

senior review

FREE

August 2025

in this issue...

- ▶ Final Wishes Made Known
- ▶ The Pros and Cons of Long-Term Care Insurance
- ▶ Medicare and Health Savings Account Planning
- ▶ It's Just Stuff: De-cluttering Helps us Focus on What's Important
- ▶ Vagus, The Great Wanderer
- ▶ Dusting Off Some Local History: "Good Swimming Holes"
- ▶ Enjoy the "Dog Days"

A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Eau Claire

Final Wishes Made Known *By Ken Anderson, themayberryguru@gmail.com*

There is one topic that was rarely mentioned on The Andy Griffith Show. Death. Aunt Bee became very distressed one day when an acquaintance her age passed away. Then there was the time undertaker Orville Monroe backed his hearse up to the courthouse door because he had heard Barney had shot himself in the chest. In The Haunted House episode, Barney and Gomer talked about the legend of Old Man Rimshaw killing his hired hand with an ax. However, in real life, death is the one thing no one can escape.



My wife and I recently did something that we have been putting off for a very long time. We finally made all our funeral plans and prepaid everything. As it turned out, it wasn't the unpleasant experience we expected it to be. In some ways, it was enjoyable. It meant several visits with our estate attorney and three meetings with a funeral senior preneed specialist, who just happened to be my wife's former employer and friend. Not having any children meant that Linda and I needed to preplan our final wishes. We did not want to burden any family members or friends with such a personal task.

Our final arrangements include a traditional funeral service at our church. We were both amazed at all the small details we had to make


decisions about. It makes me wonder how people deal with it when there is a sudden death with no arrangements made beforehand. It would make a very stressful and difficult time even more stressful and difficult. While our final arrangements may seem relatively simple, they have not always been so in the past.

Funeral customs have evolved over the years, with many of the traditions now largely obsolete. At one time in America, it was a common practice

upon death to hang black bunting and wreaths on various objects around the house. If a person died in their home, the body was removed from the house feet first to prevent them from beckoning others to follow. It was also a common practice to keep the body at home until the time of the funeral. Mirrors were quite often covered until after the funeral to prevent an image of the corpse from being captured in the glass.


Fortunately, these practices are now a thing of the past, and my wife and I can be assured that our final wishes will be carried out as planned. Now, if you pardon my pun, this topic will now be laid to rest.

TRUE




Lemon Water Prevents Kidney Stones

Research shows that drinking 3 to 4 ounces (about 1/2 cup) of lemon juice with your water throughout the day has fairly similar effects to taking potassium citrate, a common medication for kidney stones.



Hibiscus Tea Lowers Blood Pressure


Hibiscus extract improves blood pressure in animals, and a handful of human studies show benefits of drinking the tea too. Promising, but research hasn't nailed down exactly how much to drink to reap the health perks.



Raw Broccoli Hurts Your Thyroid

Animal studies found that high intakes of cruciferous veggies—like broccoli—triggered thyroid problems. But most human studies suggest that only people who are iodine deficient (rare in the U.S.) need to be concerned.

FALSE



Cinnamon Fights Diabetes

A review study found that consuming cinnamon (typically as supplements) didn't impact insulin, post-meal blood sugar or long-term blood sugar measures; and its effect on fasting blood sugar was "inconclusive." -J.W.

Source: EatingWell Magazine

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The Pros and Cons of Long-Term Care Insurance

By Cole Bruner, President of Buska Retirement Solutions and Buska Wealth Management

Long-term care insurance is designed to cover the cost of services that assist individuals with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or cognitive impairments. These services - such as help with bathing, dressing, or eating - can be provided in the home, assisted living facilities, or nursing homes. With rising life expectancy, the need for long-term care is becoming increasingly common. Long-term care insurance can help offset these potentially devastating costs. However, understanding the different types of coverage, including asset-based long-term care, is key to making an informed decision.

Pros of Long-Term Care Insurance:

- **Financial Protection:** Long-term care can be prohibitively expensive, with nursing home costs often exceeding \$100,000 per year. Insurance helps protect your retirement savings and other assets by covering part or all of these costs.
- **Choice and Flexibility:** With insurance, you're more likely to have options for where and how you receive care, including at home - something many people prefer to institutional settings.
- **Relieves Family Burden:** Insurance can ease the emotional and financial strain on family members, who might otherwise become primary caregivers or have to pay out-of-pocket for services.
- **Inflation Protection:** Many policies offer riders that increase benefits over time to keep pace with inflation - an essential feature considering healthcare cost trends.

Cons of Traditional Long-Term Care Insurance:

- **High and Rising Premiums:** Premiums for traditional policies can be costly, especially for people who wait until their 60s or later to buy. Moreover, insurers often raise premiums after purchase, making long-term affordability uncertain.
- **Use-It-or-Lose-It:** If you never need long-term care, the money spent on premiums may never yield any return - unlike other types of insurance that offer cash value or death benefits.
- **Medical Underwriting:** If you have preexisting health conditions, you may be denied coverage or offered a policy with significantly higher rates.
- **Policy Complexity:** The fine print matters. Policies can vary widely in terms of benefit triggers, elimination periods, and covered services, making it difficult to compare options.

Asset-Based Long-Term Care: An Alternative Option

Asset-based long-term care insurance - also called hybrid life insurance with long-term care riders - combines life insurance or an annuity with long-term care benefits. Here's how it works: You pay a lump sum or a series of payments, and in return, you receive a death benefit plus a pool of money that can be used for long-term care if needed.

Pros of Asset-Based Policies:

Additional Financial Benefits:

- If you never need long-term care, your heirs can receive a death benefit, so the money isn't "wasted."
- **No Premium Increases:** Many asset-based products have fixed premiums, offering greater predictability.
- **Easier Qualification:** These policies may have more lenient health underwriting compared to traditional plans.



Cons of Asset-Based Policies:

- **Higher Initial Cost:** These policies typically require a large upfront payment, which may not be feasible for everyone.
- **Less Flexibility with Funds:** Committing a large sum to a hybrid policy ties up money that might otherwise be invested or used elsewhere.

Long-term care insurance - whether traditional or asset-based - can provide essential financial protection and peace of mind. While traditional policies offer comprehensive coverage, asset-based plans may appeal to those who want both protection and a return on investment. Weighing the pros and cons of each option, based on your health, finances, and family situation, is critical. Consulting a financial services professional can help determine the best path for your long-term care needs.



But what if there were other options?

Asset-based long-term care is life insurance that also provides some long-term care benefits. It's one way to help guard your assets against the financial devastation that can come from an extended or expensive long-term care need. Protecting your assets may well give you more choices in where and how you receive long-term care.

Worried that you may pay premiums but never need long-term care?

If that happens, your beneficiaries can still receive a death benefit. Learn if asset-based long-term care can help you protect the things you care about most!

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Tuesdays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
September 9 - October 21, 2025
Lake Street Methodist Church, 337 Lake St, Eau Claire

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Three-session workshop designed to give women the tools they need to take control of symp-toms. It provides information and group activities along with simple exercises and dietary changes to practice at home. Even if you do not have leakage symptoms now, it is never too early or too late to think about bladder and bowel health. \$10 suggested contribution.

Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am
September 11, 25 & October 9, 2025
Agriculture & Resource Center, 227 1st St. West, Altoona

StrongBodies Information Session for new participants (virtual and phone conference) Strength training is especially important as we age. Being physically active and socially con-nected are both essential for health and well-being. The StrongBodies program provides a safe environment for older adults to improve strength and balance with a fun group of peers. Learn more in this free orientation and sign up for classes starting in late September 2025.



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Repeat participants must complete a Re-enrollment Consent Form to sign up by September 16. Suggested contribution \$20 for repeat participants. Download form at www.adrcevents.org, email adrc@eauclairecounty.gov or call the Aging & Disability Resource Center at 715-839-4735 to request a form by mail.

**REGISTER at least one week prior:
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Medicare and Health Savings Account Planning

By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

As you near retirement age, planning for health care coverage after retirement should take priority. There are many things to think about, including understanding what you need to do to avoid costly penalties due to health care coordination after the age of 65. Your plan should look at when to enroll in Medicare, when your employer coverage will end, whether you will be using retiree coverage, and what other Social Security benefits you will take and when. All these questions, and many more, are important to consider in the planning process. Another thing you may not have thought about is when you need to stop contributing to your Health Savings Account or HSA. Determining when to stop contributing to your HSA is essential to avoid costly tax penalties from the IRS.



Opting to take Social Security retirement benefits will also affect when HSA contributions should be stopped. This is because when you are eligible to take Social Security retirement benefits, you will or should be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A. You will not be able to decline Part A if you collect these benefits. This means that you will be enrolled in Medicare, and any HSA contributions could result in tax penalties.

HSAs are great money savers when you properly coordinate contributions to coincide with your health care coverage. Remember that if you delay enrolling in Medicare, you can get up to six months of retroactive coverage. You will have to plan to stop HSA contributions in the first month Medicare coverage starts to avoid tax penalties. Social Security retirement benefits will automatically enroll you in Medicare Part A and trigger contribution penalties when that coverage begins. Finally, you should coordinate contributions from your spouse's HSA account. If you have questions or concerns about HSA contributions, you should consult the overseer of the account and a tax professional. A little planning ahead of time can save you costly tax penalties.

Getting a little background information about HSAs will help you see the importance of planning to avoid tax penalties and keep you informed of your health care costs. An HSA is a type of savings account that you can contribute to tax-free. The funds can be used to cover qualifying medical expenses, typically including deductibles, copayments, and prescriptions. These plans are available to individuals who have certain types of insurance from their employers, and employers are also allowed to contribute to these accounts.

To qualify for an HSA, you must have a High-Deductible Health Plan. This means that you are responsible for a larger deductible before your health plan begins to pay for services. You will have a larger out-of-pocket expense for healthcare needs, but HSA plans help reduce this burden. HSAs are great because they help to cover high medical costs, but they can be costly when contributions aren't stopped after Medicare starts.

The timing of Medicare enrollment affects when you can contribute to your HSA. You can receive up to six months of retroactive Medicare coverage if you delay your enrollment after the age of 65. Delays mean you need to plan to stop HSA contributions by the first month that Medicare starts. You cannot have Medicare and contribute to an HSA. The tax penalties are imposed because Medicare is not a High-Deductible Health plan, and you are therefore ineligible to contribute to an HSA. You will still have access to the funds that you have already contributed to the HSA, but new contributions will be penalized by the IRS.

The coordination of HSA contributions should also be made with your spouse's coverage in mind. If your spouse has a High-Deductible Health Plan and is still eligible to contribute to an HSA, you should speak to the overseer of the HSA account and seek help from a tax professional to ensure that your spouse's contributions don't lead to tax penalties.



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TICKETS

It's Just Stuff: De-cluttering Helps us Focus on What's Important

By Carl A. Trapani, MA, MS, LPC, Chippewa Manor Campus Chaplain

Let's be honest: somewhere in your house there is a drawer, a box, or an entire closet you haven't opened since the Bush administration. (Whichever Bush doesn't matter now). Inside it? Stuff. Glorious, mysterious stuff. Cables to electronics you no longer own. A candle that smells like "autumn nostalgia." Mis-matched gloves. Mis-matched socks. Seventeen mismatched Tupperware lids. Paperclips and dull scissors we always intend to sharpen, but never do.

We hang on to a lot of cheap junk, unused or past-its-use stuff.

There's also "good" stuff you bought for really good reasons. Like that beautiful dinnerware set for special occasions. You used it once, then got nervous someone might break a piece. So you stored it away in its original cartons. When you first got these things, they seemed important. You were sure you were going to use them. Some were even symbols of your prosperity and success. Things you felt would make your life better. But they didn't. They just became stuff.



After a few years, these things—while still lovely and potentially useful—weren't nearly as valuable or important as they once seemed. Take that fancy dinnerware. It hasn't touched a table since the family reunion of 1997. If you were asked, "Would you rather have this china or a visit with your children or grandchildren?" I'm willing to bet the china would lose every time.

So, why not sell the china and use the money to arrange a visit with your loved ones?

Now, I'm not saying to toss or sell everything you own. If that vase from your great aunt brings a smile to your face every time you look at it, keep it and keep smiling. But maybe, just maybe, it's time to start thinking about how to de-clutter your life. Hopefully as we age, we start to realize that our most precious commodity isn't our stuff. It isn't a vase, a set of rare coins, or a box full of birthday cards from 1982 - It's time. Time with family, friends, or just a good phone visit with someone you enjoy.

The stuff we hold onto isn't what defines us; it's the time we spend in love, laughter, and shared experiences that truly make our lives richer. Sure, we've been conditioned to believe that owning things is a way of showing success or security. But the truth is, the more we hold on to stuff, the more we miss out on what really matters: Spending time with the people who mean the most to us.

When was the last time you laughed until you cried with your grandchildren over a game of cards, or shared stories with old friends over coffee? Those moments are worth infinitely more than any trinket or token we could keep. And honestly, when we're long gone, no one will remember the set of crystal glasses we bought at an estate sale. They'll remember us—the stories we told, the moments we shared, the love we gave.

So, as you look around at the clutter you've accumulated over the years, maybe it's time to ask yourself: Does this stuff bring me joy? Or would I rather spend my time with my children, grandchildren, or a dear friend? Perhaps it's time to sell or pass some of those items along, knowing they'll find a new home where they'll be appreciated—or simply make room for something even more valuable: time. After all, you've earned the right to spend your golden years not worrying about what's stuffed into closets and attics, but about how many more precious moments you have. The real treasures in life aren't found in boxes or cabinets; they're found in the hearts of those we love.

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. He has more than 50 years of pastoral service and professional counseling experience. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.

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The City of Eau Claire Housing Division is taking applications for its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. The Rehabilitation Loan Program is Federally funded and offers loans up to \$20,000. This program is for homes in need of repair, not for extensions or cosmetic renovations.

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Vagus, The Great Wanderer

by Judy Soborowicz, Active Health Chiropractic

...all parts of the nervous system are connected together and no part of it is probably ever capable of reaction without affecting and being affected by various other parts.... – Sir Charles S. Sherrington, “Integrative Action of the Nervous System” (1906)

Our brain and nerve system acts for our ultimate benefit, serving by receiving and transmitting everything we sense- consciously or not and everything we act out, consciously or not. A complex network of nerves connects our whole body to our brain, but not all nerves are created equal. When considering the scope of influence and effect on our health, the tenth cranial nerve, known as the Vagus Nerve, is a stand out.

Vagus, in Latin means wandering or roaming, a fitting name, as this cranial nerve ‘wanders’ its way to nearly every organ system of our body, the Vagus nerve truly has immeasurable impact. We will take a glance at the path the Vagus nerve takes from our brain to our organ system connections and highlight some of the vital effects on our total body health.

Soon after the Vagus Nerve emerges from our brain it relays sensation to the supportive structures surrounding the back of our brain, the skin within our ear, and around our eyes. Special sensors in our neck arteries ensure adequate oxygen intake for our brain, prevent our heart rate from getting too high, and sense rises and fall in blood pressure. Branches to our vocal cords, and swallow mechanism provide our ability to speak, sing, chant and stand from sit without becoming lightheaded. Vagus nerve branches influence coordination and control of our lungs for breathing, esophagus and stomach- think gut/brain axis and enzymes for digestion & absorption, pancreas for blood sugar regulation, liver, gall bladder intestine, kidneys & spleen for detoxification and immune system.

Communication via the Vagus nerve is dynamic, continuous and simultaneous because our life depends upon it. Problems with our parasympathetic nerve system via the Vagus reduce our ability for our brain to activate and integrate best overall health outcomes no matter what circumstance. Stress, trauma, toxins all play a role in causing interference to optimal nerve function. Intuitively we know how important this vital connection is; observe a crying child rubbing their eyes, taking deep breaths, and you will see an illustration of the innate activation of calming reflexes that lower heart rate via the activation of the Vagus nerve. There are many ways to promote the health of our Vagus nerve. Many of these activities are built into cultures and as humans we have been practicing them for thousands of years. Singing, chanting, deep breathing, rhythmic movements, piercings, and natural healing modalities including the chiropractic adjustment. Things that stand the test of time provide access to facilitating the health of the whole body, by impacting the most vital structures. Whether unknown or known, safeguarding the health of our nerve system is fundamentally built into our lives, a true affirmation of the value of nerve system health.



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Dusting Off Some Local History: “Good Swimming Holes”

By Greg Kocken, Archivist, UW-Eau Claire, Kockeng@uwec.edu

This summer I am taking my family to Wisconsin Dells, a staple of summertime tourism in Wisconsin. The attraction for my children is, of course, the water parks. I expect this vacation will provide my children with a more enthralling experience than the small plastic pool I fill with six inches of water and set in my backyard. Community pools also provide a regular escape for my family, especially on hot summer days. The Chippewa Valley is home to several outdoor community pools. In 1991, both Fairfax Pool in Eau Claire and the Bernard Willi Pool in Chippewa Falls opened to the public. A few years later, at a cost of approximately 2 million dollars, the Wakanda Water Park opened in Menomonie. Together, these three pools provide countless hours of enjoyment each summer for children and families across the region.



Half Moon Lake, seen here in the 1960s, was a popular swimming destination in Eau Claire. The lake, however, still presented dangers and drawbacks as a swimming hole. Courtesy Chippewa Valley Museum.

Community pools grew in popularity in the early 20th century. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the government financed projects to build over 800 new community pools across the United States. Community pools proved popular, but not without some controversy. Many pools across the United States were segregated, leaving many people with inadequate and unequal access to these facilities. Efforts to desegregate community pools were met with resistance, with some communities choosing to close pools altogether rather than desegregate. Ultimately, community pools arrived in the Chippewa Valley much later than in other parts of the nation. This may, in part, be due to the abundance of rivers and lakes in the region. Rivers and lakes, however, present unpredictable hazards. Community pools are often safer, more accessible, and can be easily tailored to suit a variety of age groups and needs.

Although community pools arrived relatively late in the area, there were many efforts during the 20th century to establish these pools. In the late 1930s, the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Eau Claire advocated for using government funds to create a community pool. Some members of the community resisted this effort, arguing that there were “good swimming holes in the river above the points

where the sewage is dumped into the river” (Eau Claire Leader 3/25/1939). Communities across the region organized committees and explored the idea of building pools decade after decade. Funds were raised on several occasions, but time and time again nothing came of these activities. Certainly, there were other pools accessible to people in the region. The YMCA in Eau Claire opened a pool in 1912, the Eau Claire Country Club added a pool in the early 1960s, and several local schools maintained pools. These pools, however, never quite met demand and calls for investment grew in the 1980s. These voices were finally heard when many of the pools we

enjoy today opened in the 1990s. These pools provide experiences that far surpass the ubiquitous blue kiddie pools seen throughout neighborhoods, and my own yard, each summer.

Is there a local history mystery or topic you want to know more about? Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming column of “Dusting Off?” Please contact Greg at the UW-Eau Claire archives. He would love to hear from you.



Summer Means Outdoor Activities! Do You Suffer With Allergies?

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Enjoy the "Dog Days"

By Dave Olson, Realtor®, RE/MAX EXCEL

August is known as the ‘dog days’ of summer, because here in Wisconsin, the days are often hot and of course humid. Our furry friends know how best to spend hot sweltering days – they lie down, rest, and keep cool. I just read about a plan to have these four ingredients in your plan for a great “dog day” afternoon: A hammock. Lemonade. A good book. An afternoon to yourself. I don’t know about you, but to me that seems wonderful!



For me, I’m amid a very busy summer Real Estate season, for which I am very BLESSED. Truthfully though, I struggle to take time away from my profession. I have been known to tell my wife, “That’s just the way Real Estate goes.” and push through yet another busy week. Really though, don’t we all have our reasons for being “too busy”? All the more reason for us to let the “dog days” beckon us to slow down, sit a while, and allow ourselves time to relax. Science and modern medicine has proven that physical rest is important and necessary for our health and well-being. Spiritual rest is no less important. As a Christian, I know that the Bible says that even God rested on the seventh day after creating the heavens and the Earth.

Most people believe he chose to do that as an example for us to follow, for our own good, a sabbath day to rest in him and renew our spirits. That’s what the word “sabbath” means. Rest. We all need time that is not packed full of activities, demands, or duties, and late summer sure seems like a great time to set aside some time, even a small amount, for yourself.

That is often easier said than done. The main point here is to encourage each of you to be intentional about planning some “take it easy” time. If you’re a planner like me, you’ll need to block out time on your calendar. If you’re not a planner, and your days run into each other, then “plan” a day to do nothing or an activity that is out of your normal routine that you enjoy and relaxes you. If you intend to take time for yourself, you will. If you don’t, you won’t. Call a friend and plan some “sabbath” time together. It’s a lot harder to skip something if you’ve committed to someone to do it.

Please take the time this August to “savor the summer”. Go read that book in the hammock with the lemonade. Hit a bucket of golf balls with your best friend. Sit in the shade and listen to the Brewers on the radio for the entire game. Sit on the porch and just talk, read, or watch the sunset. Learn a wonderful lesson from our dogs. Maybe they really are wiser than humans. No one needs to encourage them to relax. Please value the “dog days”. Take the time to relax and enjoy them.

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