shannon walks ten to twelve thousand steps per day.

"I have a message board through Facebook and they'll say 'I walked a mile today.' Some of them walk two miles or three miles," said Shannon.

She is an advocate for one dietary principle and strongly encourages seniors to follow her lead.

"I just went on vacation with five women. At breakfast I said, 'Eat eggs! We're not eating Danishes until you guys eat eggs.' They said, 'We are on vacation.' I am a preacher of protein. Carbs are not your enemy. You still need carbs to be able to work out, but I try to get my protein intake every day," Shannon explained.

Shannon has words of wisdom which should be embraced by women, young and old.

"I say strong is the new beautiful. I will take being strong any day over being beautiful because if you don't use it, you're going to lose it," Shannon said.

*George Thomas Kattouf of Altoona is the developer of the website AgelessTimeless.com. He has been instructing martial arts for over four decades in the Altoona Area at the Academy of Martial Arts and encourages seniors to stay fit through martial arts training. If you or someone you know in Blair County is age 50 or older and would be a good candidate for the Fitness Track, email Kattouf at george@agelesstimeless.com. Tune in to the YouTube channel AgelessTimeless to learn more.*

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**SELLING IN A BUYER'S MARKET**

If you have been clinging to real estate news from a couple of years ago, you probably still picture a world where you could throw a sign in the yard, host a packed open house, and collect 20 over-asking offers by Sunday evening.

**I hate to break it to you, but that train has left the station.** We have officially crossed the line from a lack of houses to a lack of buyers. Don't get me wrong. Buyers are still out there. They're just more choosy than they used to be. Across our local area, inventory is climbing, homes are taking longer to sell, and buyers are finally gaining the upper hand. When months of supply start pushing toward that magic six-month mark, the steering wheel shifts firmly into the buyer's hands. We're headed in that direction.

Selling a home today doesn't mean you can't win—it just means you have to stop playing by 2021's rules. Trying to use peak-market tactics today is the fastest route to a stale listing, zero showings, and a series of painful price cuts. Here is how to actually get a deal done without losing your mind—or your equity.

**Ditch the "Test the Market" Strategy.** In a red-hot seller's market, listing high to "see what happens" was a gamble that often paid off. Today, it's a fast ticket to hearing crickets chirping.

When you overprice a home in a buyer's market, buyers don't look at it as a challenge—they simply ignore it and look at the three other properly priced homes down the street. Once your home sits for thirty, sixty, or ninety days, a subtle stench of desperation sets in, and buyers start asking what is secretly wrong with the place.

So price it right from day one. Get a good agent and look at cold, hard MLS sales data from the past thirty days—not what your neighbor Bob says he got for his house two years ago, and certainly not what your Zestimate claims on a good weather day.

**Consider a Pre-Listing Appraisal.** If you want to completely eliminate the guesswork and emotional bias from your pricing, consider ordering a pre-listing appraisal before your home hits the market. Hiring an independent licensed appraiser gives you an objective, unbiased benchmark of what a lender's appraiser will actually value your home at later in the deal. Standing on an official appraisal report when you set your asking price gives you an airtight defense against lowball offers, keeps you grounded in actual market value, and prevents the heartbreak of a deal falling apart three weeks into escrow because of an appraisal shortfall.

**Condition Is No Longer Optional.** Remember when sellers could leave deferred maintenance everywhere and still get a bidding war? Those days are gone.

When inventory is high, condition is your primary differentiator. Optional staging and light repairs are no longer optional. Your home needs to be deep-cleaned, clutter-free, and painted, with everything in working order. In fact, smart sellers are doing pre-listing inspections to catch structural or HVAC surprises before a buyer's inspector finds them. If you leave a laundry list of subtle repairs for the buyer to discover, expect them to knock thousands off their offer for trouble you could have fixed with a weekend trip to the hardware store.

**Marketing Needs to Do More Than Exist.** With high inventory, putting ten blurry cell phone photos on the local MLS and calling it a day isn't marketing—it's wishful thinking. Your home is competing against dozens of alternatives for a limited pool of qualified buyers. Professional photography, video walkthroughs, and targeted digital reach aren't flashy extras anymore; they are the bare minimum needed to get someone off their couch and through your front door. Good thing Perry Wellington Realty offers all of that plus drone video and your listing featured on our live weekly TV show - all for our low 2.5% Commission rate. No additional charge. Why list anywhere else?

**Learn the Art of Creative Negotiation.** When an offer finally comes in, don't get defensive if it isn't a carbon copy of your asking price. Price is only one dial you can turn.

In today's rate environment, buyers are looking at their monthly cash flow above almost everything else. Being open to seller-paid closing cost credits, funding a mortgage rate buydown, or agreeing to a reasonable repair request can often bridge a huge gap. Sometimes giving a buyer a credit toward their loan costs saves the deal and nets you more money than simply slashing your sticker price.

**Let the Data Do the Heavy Lifting.** The hardest part of a shifting market is the emotional adjustment. Homes take longer to sell now, and negotiation cycles feel like a game of chess rather than a sprint.

The best thing you can do is set predefined evaluation points at two weeks, thirty, sixty, and ninety days. Look strictly at showing activity, online views, and local price trends. If the market is telling you that your price or presentation is off, don't take it personally—adapt. FAST. The sellers who listen to the data (and their agent) win the game; those who argue with it end up sitting on the market until next season.

Adam Conrad Jr. MBA, CRS®, DRE®, CRB®, SRS®, e-Pro is the broker/owner of Perry Wellington Realty, licensed in PA, FL, MD, and WV. Adam is the Owner and Director of Education of Vintage Real Estate School. He is also a Licensed Certified Residential Appraiser and Title Agent. Adam has lectured in business and entrepreneurship at Pennsylvania State University, Saint Francis University, and other colleges. He hosts a weekly TV show on NBC affiliate WJAC on Fridays at 12:30 p.m. He is also an author and contributor to Inman News. All statistics courtesy of the Allegheny Highlands Association of Realtors (1/1/18 – 12/31/25).

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# Planning a simple, affordable funeral

Dear Savvy Senior, I'd like to make my end-of-life arrangements, but I want to keep things simple and affordable. What are my options? — **86-Year-Old Dear 86,**

Smart thinking! Planning ahead can save your loved ones a lot of stress, and money. With a traditional burial averaging around \$10,000 and a full-service cremation near \$6,500, it's easy to see why many seniors are looking for simpler, lower-cost ways to say goodbye.

The good news is, there are plenty of options that are dignified, straightforward, and much easier on your wallet. Here's a look at some choices, depending on the kind of farewell you want.

### Direct cremation

If cremation appeals to you, a direct cremation is the simplest – and usually the least expensive – option. It includes picking up the body, completing the required paperwork, the cremation itself, and returning the ashes to your family. There's no embalming, formal viewing, or casket; a simple cardboard box called an "alternative container" is used to hold



Jim Miller  
Savvy Senior

the remains. Depending on where you live and which provider you choose, direct cremation typically costs \$700 to \$3,500. If you want extra services, ask for an itemized price list so you know exactly what you're paying for. Funeral homes are required by law to provide this.

### Immediate or direct burial

If burial is your preference, an immediate or direct burial is the most basic option. The body is buried in a simple container soon after death, skipping embalming, viewings, and the use of funeral facilities. Families can still hold a memorial service at the graveside, at home, or at a place of worship without the body present.

These services usually run \$2,000 to \$3,000, not counting cemetery fees, which can add \$1,000 to \$3,000. Every funeral home offers direct burial.

To find local providers, you can search online for "cremation" or "funeral"

along with your city and state. You can also compare prices on sites like Funeralocity.com or Parting.com. Another handy approach is to use AI tools like ChatGPT or Gemini: you can ask them to pull together lists of nearby funeral homes or cremation providers, see which services they offer, check estimated costs, and even compare options side by side – all in a matter of minutes. It's a quick way to get a snapshot of what's available without making a bunch of phone calls.

### Green burial

For the environmentally minded, green burial is a simple, natural option. The body is buried in a biodegradable coffin or shroud, without embalming chemicals or a vault. Costs typically range from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

The Green Burial Council (greenburialcouncil.org, 888-966-3330) maintains a state-by-state directory of cemeteries and funeral professionals who offer these services.

### Water cremation

Also eco-friendly, water cremation (or alkaline hydrolysis) uses water, chemicals, and heat instead of fire. Costs usually range

from \$2,000 to \$3,500, and it's legal in more than 20 states. Search "alkaline hydrolysis" to find a provider near you.

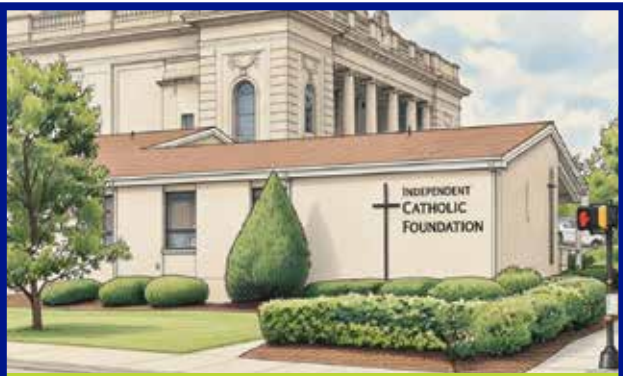
### Donate your body

If you want the lowest-cost option, consider donating your body to science. Medical schools use donated bodies for teaching and research, then return the cremated remains to your family or bury them in a local cemetery – usually free. Some schools may charge a small transport fee.

To find a program in your state, check the University of Florida's U.S. program directory at Anatbd.acb.med.ufl.edu/usprograms, or call the Whole-Body Donation Referral Service at 800-727-0700.

Planning ahead gives you control, saves your family money, and ensures your final wishes are honored. With these options, you can choose a farewell that's simple, meaningful, and within your budget – and doing a little homework now makes it easier for everyone later.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



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# JAPAN: Only 153 at start of count

(Continued from Page 1)

The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research last week released the results of a survey indicating more than 20% of both men and women who are single and aged between 18 and 34 have no intention of ever marrying, with nearly half saying they see no benefit in marriage.

Ueno acknowledged the reasons for marriage reluctance among young people include the high costs of raising and educating chil-

dren and the mental and physical burden on working parents. He said the government will continue addressing their concerns and attempt to turn around problems related to Japan's aging population and dwindling births.

Japan's drastic population decline is inevitable, experts say, noting the country's total fertility rate dropped to a record low 1.14 in 2025, far below the 2.1 children needed to be born to each Japanese woman to maintain the current population.

Japan's total population during the 2020 census stood at 126 million, almost 30% of which were 65 or older. Experts estimate there will be a decline to 87 million by 2070 with nearly 40% aged 65 or older, according to the national institute.

There were 153 people aged 100 or older in Japan when centenarian surveys began in 1963. They exceeded 1,000 in 1981 and surpassed 10,000 in 1998, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry.

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# Too many bags piling up? There’s an easy solution

NEW YORK (AP) — When professional home organizer Britnee Tanner visits her clients, she often spots extra reusable bags buried under the kitchen sink or stuffed in a corner of the pantry.

“They just are sneaky,” said Tanner, who lives in Salt Lake City. “I purchased a handful of these and then somehow I’ve collected ones I’ve never purchased, and I don’t really know where they’ve come from.”

Reusable totes are intended as durable alternatives to single-use plastic bags. But it’s easy to accumulate too many, from freebies at events to giveaways at the grocery store.

The environmental impact of a reusable bag is relatively small, so ending up with a sizable stash isn’t a significant problem. Still, piling down can declutter cupboards and lead to a smaller collection that’ll

actually get used. As for the excess, donate to food banks and thrift stores.

“You don’t want an entire closet of reusable bags,” said sustainability scientist Shelia Miller with the University of Michigan. “You want well-loved reusable items, and that’s really what gives the environmental benefit.”

Single-use plastic grocery bags aren’t meant to last. They become urban tumbleweeds or break down in the environment, releasing harmful microplastics. Single-use plastic shopping bags are banned across 12 U.S. states, and several more cities and towns have instituted their own initiatives, including bag taxes.

As a result, many people stock up on reusable bags made from canvas, cloth or thicker plastic. A few solid, durable bags used for errands or groceries can stand the test of time. Environmental economist Kimberly Oremus uses hers for up to a decade. But whether we intend to or not, additional bags of various shapes and sizes worm their way into our homes.

Just like any product, reusable bags require energy and resources to make — like the water that’s used to grow cotton. Researchers have found that the number of times a bag needs to be reused to offset the environmental cost of its production varies widely based on what the bag is made of.

There isn’t a magic number of uses to strive for, but durable bags that look and feel thicker tend to accrue more environmental debt than flimsy plastic totes and need to be reused more times to pay it off.

Reusables “are generally good for the environment, with the caveat that they have to be reused,” said Miller.

## CRAFT: Cremation more accepted

(Continued from Page 1)  
**Coffins embody respect for the dead**

The bond between the living and their ancestors can also have a physical dimension.

“In traditional Chinese belief, the coffin is viewed as the permanent physical resting place for the deceased,” Ling said.

It should be made from natural, heavy and durable materials — much like the wood used by Goh — and, when affordable, from the finest timber.

“Providing such a coffin expresses the family’s respect and filial piety toward the deceased,” Ling added.

A high-quality coffin can also reflect the prestige and dignity of both the deceased and their family. But its significance can extend beyond status, reflecting an ancient aspiration for immortality.

“Preserving the physical body in a premium-quality coffin subtly holds a lingering hope for a future resurrection or rebirth,” Ling said.

Those beliefs have long shaped the role of traditional coffins in Chinese funeral customs. Yet changing attitudes toward death and the body have gradually altered that role.

Cremation has become more widely accepted across generations, contributing to the decline of traditional crafts like Goh’s.

“It was widely believed that burning the human form through cremation was an act of disrespect,” Ling said. “With changing times, the vast majority of Chinese people today — across the entire Greater China cultural sphere — have come to accept the concept.”



Associated Press photos

**Goh Khuay Par applies a coat of finish to a Mei Hua coffin at his family’s workshop in Muar, Malaysia.**



**Brothers Goh Khuay Par (left) and Goh Khuay Hou inspect a completed Mei Hua coffin at their family’s workshop.**



**Traditional Chinese coffin maker Goh Khuay Par (left) carves a Mei Hua coffin as his brother Goh Khuay Hou paints another at their workshop.**

### A craft with an uncertain future

Goh begins each coffin by tracing the outlines on the wood with a pencil before cutting and shaping it. He uses hand tools including an adze and an axe.

His coffins are made from a Malaysian timber known as “keledang,” traditionally prized for coffin-making among the country’s Chinese community. Goh said the wood once came from southern Malaysia but must now be sourced from the north.

To assemble a coffin, Goh starts with the two sides, adding smaller pieces in the middle and, eventually, the top and bottom. The pieces fit together like a puzzle, with nails used only to hold them in place.

He said the basic process has remained unchanged over the years, providing him with a livelihood for more than five decades.

“It’s been all right,” Goh

said. “It puts food on the table.”

A few other craftsmen once carved coffins in Muar and worked alongside Goh at his family’s workshop. But they retired, leaving only Goh and his brother to carry on the family trade.

His work demands physical strength, and some coffins are harder to make than others. The one currently taking shape in his workshop is among the difficult ones, Goh said, because of the hardness of the wood.

“When you come across very hard wood, that’s what you dread,” he said. “The thing you fear most is getting a really hard piece.”

Those physical demands also leave Goh wondering about the future of his craft.

“It’s not about hoping,” he said. “Young people, would they want to do it?”

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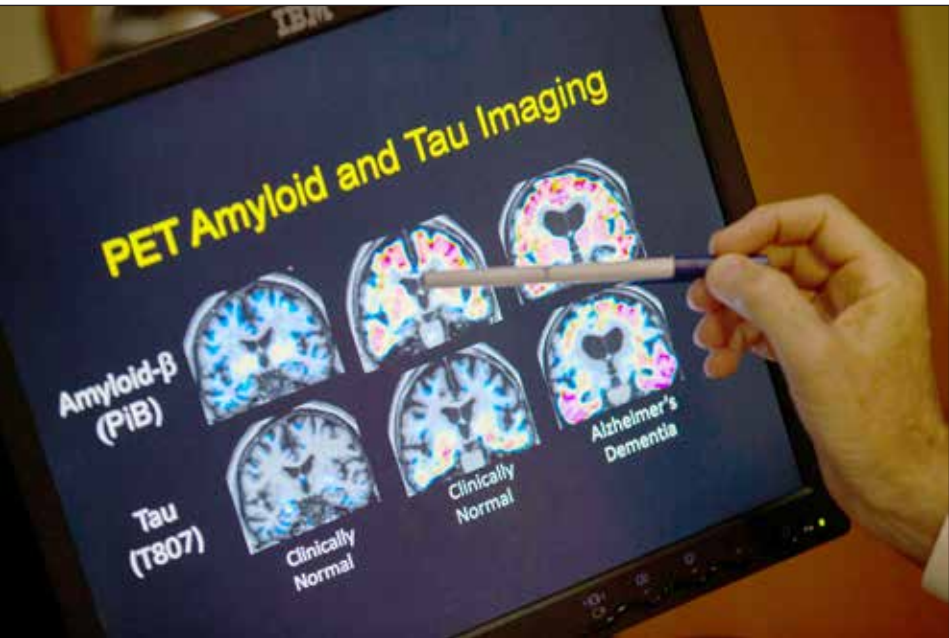
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Associated Press file photo

A doctor points to PET scan results that are part of a study on Alzheimer’s disease at Georgetown University Hospital on May 19, 2015, in Washington.

# DEMENTIA: Middle age a key time

(Continued from Page 1)

Here’s the rub: A “positive” test result is just a risk factor, not a guarantee someone will later develop Alzheimer’s, Ashton cautioned. Lots of older adults harbor high levels of amyloid but never show cognitive trouble. And while negative test results seem pretty reliable, a positive test sometimes is wrong, a so-called false positive.

Yost volunteered for a Banner blood test study that included cognitively normal people and learned his result was “intermediate,” defined as maybe having some amyloid but not a worrisome “elevated” level.

Yost found the uncertainty “a little disappointing” and something to watch as he gets older, while pursuing brain-healthy steps like exercise and a mentally stimulating genealogy hobby.

**What everyone should do**

A major trial last year found that healthier habits slowed age-related cognitive decline in older adults who were at increased risk of developing dementia. Among the steps: A half-hour of moderately intense exercise four times a week, twice-weekly resistance training and following the MIND diet, which stresses lots of leafy greens and berries, whole grains, poultry and fish.

Dementia experts also advise getting enough sleep, avoiding social isolation, treating hearing loss and exercising your brain, not just your body. They say middle age is a key time to act.

As for those extra 13 dementia-free years, the NYU study reinforces that what’s good for the heart is good for the brain.

Coresh’s team analyzed health records of more than 12,000 people who had been tracked for decades since they were, on average, age

56. High blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and smoking can damage blood vessels that feed the brain and fuel inflammation. Those who entered the study without those three problems fared best, but avoiding one or two was helpful. Even people who carry the APOE4 gene, which increases the risk of later-life Alzheimer’s, still benefited from a healthier middle age.

Other studies also have shown that aggressively treating high blood pressure helps brain health.

“Be very serious with your physician about the value of lowering it as early as possible for as many years as possible,” Coresh said.

As for those Alzheimer’s blood tests, stay tuned. Clinical trials are underway to tell if drugs now used to treat Alzheimer’s might also help certain people before they develop symptoms — findings that could change testing advice.

# Volunteering can benefit your mental health

*Metro*

Seniors are vulnerable to mental health issues. The World Health Organization says around one in five older adults experience psychiatric disorders like depression, anxiety, and dementia-related mood changes. While various therapies can help, seniors may discover volunteerism can be a surprising antidote to mental health concerns.

Volunteering offers seniors many benefits, including a renewed sense of purpose. Volunteering also helps combat social isolation, which can lower rates of depression and anxiety. According to Voices for National Service, older adults who volunteer have reduced risk of mortality, more optimism and feel less depressed and lonely. People who were once working full time and are now in retirement may find they have hours to spare. Those hours can be directed toward volunteer efforts, which can boost seniors’ mental health in myriad ways.

■ **Lowers depression and anxiety:** The National Institutes of Health says research indicates consistent volunteering can help to reduce risk of depressive symptoms. Staying engaged and active combats feelings of hopelessness.

■ **Decreased social isolation:** Points of Light says regular time spent with peers and the people being helped can mitigate loneliness. Having a strong support network can make stress more tolerable and increase feelings of belonging.

■ **Restores sense of purpose:** When work ends, many seniors lose the structure that governed their working life. Volunteering gives the opportunity to wake up, follow a schedule and achieve goals. It can be rewarding to play a valuable role in the community again, according to Voices for National Service.

■ **Mental stimulation:** Volunteering may lead to learning new skills and interacting with others, and that can keep the mind sharp.

■ **Physical activity:** Older adults may lead sedentary lifestyles if they have nothing to keep them busy. Volunteering helps a person engage in some sort of physical activity. A 2025 study published in the journal Social Science & Medicine found volunteering is associated with lower levels of hypertension and chronic inflammation. Staying active can lower blood pressure, risk of heart disease and eight types of cancer.

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