

senior review

FREE

January 2024

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

Need Someone to Talk To? Call UpliftWI *By Wisconsin Department of Health Services*

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announces a new phone line is now available allowing all Wisconsinites to share their successes and challenges with a peer who will listen and offer support. Built by Mental Health America of Wisconsin under a grant from DHS for people experiencing mental health and substance use concerns, UpliftWI can be reached at (534) 202-5438 daily from noon to midnight, with 24/7 operation expected by the end of the year. This non-emergency service is free and confidential.

"We're pleased to partner with Mental Health America of Wisconsin on this expansion of peer services in Wisconsin," said DHS Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge. "The peer-to-peer support offered by UpliftWI is a proven way to get people the help they need and stay healthy. This service is going to improve lives by providing preventive care for people experiencing stress or other challenges in their lives."

Callers to UpliftWI speak to certified peer specialists with diverse life experiences stationed across the state. A certified peer specialist is a person who has navigated their own mental health and substance use challenges, completed a training course, and passed a state exam that tests their skills and knowledge about how to support others. They use their personal experiences to help callers identify and pursue their own wellness goals and will share information about community resources if requested. Callers are not required to provide their name, address, or other identifying information.

"The goal of UpliftWI is to help callers feel connected, understood, and less isolated in an effort to prevent mental health and substance

use crises," said Mental Health America of Wisconsin Chief Operating Officer Brian Michel, the leader of the team responsible for the service. "We all have times of challenge. UpliftWI is a safe place to share those challenges with a supportive voice who will listen in confidence without judgment or criticism."



UpliftWI is funded by a \$600,000 annual grant awarded to Mental Health America of Wisconsin in 2022. The grant comes from Wisconsin's share of funding allocated to mental health and substance use services from the American Rescue Plan Act and will be available through 2025. UpliftWI adds to Wisconsin's growing network of peer services that now includes statewide options for support by phone, drop-in, and overnight stays. Drop-in support is available at one of 11 state-funded peer recovery centers. Eight of those centers focus on mental health support and three focus on substance use support. Overnight stays are available at one of the six state-funded peerrun respites. People need to call ahead to arrange a respite stay of up to one week.

Anyone experiencing mental health and substance emergencies should call, text, or chat the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. If the emergency is lifethreatening, call 911.

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Ginseng **BRIGHTENING** Sipping tea made from this antioxidant-rich root can help defend your body against stress. In an eye cream, it also protects you, but this time the enemy is inflammation-causing free radicals, which can result in dark marks and dullness.

Blackberries **EXFOLIATION** The pint-size fruit has two forms of alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs), citric and malic. They're chemical exfoliants that gently break up the stuff that holds skin cells together, so dead ones easily slough off without harsh scrubbing.

The pigment that gives orange veggies their safety-vest color is the same one your body uses to make vitamin A-and this nutrient is vital for immune system health. It even makes immunizations-like that flu shot you got-more effective. And, emerging research suggests vitamin A may provide against autoimmune diseases, such as type 1 diabetes, lupus and multiple sclerosis.





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Dementia & the Weather

By Azura Memory Care

Weather affects most of us in one way or another. Perhaps we feel energetic when it's sunny and sluggish on overcast days. And no one likes being stuck in a hot car or a freezing movie theater. Alzheimer's and dementia can affect the brain's control centers, resulting in increased sensitivity to heat and cold.

A 2018 research study followed 3,300 people diagnosed with Alzheimer's in the United States, France, and Canada. The results demonstrated that cognitive (thinking) ability changed depending on the season. It appeared to be higher in the fall and summer, when days are longer and sunnier. People experienced more episodes of sun downing (an escalation in anger, irritation, and confusion occurring late afternoon or evening) during winter and early spring. They also had more sleep-pattern disturbances and depression during shorter, darker days.

As the weather starts to get colder, winter can be a particularly difficult time for somebody living with dementia. The bad weather and colder temperatures can bring specific challenges, and can sometimes make symptoms temporarily worse. What's more, people with dementia aren't always able to communicate the fact they're cold – or they may not even recognize it themselves.

Here are a couple ways to support someone who has dementia through the cold months:

Make sure they are dressed appropriately for the weather.

People with dementia won't always remember to dress appropriately for colder weather, so it's important to help make sure they're wearing the right clothes. Layers are key to keeping warm, and the best materials for maintaining body heat are cotton, wool, or fleecy materials. If you're going outside, remember that a lot of heat is lost through the head and neck, so make sure the person has a hat and scarf on. Gloves are also important for keeping hands warm. If it's icy or snowy, make sure the person is wearing appropriate footwear, such as non-skid boots.

Encourage regular movement

Keeping active can help to boost circulation and help keep someone with dementia warm. It's a good idea to encourage the person to move around at least once an hour. If walking is difficult or extreme weather conditions make it hard to go outside, simply getting the person to move their arms and legs, or wiggling their toes can be helpful!

Make the most of natural daylight

Decreased sunlight can cause someone with dementia to feel increased anxiety, confusion, and even depression during the winter. You can help by making sure they're exposed to natural daylight when possible. Get outside when you can – a quick walk around the block or even just sitting outside in the garden for a few minutes can do wonders. At home, make sure curtains are open during the



day to let in as much light as possible. You could also position the furniture so that the person with dementia is sitting near a window. As natural light starts to fade, make sure lights and lamps are turned on.

Know their limits

Although spending a little time outside is encouraged as long as they are dressed appropriately, some of those with dementia absolutely, 100%, do NOT want to go outside, and can become very agitated if you keep pushing. If they are really set on not going outside, find other ways to get them sunlight or their bodies moving. Do a puzzle by the window or take a walk around the house.

Encourage consistent eating and drinking

Keeping warm uses up a lot of energy, and a warm house can increase the risk of dehydration. It's important to make sure someone with dementia is eating regular meals and drinking enough fluid during the winter. Snacking throughout the day can help keep energy levels up, and hot drinks can help keep them warm. They should avoid drinking alcohol as it makes you feel warm, but actually draws important heat away from vital organs.

Resources:

- *Coping with colder weather and staying active with dementia.* Alzheimer Society of Canada. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://alzheimer.ca/en/help-support/im-caring-person-living-dementia/ensuring-safety-security/help-people-living-dementia>
- <https://www.beingpatient.com/dementia-caregiving-cold-winter-weather/#:~:text=People%20with%20dementia%20may%20not,of%20too%20much%20body%20heat>
- *7 ways to support a person with dementia in cold weather.* Alzheimer's Society. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/how-support-somebody-living-dementia-cold-weather>



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Resolutions and Celebrations

By Ken Anderson, The Mayberry Guru, themayberryguru@gmail.com

I begin this month's article by wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy 2024. I trust that I am like many of you who make New Year's resolutions only to break them. In the past, I have resolved to lose weight, eat healthier, exercise more, and get more sleep. But rarely did these well-intentioned resolutions last more than a few days. So, this year, I am foregoing any resolutions. Instead, I have decided to educate myself on the origins of the practice of New Year's resolutions and celebrations.



Upon researching the subject, I found a publication called The Conversation U.S. This publication is part of a global group of news organizations founded in Australia in 2011 by a former newspaper editor, Andrew Jaspan. The U.S. version of The Conversation was launched in 2014.

According to The Conversation, Historically, the first people to set New Year pledges were the Ancient Babylonians some 4000 years ago. These pledges later became known as resolutions. The Babylonians were also the first known people who celebrated the beginning of a new year. However, their celebration occurred when they planted their crops in February.

The Babylonians knew how to bring in the new year in style. Their New Year celebration was known as Akitu and lasted 12 days. During this festival, the people would plant their crops, pay honor to their king, and promise to pay their debts. They believed that if they kept their promises, the gods would look favorable upon them, and they would have an excellent new year.

As I look back at my life, I was 14 when I first began celebrating New Year's Eve. My celebration each year would be typically going to a dance at Memorial Hall in Dorchester. The hall filled with dancers, and when midnight approached, the countdown to the new year began. And it was a tradition to kiss your dancing partner when the new year came in. That was the one tradition that I eagerly anticipated all year long.

I have never been one to watch television broadcasts on New Year's Eve. Beginning in the 1940s, NBC began broadcasting news of New Year's festivities from Times Square, anchored by Ben Grauer on radio and television. This coverage was later incorporated into special editions of the network's late-night talk show, The Tonight Show. Over a million people are estimated to pack Times Square on New Year's Eve to watch the ball drop, while an estimated one billion worldwide watch the spectacle on television.

My wife and I celebrate New Year's Eve in our traditional manner. We go out for pizza with friends and then return home to play dominoes, and rarely stay up until midnight. Such is life when you are 77 years old.



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Staying Warm and Not SAD

by Kristi Gay, freelance writer

Let's face it, January is tough in Wisconsin between the early darkness, the bitter cold, the loneliness and boredom after the holiday rush, and the lack of Vitamin D to our dry skin! However, I always try and remember to "flip the coin" perspective and think back to a children's book I used to read my kids when they were little: "Winter is the Warmest Season". This is the time we can bundle up with big scarves (which I do inside and outside from about November through March), pile on large blankets which are even better if they have been crocheted with love, sip hot chocolate and if we're feeling spicy add a candy cane or a shot of some Peppermint Schnapps, and build a roaring fire in the fireplace (or visit Grizzly's restaurant in Eau Claire where there are tables feet from the fireplace which I always try and claim!).



SAD, or Seasonal Affectiveness Disorder, is described by Mayo Clinic as a type of depression that is related to the changing of the seasons and could include symptoms such as feeling down or depressed, low energy and sluggish, increased cravings, and losing interest in things you once enjoyed. In addition to taking extra good care of yourself with regular sleep hours, three healthy meals, and even some fresh air (bundle up and get out there for even 10 minutes if you see the sun peek out! Your week **DEPENDS** on it!), here are some other things to try, knowing you're not alone and even trying things to feel better sometimes feels better than just accepting your bad mood:

- Try Light Therapy! You can order a HappyLight for only \$40 on Amazon and use it for 30 minutes to two hours daily in the morning, which mimics sunlight without the harmful UV-rays of a tanning bed, and has been shown to improve sleep, boost mood, increase energy, and enhance focus so you feel revitalized throughout the day
- Talk to your doctor about mood-boosting supplements like St. John's Wort, Vitamin D or Vitamin C, or even gummies called "Hello Happy" with Saffron and Vitamin D - some people swear by these changing their winters!
- Prioritize 10 minutes of fresh air, no matter the temperature. When my dad died and my mom got a puppy, this daily force of a walk really helped her mood each day, even the days it was -20 degrees she just had to bundle her and the dog up and make it ten minutes, but the mood boost lasted hours afterward!
- Treat yourself to some of the things listed above like hot chocolate, a fireplace, or maybe even a couple balls of yarn and a new crochet needle to get warmer by the row as you crochet (I like the huge yarn and needle to make thick blankets and fast). Take a hot bath but glamorize it with low lighting, candles, and maybe a glass of wine. The nicer and more "fancy" you make things for yourself, the more treated you will feel!

And with any type of depression, seasonal or not, make sure you reach out to friends or doctors to share your emotions. There is help out there, but it's impossible to access if no one knows you're struggling. Depression is the silent killer because it's not like other diseases where you can see on the outside. Sometimes forcing yourself to try things to lighten your day sounds impossible, but with any new habits just take one baby step, and any positives that come from that baby step will potentially motivate you to take one more baby step, until all of the sudden you wake up and it's MARCH 20 - THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING! :)

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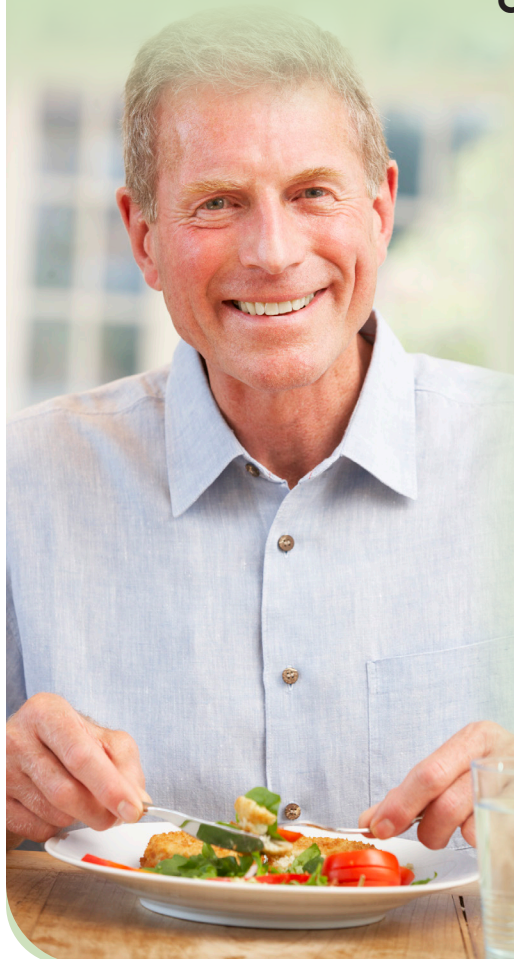
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Dusting Off Some Local History: "A Great Sky-Rocket"

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

When I was in fifth grade my parents bought me a telescope. I was fascinated with the solar system and wanted to become an astronomer. I planned to present a science fair exhibit detailing my observations of the night sky, but ultimately walked away disappointed from the experience. I did not know where to point my telescope, how to effectively use it, or possess the patience needed to be an astronomer. I remain, however, fascinated by the night sky. There is something awe inspiring when you pause to look up at the stars on a clear night and contemplate the vastness of the universe. Humanity has always been curious, and occasionally fearful of the mysteries that lie beyond our planet. In the Middle Ages, the appearance of comets often caused great sensation with many people believing their appearance to be a bad omen. Indeed, William the Conqueror's 1066 invasion of England followed the appearance of Halley's Comet; the comet is even represented on the Bayeux Tapestry detailing the events leading up to the conquest.

On the evening of April 18, 1908, people across Western Wisconsin were treated to a spectacle as several meteors raced through the night sky. The La Crosse Tribune reported, "The meteor gave off sparks and 'chunks' of light... Many people at first thought it was a great sky-rocket... there was a deep roar and in some places the ground was shaken as though by an earthquake." Although newspaper accounts from across Western Wisconsin all suggest it was a single event, it was






A prolific annual meteor shower, The Leonids, cause a spectacular meteor storm that occurs approximately every 33 years. The 1833 meteor storm is depicted in this illustration published several years after the event.

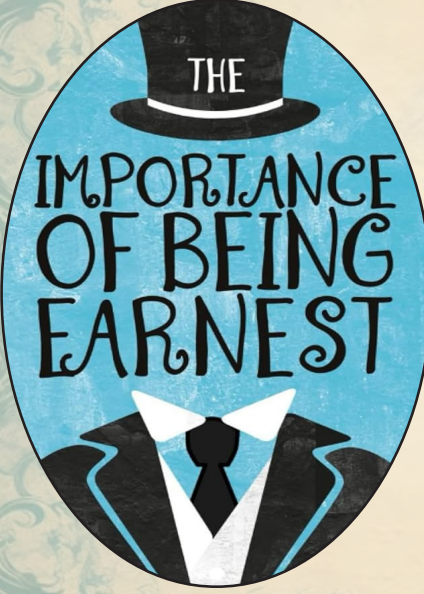
mostly likely a shower of several meteors. A report in the Eau Claire Leader detailed that it "...resembled that of a big ball of fire which was as brilliant as an arc lamp." The meteor possibly shed meteorites which landed across Western Wisconsin. The account in the Leader claimed that a meteorite landed near a railroad yard and "...the spot where it fell is plainly visible, and no one as yet has found any portion of it, it being buried so deep in the ground."

Newspapers throughout the Midwest reported the phenomenon. It sparked conversation and curiosity. Continuing its coverage of the event, the Leader reported the following weekend that "...there is something awesome in a visitation by one of these strange bodies, coming from nowhere and carrying—so far as humanity is concerned—no message." I have never witnessed a meteor crashing to earth, and the only meteorites I ever recall seeing were those on display in science museums. The phenomenon, however, is not all that rare. Research suggests that an estimated 17,000 meteors fall to Earth each year, but don't expect to see the skies lit up by falling meteors — most of the meteorites resting on our planet's surface may be no larger than a speck of sand.

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.

present a Winter Comedy to Warm the Heart



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Oscar Wilde's wildly popular comedy is a crowd-pleasing farce filled with mistaken identities and romance. Jack and Algernon have each created alter egos named Ernest to escape their tiresome lives. Gwendolen thinks Jack is Ernest, and Cecily thinks Algernon is Ernest.

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Go Ahead and Make Your Plans

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

As we ring in 2024, many people will make New Year resolutions. Most of them focus on self-improvement such as getting physically fit, losing weight, and becoming financially healthy. These are all worthwhile goals to pursue. Unfortunately, a recent Gallup poll shows only about 1 in 3 U.S. adults even bother to make a New Year's resolution. The other 2/3 won't even bother. So go ahead and make your New Year resolutions. Don't let anyone talk you out of it.

Why? Because people who make them end up being much more successful than the people who don't.

While most people placidly ignore the wisdom of Benjamin Franklin, who said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!" You should at least stop and consider his words. Was he telling the truth, or just trying to be witty? Many people are skeptical about plans. They wonder if plans even "work"? (No. Plans don't work, but people who work their plans do much better than those who don't.) The majority (and skeptics) believe that planning out one's life is no more effective than not planning it. They believe that with or without our making plans, life seems to do a pretty good job of moving us along and developing us on its own. So, if things seem to be going pretty well; that's good enough. Sure, there are some things we could do better, and it might be good to make some plans for our career and finances, but it's not worth the effort to try to plan how to achieve improvement. So, we don't.

So, what should you do? Should you ignore this wisdom and keep on doing what you have always done? If so, how happy and successful has that made you? Mark Victor Hansen said,

"If you do things the same way you've always done them, you'll get the same outcomes you've always gotten. In order to change your outcomes, you've got to do things differently." You need to plan. Thomas Edison believed in planning when he said, "Good fortune



is what happens when opportunity meets with planning." He left out hard work and persistence in his quote, but he lived by those values as a matter of course.

One of the big regrets I often hear from people as they get older is this. "I wish I had planned to be better prepared for the challenges of growing old." Why would they feel this way? Because they hadn't planned for the changes that age naturally brings. They refused to think of themselves ever being weak or dependent on others to help them with their most

basic activities. Now it's too late to do much about their condition. But let me encourage you to start planning for your future now if you haven't already. As you stand at the edge of the rest of your life and wonder which way to go; consider your present home. Is it adequate for you? What if you need a walker or are in a wheelchair? What changes would you have to make? Start planning now for a future that may involve you needing help to get around safely and effectively.

As you look ahead to 2024, I have just one resolution to suggest to you. Do not let this moment and this opportunity slip away. Plan some serious resolutions for 2024 that will help prepare you for all the years following. We always regret opportunities we let slip away, especially the times we could have taken action, but didn't. John Barrymore summed it all up nicely. "A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams." Stay young and plan for the future. Then work to make your plans come true.

Happy New Year!

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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Shifting Tides: Market Dynamics Ignite a Surge in New Home Interest

By Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

Lack of supply in the resale market is favorably impacting new home sales. In September 2023, the pace of new home sales was up 33.9% year over year to a seasonally-adjusted rate of 759,00 units. The median new home sale price in September was \$418,800, down 12.3% compared to a year ago, largely due to builder incentives and a shift toward building slightly smaller homes. Meanwhile, existing, or pre-owned home sales sank 15.4% from the previous year, yet existing home prices rose slightly to \$394,300.



New home construction is typically more expensive than existing homes of similar size, condition, and amenities, but homebuyers are flocking to new homes because the costs and benefits between existing homes and new homes has narrowed. According to NewHomeSource.com, new home buyers get numerous benefits, including:

- The ability to choose the finishes, fixtures and decor
- A “honeymoon” period when everything in the house is brand new
- Builder-supplied warranties for finishes, systems and structure
- Energy-efficient heating, ventilation, cooling and appliances that will save you money
- The latest in architecture, design, floorplans, construction techniques, and in-home automation.

In the overheated market of the past few years, shopping for a home has become wearisome to homebuyers, including some buyers’ remorse caused by unexpected issues with the home, too much maintenance and upkeep, and too many compromises simply to get into a home.

Ask your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network professional to show you new homes in your area. Don’t visit builders or model homes without your agent, so they can negotiate for you.

NAVIGATING THE 2024 HOUSING MARKET

In the new year, homebuyers and sellers are still facing the same challenges as they did in 2023—high interest rates, sky-high home prices, and an inadequate supply of homes. As affordability issues slow housing sales volume, low supplies are keeping home prices high.

Bankrate.com experts say that mortgage interest rates reached 8.01% in October, the highest level since 2000, but since then rates have come down. There’s no likelihood of a housing market turndown as long as lending standards remain strict, and there aren’t enough homes to meet demand. Goldman Sachs Research expects 30-year-mortgage rates to open 2024 at 7.6% and to end the year at 7.1%. Home prices will appreciate 2% in 2023, 1.9% in 2024, and 2.8% in 2025. If mortgage interest rates continue to ease, it’s likely that demand for homes will reignite, despite higher purchase prices.

The Federal Reserve’s aggressive handling of inflation by raising overnight borrowing rates to banks has had a positive effect, and further rate hikes appear unlikely as the numbers get closer to the Fed’s target of 2% inflation.

Meanwhile, help is out there for those being squeezed out of the market. FHA-guaranteed loans require as little as 3.5% down. Numerous state and local governments have increased programs for first-time and lower-income homebuyers. Many lenders offer grants, down payment assistance programs, and mortgages with no closing costs. The National Association of REALTORS® offers the Housing Opportunity Program, with resources for homebuyers.

For further advice, ask your Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network professional.

December Quick Tip

Walk around and do a “light audit” of your home. Replace all burnt out lights. Avoid bright white, use soft white or daylight color for best results and use brighter lights to perk up those dark areas.

Call (715) 379-8388 for more household tips and to connect with one of our skilled Eau Claire Berkshire Hathaway Realty agents.

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