



Senior **Living**

**Preble couple
'Living the dream'**
page 3





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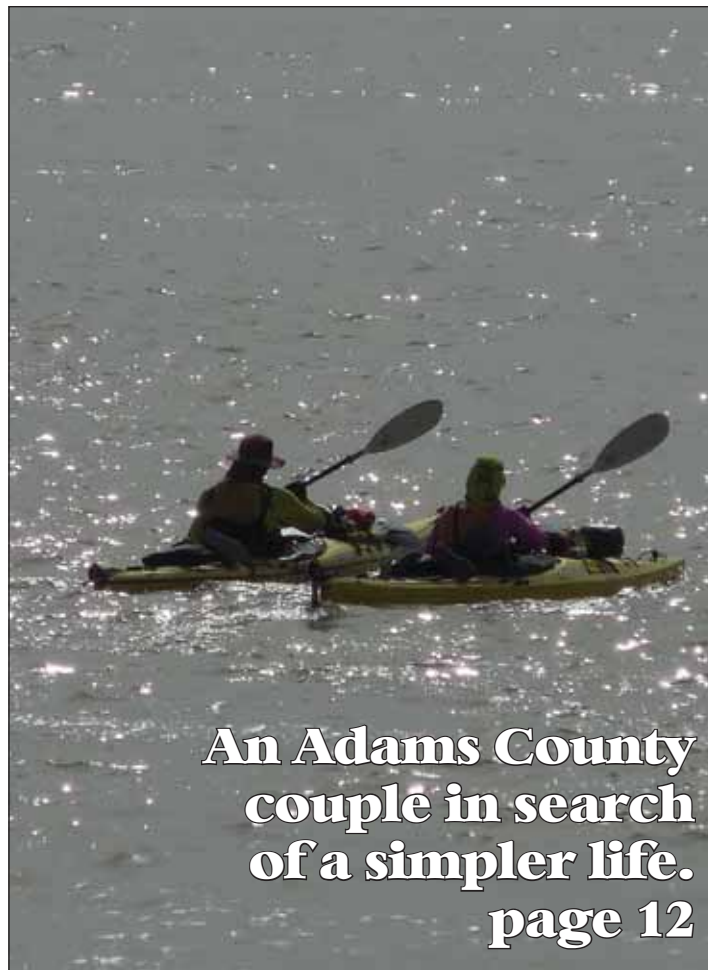
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**An Adams County
couple in search
of a simpler life.
page 12**

An advertisement for Christian Care Retirement Community. It features a photograph of an elderly man with white hair and sunglasses, wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and khaki pants. He is standing next to a dark blue classic car, possibly a Pontiac, with his hand on the hood. The car has a license plate that reads "INDY SNY346". In the background, there is a building with a sign that says "CHRISTIAN CARE Retirement Community" with a logo of a cross and a dove. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is contact information: "720 E Dustman Rd | www.christiancarerc.org | 260-565-3000".

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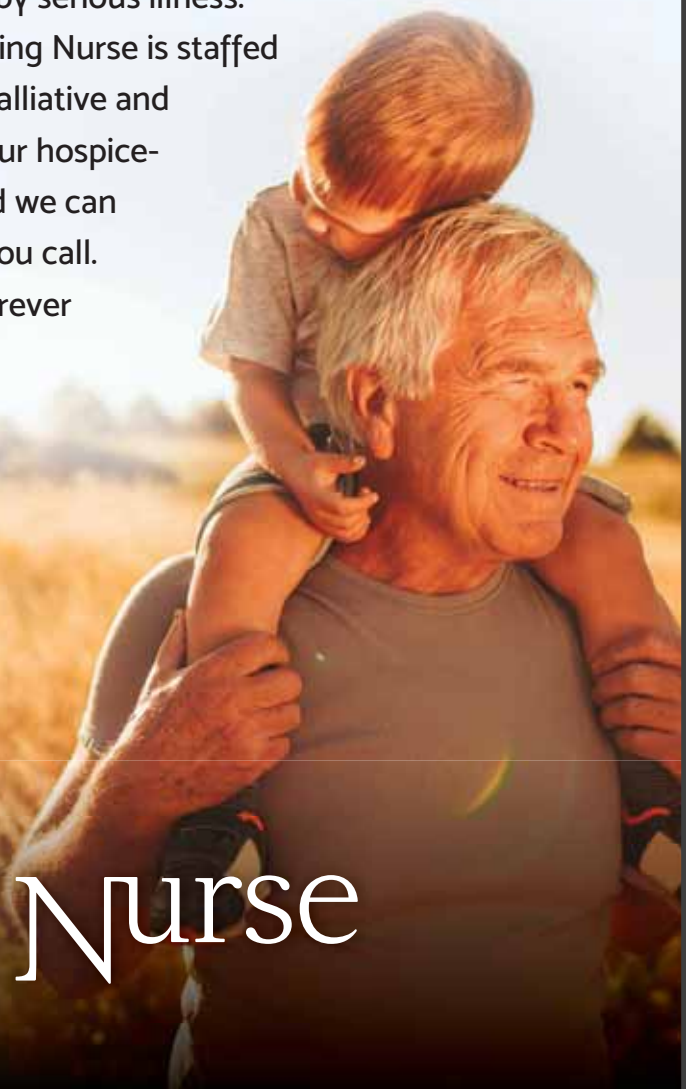
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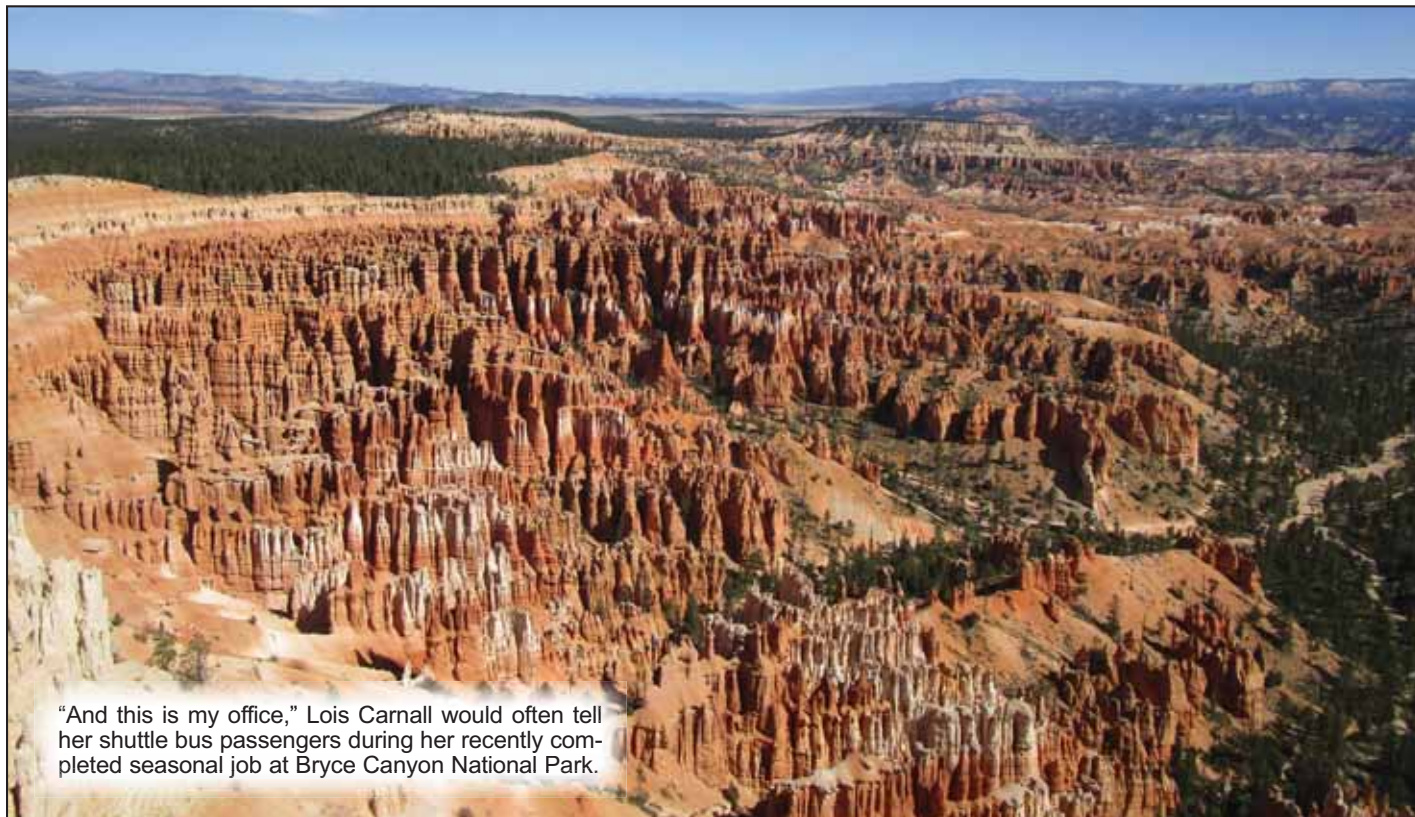
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"And this is my office," Lois Carnall would often tell her shuttle bus passengers during her recently completed seasonal job at Bryce Canyon National Park.

'Living the dream'

Tom and Lois Carnall back home in Preble from seasonal jobs at Bryce Canyon National Park

BY MARK MILLER

If you have any doubt that Tom and Lois Carnall of Preble enjoyed their inaugural season of working in Bryce Canyon National Park, spend a few

minutes with them. All doubts will be removed.

"We absolutely loved it," Lois will tell you. "It was a lot of fun." The couple felt well treated by their employers, made many new friends, did quite a bit of sightseeing themselves and enjoyed their jobs, particularly talking with the endless number of tourists they dealt with.

"Oh sure, there were days and there were problems," Lois added.

"I'd say 95 percent of the people were amazing, very friendly" Tom said. "The other five percent..." More on those later.

Tom Carnall retired from OmniSource in Fort Wayne one day this past March. The retirement party was held in the morning and by 2 p.m. they were on the road. They'd been contemplating and investigating a retirement of nomadic, seasonal work for years and had been in contact with the Red Canyon Transit Co., which contracts for services with the National Park Service, answering an ad in early January.

They had been struggling with pulling the trigger, however. Tom had been re-elected as a line officer with the Preble Volunteer Fire Department, and Lois' 95-year-old mother was in a nursing home. The man who would become their supervisor, after reviewing their applications and checking their references, told them they were first on his list — they had jobs if they wanted them.

"We kept putting him off," Tom said.

"Mom's health improved and the nurses encouraged us to go," Lois added.

"So one day I called Lamont (Olsen, their supervisor) to see if the jobs were still open," Tom continued. "He said 'come on out,' so I gave my notice of ➔



The Carnall's part-time schedule allowed for plenty of tourist time of their own. Above, Lois is along Burr Trail near Boulder, Utah. (Top photo by Mark Miller; Above photo provided)

retirement and off we went.”

The couple, married since 1974 with two children and two grandchildren, had purchased a large motor home a few years ago with the intent to live in it full time in retirement. Their camping experience goes back more than 30 years.

“This is something he’s been talking about since he’s been in his 30s,” Lois explained.

Tom joined an internet group called Workcamper.com.

“I get between two and 20 emails every day about jobs all across the country,” he said. The prospect of working at Bryce Canyon, somewhere they’d never been, sounded intriguing. They had initially inquired about overseeing a small campground, but by the time they decided to do it, that job had been filled.

“It turned out we got the jobs we were supposed to get,” Lois said.

She is retired from 31 years of driving a bus for North Adams Community Schools. She would drive one of the shuttle buses in the park. “So I’ve been in training for this for 31 years.”

Tom was a parking lot attendant, tasked with keeping cars and people moving which is key to keeping the entire park from becoming a big gridlock during the busy summer months.

Each has a number of stories to share.

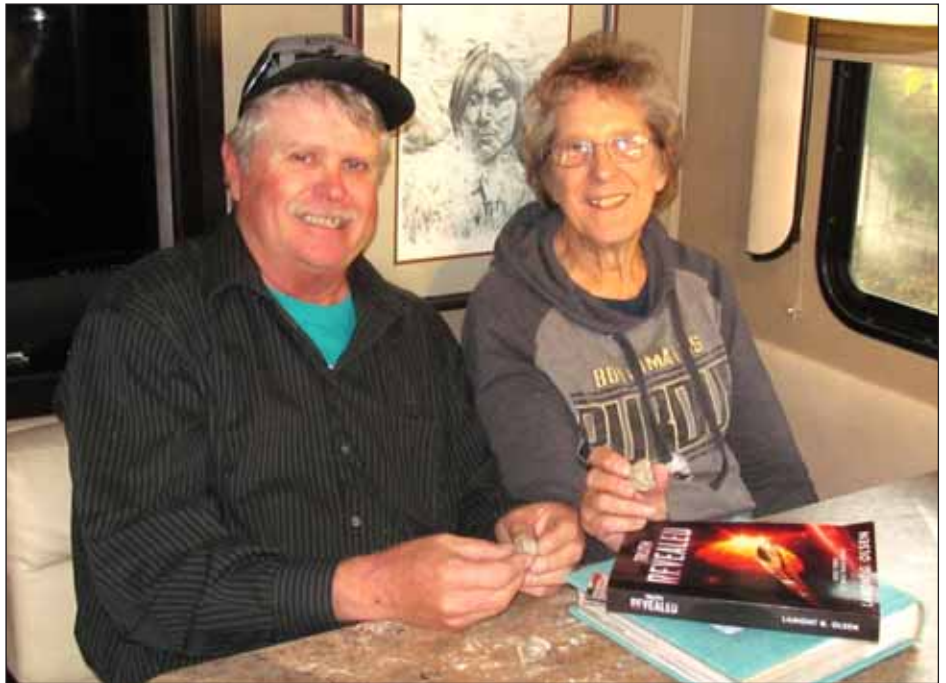
“Some of the people are kind of hard to deal with,” Tom said with a grin. “A lot of the foreigners don’t know how to drive; a lot of them get impatient. They don’t understand why they have to keep moving. They can’t just sit there and wait for a parking spot to open up. It would back everything up.”

“I’ve been cussed at in every language known to man,” he added, chuckling at the memories. “They’d be talking to me in English but then they’d get excited. When they started talking in their own language, I knew the situation had changed.”

It was not unusual for Tom and his co-workers to be nudged by a car of an upset driver.

“But then some of them would circle the lot for 20 or 30 minutes and then get a spot, run up to the edge, take a picture and then get back in their car. ‘That’s a good view but don’t you want to walk up to the observation point?’ I would ask them. ‘It’s beautiful up there.’ They’d say ‘no we don’t have time.’ Amazing.”

Meanwhile, the people Lois dealt



Back home again in Indiana (at least for the time being), Tom and Lois Carnall display a few of their mementoes from their first season of working at Bryce Canyon National Park: they are holding some fossilized sea shells which proves that Utah was once a seabed; in front of them are a book written by their supervisor, Lamont Olsen and a scrapbook they are still working on. (Photo by Mark Miller)

with “were much more relaxed,” she said. “After all, all they had to do was sit back and look at the scenery. They didn’t have to worry about the traffic or parking.” There were difficult times, she added. “It could get pretty crazy between noon and about 4 during the summer.” Her tasks included helping people in wheel chairs and loading and unloading bicycles onto the bus’ bike racks. Her bus was rear-ended one day, but fortunately during her lunch break when a relief driver was at the wheel.

“We often said we were ‘living the dream,’” she said.

Tom and Lois Carnall are both Wells County natives. Tom graduated from

Bluffton High School in 1973; Lois (Wall) from Southern Wells in 1972.

“I’m the older woman,” she chimed in.

Tom’s working years began as a bus boy at the Dutch Mill, where his efforts caught the eye of Roger Swain, who was the publisher and owner of The News-Banner. Tom worked in the production area of the newspaper through high school. He then worked for Korte Paper in Fort Wayne, Central Soya in Decatur and then finished at Omni-Source.

Lois was working at Franklin Electric when the couple met. They eventually moved to Adams County where they raised their two children.

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It was not “all work and no play” during their time in southeastern Utah. Not by any stretch.

“Lamont told us he’d didn’t know whether he could get us 40 hours a week,” Tom said. “We said ‘we’re retired, we don’t want to work 40 hours a week!’”

Each averaged less than 30 hours, which normally meant four off-days per week and the company was very flexible about taking additional time off.

“We took a whole week off when our daughter and granddaughter came out to visit,” Tom said.

Their own tourism included Powell Point, Pink Choral Dunes, Aquarius Plateau, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and the salt flats, the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Johnson Canyon.

Did they feel like they were being paid to vacation?

“Oh yes, very much so,” Lois said. “We told a lot of people just that.” As she pointed out different aspects of the park to her passengers, Lois would often add “and this is my office.”

They speak well of the company and

their supervisors. Olsen is a published writer (author of a series called “Space Train”) and often took them to local events or to a nearby landmark.

“He’s very knowledgeable, a very interesting gentleman,” Tom said.

“We worked with some pretty neat people,” Lois added. There was a retired rancher from Utah, a couple from Louisiana, but many of the seasonal workers were more local. “We were constantly asking questions and we learned so much from them.”

And Bryce Canyon itself was, they said, “tremendous.”

Lois recalled early-morning shifts that often meant no passengers the first time or two through the route. It gave her the chances to enjoy the quietness and beauty of the park. Tom also had many early-morning opportunities to gaze out over the canyon.

“Every day, it looked different, depending on the sun and the clouds,” he said. And then there was the night of the “super moon” that created unique views the couple will never forget.

“The canyon glowed,” Lois said. “The

Continued on page 17



The hardest part of Tom and Lois Carnall's decision to work a season at Bryce Canyon National Park was being away from their family. Their daughter and granddaughter, Blakely, were able to fly out for a week's visit, during which the couple got some special family time (Photo provided)

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A holiday roast to remember

The holiday season is a perfect opportunity to gather with friends and family, and few things bring people together like an elegant, seasonal meal. Serving up a mouth-watering main dish worth celebrating can elicit rave reviews from your guests and keep them gathered around the table longer, creating lasting memories.

Creating a crowd-pleasing holiday centerpiece starts with choosing a flavorful, tender cut of meat. For example, elegant cuts like Chateaubriand (roast-size filet mignon) or Bone-In Frenched Rib Roast can serve as the focal point of a memorable meal.

Simple to prepare and easy to carve, all you need to do is season (or marinate) and roast before serving

alongside a wine-infused sauce like Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce or Apricot and White Wine Glaze.

Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce

Prep time: 5 minutes; Cook time: 25 minutes; Total time: 30 minutes; Yield: 2 cups

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 medium red bell peppers, finely diced
1 cup red wine
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1/3 cup white sugar
2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds
6 tablespoons dried cranberries
6 tablespoons dried currants
1/4 teaspoon salt

Heat medium skillet on medium-high heat.

Add olive oil and diced red pepper; saute 3-5 minutes.

Add red wine, red wine vinegar, sugar, mustard seeds, cranberries, currants and salt. Bring mixture to boil then turn temperature to low and simmer 20 minutes, or until liquid is mostly evaporated and thickened.

Bring to room temperature before serving alongside holiday roast.



Note: Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce can be made up to 3 days in advance.

Whiskey Marinated Holiday Roast

Prep time: 45 minutes-1 hour, plus 48-72 hours thawing time; Cook time: 2-3 1/2 hours; Total time: 4 days; Yield: 4-6 servings

Marinade:
4 ounces water
2 ounces whiskey
1/4 teaspoon baking soda

Roast:
2 pound chateaubriand or 4 pound bone-in frenched prime rib roast, if frozen, thawed completely (allow 48-72 hours)

Option: Choose any number of rubs for your roast.

To make marinade: In large, re-sealable bag, mix water, whiskey and baking soda.

To make chateaubriand: Place roast in bag and marinate in refrigerator 30 minutes.

Remove roast from marinade. Discard marinade.

Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight. When ready to cook, heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan.

Roast 2 hours, or until roast reaches internal temperature between 120-125 F.

Let roast rest 30-45 minutes.

Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side then flip and broil 2 minutes on other side, or until brown

crust uniformly covers roast.

To make bone-in frenched prime rib roast: Place roast in bag and marinate in refrigerator 45 minutes.

Remove roast from marinade. Discard marinade.

Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight. When ready to cook, heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan.

Roast 3 hours and 15 minutes, or until roast reaches internal temperature between 120-125 F.

Let roast rest 30-45 minutes. Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side then flip and broil 2 minutes on other side, or until brown crust uniformly covers roast.

Apricot and White Wine Glaze

Prep time: 5 minutes; Cook time: 25 minutes; Total time: 30 minutes; Yield: 1 1/2 cups

1 1/2 cups white wine
2/3 cup white wine vinegar
3/4 cup apricot jam
2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
2 tablespoons brown mustard seeds
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
3/4-1 teaspoon chili flakes

In medium saucepan over medium heat, combine white wine, white wine vinegar, apricot jam, mustard seeds, salt and garlic.

Bring to boil then turn to low and simmer 25 minutes, or until reduced by one-third.

Remove from heat and stir in chili flakes.

Reheat or bring to room temperature to use as glaze or serve as sauce for holiday ham.

Note: Apricot and White Wine Glaze may be prepared up to 3 days in advance.

Find more recipes and tips to create a holiday dinner to remember at OmahaSteaks.com.

(Family Features)

4 Tips for a merry holiday home

A merry holiday season starts at home. Here are some nice ways to add cheer to the rooms and spaces where people gather.

• **Light a Fire:** It may be the most primitive technology in existence but lighting a fire is still one of the best ways to create a rich holiday atmosphere. Bonus: use aromatic firewood such as pine, fir or cedar.

• **Bake Cookies:** Make the whole house smell amazing (and become everyone's favorite person) by popping cookies and other desserts in the oven that include spices evocative of the season, like nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon and vanilla. For a lighter option, you can get the same effect by brewing



PHOTO: ©manaamedia / iStock via Getty Images Plus

a decoration destination — think garlands and candles. Be sure to set out sheet music and other instruments like tambourines or bells so that guests can join in the fun.

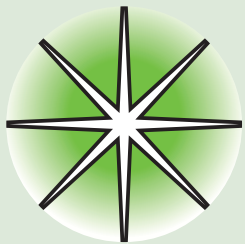
• **Add Flora:** Spruce up your living spaces — literally. Holly, Christmas cactus, poinsettias and spruce add color and vibrancy to mantels, staircases, coffee tables and other nooks and crannies. What's more, many of these plants will continue to thrive long after the

tea with these same ingredients.

• **Host a Sing-a-Long:** Securing yourself a digital piano with an authentic concert grand sound may just be the best gift you give your family this holiday season. The piano itself can also be

lights and tinsel come down.

The holidays come but once a year. Make the most of the season by turning your home into a winter wonderland. (StatePoint)



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DR. HOTT

Supporting Alzheimer's caregivers during the holidays

More than 16 million family members and friends are serving as Alzheimer's caregivers in the U.S. As families approach the holiday season, there are easy ways to support caregivers that can ease the burden of caregiving and help make the holidays a joyous time for everyone.

"Holidays can be stressful for all of us, but they can be especially demanding for caregivers," says Ruth Drew, director of information and support services at the Alzheimer's Association. "It's easy to get lost in the hustle and bustle of the holidays, but little gestures can go a long way and can be easier than you think – just one hour of help can make a big difference for a caregiver."

An Alzheimer's Association survey reports that many caregivers are not getting the help and support they need – an overwhelming 84 percent of caregivers say they would like more support in caring for someone with Alzheimer's, especially from family members.

The Alzheimer's Association offers tips for families that can help ease the burden on caregivers this holiday season:

1. Build on traditions: Caregivers may feel overwhelmed by maintaining traditions. Experiment with new traditions that might be less stressful or a better fit for the caregiver. For example, turn the traditional holiday dinner into a lunch.

2. Adjust expectations: The stress of caregiving responsibilities layered with holiday traditions can take a toll. If a caregiver has traditionally hosted family celebrations, offer to host instead.

3. Give them a break: Make a standing appointment to give caregivers a break. Offer to spend time with the person living with Alzheimer's to allow the caregiver a chance to run holiday errands or engage in an activity that helps **he or she recharge.**



4. Check in regularly: It's easy for people to lose touch during the holidays. Calling to check in, sending a note or stopping by for a visit can make a big difference in a caregiver's day and help them feel supported.

5. Tackle holiday to-do lists: Caregivers are often overwhelmed by the demands of caregiving and it can be hard for them to find time to complete

simple tasks that others may take for granted. Offer to tackle a caregiver's holiday to-do list – cooking, cleaning, gift shopping or wrapping.

6. Adapt gift giving. Caregivers often neglect their own well-being. Select gifts that can help them take care of themselves and provide some relief. For example, gift a household chore service or meal delivery service.

To learn more and access resources, visit www.alz.org, the website of the Alzheimer's Association or call its 24/7, free Helpline — even during the holidays — at 800-272-3900.

Caregiving needs will intensify and become more demanding as Alzheimer's progresses. While it's important to check in and support caregivers throughout the year, offering additional help during this busy time of year can ensure that caregivers have a reliable and flexible support network.

(StatePoint)

Holiday Helpers

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Make the holidays a little sweeter



What would the holidays be without platters full of homemade cookies? This recipe for “Stareos” from “Classic Stars Desserts” (Chronicle Books) by Emily Luchetti adds a gourmet spin to a popular chocolate sandwich cookie.

Stareos

Makes 18 cookies
Chocolate Shortbread

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- Pinch of kosher salt
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 8 ounces (16 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- Flour for dusting

Filling

- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

To make the chocolate shortbread: In a bowl, stir together the flour, salt and cocoa powder and set aside. Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on low speed until the butter and sugar begin to incorporate, about 15 seconds. Add the dry ingredients and continue to mix until the dough comes together, about 3 minutes. It will look dry just before it comes together.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment

paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough 1/4 inch thick. Using a 2-inch star cutter, cut out as many cookies as possible. Gather together the scraps, reroll, and continue cutting out cookies until you have 36 cookies. Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets, spacing them 1 inch apart. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 300 F. Bake the shortbread until firm, about 35 minutes. At the midway point, switch the baking sheets between the racks and rotate them 180 degrees to ensure even baking. Let cool on the baking sheets to room temperature.

To make the filling: In a small bowl, stir together the mascarpone, sugar and vanilla until smooth.

Turn 18 of the cookies bottom-side up on a work surface. Using a table knife or a small icing spatula, spread about 1 tablespoon of the filling on the bottom of each cookie. Top with the remaining cookies, bottom-side down.

Source: Metro Creative



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Christmas in the castle offers look into home of early 1900s industrialist

BY ROD KING

Bright colored lights and impressive decorations are an important and treasured part of the Christmas holiday season. Viewing them in a turn-of-the-century mansion/castle makes them even more spectacular.

The University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne will welcome visitors to its annual Christmas in the Castle event December 6 through 10. Senior day is Tuesday, December 10.

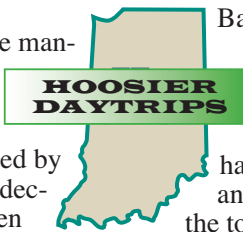
All three floors of the ornate mansion will be open and decorated. Visitors can expect to see as many as 15 Christmas trees throughout decorated by professional florists, interior decorators and designers. Thirteen distinctively different fireplaces will be decorated as well.

Activities begin Friday, December 6 at 4 p.m. and run through 6 p.m. On

Saturday the 7th and Sunday the 8th it's open from noon to 5 and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday, December 9. Senior day is Tuesday, December 10 from noon to 5 p.m. and the cost is just \$6 for persons 55 and over. Free parking is available in the North Campus right across Spring Street from the mansion where tickets can be purchased. Shuttles will be available for persons needing assistance.

Industrialist/banker John Henry Bass named his 22-room (not counting bathrooms) Romanesque-style "country home" Brookside. It's 15-foot-high beamed ceilings, rich inlaid hardwood floors, curving staircase and fabric-covered walls help set the tone for the event.

Construction on the mansion began in 1889. In 1902 a gas explosion in the basement ignited a fire that destroyed all but a portion of the exterior ma-



A beautiful, dark wood staircase leads to the second and third floors.

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The Bass Mansion on the campus of the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne features spectacular decorations on all three floors of the turn of the 20th century mansion. (Photos courtesy of USF)



University of Saint Francis used the mansion for many years as its library and administrative offices. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

sonry. The reconstructed home incorporates a combination of classic hand-carved limestone on the outside and a solid concrete and steel support structure inside. In 1982 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

After many years as the school's library and administrative offices, a major restoration was undertaken in 2009 to return the mansion's unique and original decorative and cultural legacy to its former elegance. Work was completed in 2010.

The mansion is located on the campus of the University of St. Francis, 2701 Spring Street, Fort Wayne.

Get a head start on the holiday spirit, see some outstanding decorations and get a close-up look at how the rich folks lived in the early 1900s.

The writer, a Fort Wayne resident, may be reached at natrod2002@yahoo.com



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Kayaking couple embraces simpler life after 'source to sea' journey

BY TANYA ISCH CAYLOR

On their 1,591-mile kayak trip from the source of the Wabash River to the Gulf of Mexico, John and LaNae Abnet often fantasized about living a simpler life once they returned to land.

"How can we recreate this way of life when we return home?" LaNae wrote on her blog (separateboats.com), midway through their four-month journey in 2017. "How can we perform the basic survival tasks while spending time outdoors in nature?"

With just a few supplies packed into their kayaks, life on the river was unquestionably more challenging. Yet it felt richer than the lives they'd been living back home in Adams County.

Abnet, a former teacher, posed similar questions in "Paddling Edna," the book she wrote about their experience.

"How can we continue exploring new sights instead of spending all our time imprisoned by our familiar surroundings?"

"How can we create a peaceful lifestyle in our typical American culture?"

A little over two years after the Abnets paddled from the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico, their dream has become a reality. Having eliminated most of their possessions, they

literally measured what was left and built walls to fit on 32 acres of land west of Geneva.

Their pole barn-style home has the soothing feel of a cabin, with each artfully arranged object, from bed to guitar to writing desk, serving a purpose.

"Now our kids know not to buy us anything for Christmas," jokes John. Only he's not really joking. These days, the burden of finding a place for any new possession far outweighs the joy of receiving a gift.

"Just buy us a bag of coffee," he says.



LaNae and John Abnet embraced a simpler life after returning to Adams County from their 2017 kayaking expedition from the source of the Wabash River to the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo by Tanya Isch Caylor)

"We like coffee."

As they continue to evaluate what's meaningful in their lives, the Abnets are constantly reimagining concepts most people take for granted.

Take grandparenthood, for instance. The Abnets have plenty of space on their property for outdoor experiences with their eight grandchildren. But they don't see themselves ever serving as full-time babysitters, nor did they set up their home for that purpose.

"We have a great relationship with our grandkids," John says. But more often they visit their kids and grandkids —

who live in Fort Wayne, Muncie, and Bowling Green, Ky., along with one family in Adams County — rather than hosting them at their own home.

And "visiting" doesn't necessarily mean attending sporting events. The way they see it, just because their grandkids' lives have become dominated by scheduled activities doesn't mean they have to embrace that same mentality.

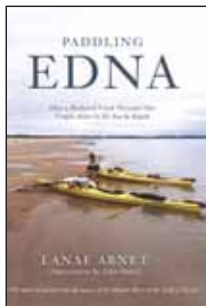
"Our goal is to go to one of everybody's games a year," says John. "We enjoy it. We may go to more than that, but our goal is one."

Their views on work and retirement are similarly unconventional — at least in part because reducing debt eases the burden of how much income you need to get by.

John, who worked in the automotive industry before their trip and for a short time afterward, doesn't view the consulting work he does now as any more valuable than LaNae's writing and gardening.

Her blog and book provide context to their lives, and her gardening and food preservation saved them thousands of dollars on their 2017 expedition. Packaged dehydrated camp food is expensive. LaNae is now in the process of dehydrating meals for a kayak exploration of the Upper Mississippi they're planning for this coming June.

As for retirement, they joke that that's not even a word in their vocabulary. The \$101 monthly pension check John recently began receiving at age 58 is all



LaNae Abnet's book about their journey on the Wabash River is available at several websites.

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John and LaNae Abnet paddle into the Gulf of Mexico in 2017, the culmination of a four-month journey that began in a northwestern Ohio ditch where the Wabash River begins. (Photo provided)

he ever expects to receive in conventional retirement income. They intend to do what's most meaningful and sensible at every stage of their lives.

"Retirement isn't a real thing," John says. "It's an artificial construct. In a lot of foreign countries, they wouldn't even understand the concept of retirement."

"A bigger worry," says LaNae, "is

running out of time, or running out of health."

Staying active has made them exceptionally fit for their age. Though LaNae, 57, had a genetically troubled hip replaced after their 2017 trip, she moves gracefully about their home and property.

They plan to explore the Upper Mis-

issippi next June. After that, they may try some cycling trips. John would love for them to live and work in Japan for a year. LaNae is captivated by the challenge of trying to live somewhere cold, at least for a while. Hearing another adventurer talk about needing to cut a hole in the ice to get water really ap-

Continued on page 32



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Fiber and cholesterol — and you

Q. Does fiber in your diet reduce cholesterol?



The Healthy Geezer
By Fred Cicetti

There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber is acted upon by the normal bacteria in your intestines. Insoluble fiber is not digested by the body and promotes regularity and softens stools. Wheat bran, whole grain products and vegetables are good sources of insoluble fiber.

Soluble fiber appears to reduce your body's absorption of cholesterol from the intestines. Oatmeal contains soluble fiber that reduces your low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the "bad" cholesterol that can increase your risk of heart attacks and strokes. This type of fiber is also found in such foods as kidney beans, brussels sprouts, apples, pears, barley and prunes.

The American Dietetic Association recommends a healthy diet include 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day, including both soluble and insoluble fiber. (Soluble fiber should make up 5 to 10 grams of your fiber intake.) However, Americans only consume about half that amount.

There are other foods that work against cholesterol.

Soy protein, found in such products as tofu, soy nuts, soy milk and soy burgers, can help lower blood levels of LDL cholesterol, particularly when it's substituted for animal protein. Ingesting 25 to 50 grams of soy protein a day lowers LDL cholesterol by 4 percent to 8 percent. That's a lot of soy. People with the highest cholesterol levels seem to benefit the most from soy protein.

Women with breast cancer or who are at high risk of breast cancer should consult with their doctors before eating a soy, because it is not clear how these plant estrogens might affect them.

Studies have shown that walnuts can significantly reduce cholesterol levels in the blood. Rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, walnuts may also help keep

blood vessels more healthy and elastic.

When walnuts represent 20 percent of the calories in a cholesterol-lowering diet, they reduce LDL cholesterol by 12 percent. Almonds appear to have a similar effect. All nuts are high in calories, so use them as replacements for high-calorie foods with high levels of saturated fats.

Omega-3 fatty acids in fish are noted for lowering triglycerides, another form of fat in your blood. They also benefit the heart in other ways. The highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids are in mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines, albacore tuna and salmon. Other good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil and soybean oil.

Some foods are fortified with plant substances called sterols or stanols,

which are similar in structure to cholesterol; this helps them block the absorption of cholesterol in the intestines. Margarines and orange juice that have been fortified with plant sterols can help reduce LDL cholesterol by more than 10 percent.

The American Heart Association recommends that foods containing plant sterols should be reserved for adults requiring lower total and LDL cholesterol levels because they are at high risk of—or have had—a heart attack.

You may want to try eating more soluble fiber, soy protein, walnuts and fatty fish. The next step would be the addition of foods fortified with plant sterols. Eating a combination of these cholesterol-lowering foods increases the benefit.

Of course, if you're a geezer and you plan to make a change in your habits that could affect your health, it is recommended that you consult your doctor first.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezer.com.

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‘Living the dream’

Continued from page 5

formations just popped,” Tom added.

The nearest supermarket was 90 miles away, which became a regular weekly day-trip. It would include lunch and stops at Walmart and JoAnn Fabrics. Lois has a sewing machine in the motor home and continues to do her quilting.

“And it’s not liking driving 90 miles in Indiana, of course,” added Tom. “It’s through two mountain ranges, great scenery. Every trip was an adventure.”

The weather was colder than they’d anticipated. There was 10 feet of snow when they first arrived in late March, eight inches of snow on May 20 and five inches on Labor Day. In between, “the summer was very pleasant but the sun could get pretty intense,” Tom said. Summer nights were cold enough that they had to turn their furnace on almost every night.

Bryce Canyon National Park does not shut down for the winter, but the traffic count slows to the point that the shuttle buses and parking lot attendants are not needed. Their last day was Oct. 20, allowing the couple to get home in time to welcome their second grandchild, born Oct 31.

“That’s the toughest part, of course,” the couple said almost in unison. “But we did Facetime every night with the kids,” Tom explained. The facilities at the employee campground include cable television and an internet connection. They also had stories about getting to know their campground neighbors.

“It’s very enjoyable,” Lois said. “We never regretted it at all. In fact, we’re going to do it again.”

The Carnalls are expected back next March, barring any complications regarding Lois’ mother or their grandchildren.

“How long are we going to do this?” Lois asked and answered. “We don’t know. We’ll do it again and then take it from there.”

Meanwhile, the couple is preparing to put their Preble home on the market. When it sells, they will move into their RV permanently, drive down to Florida for a spell over the winter, maybe find a “workcamper” job down there, or maybe not.

Like they said: “Living the dream.”

The writer is the editor of Senior Living Magazine. Have a story idea? seniorliving@adamswells.com

These passengers deserve to be banned from flying

BY CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

They're inconsiderate. They irritate you. And sometimes, they infect you.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could ban passengers like that from the plane?

Two "no-fly" lists already exist. The

government has one, which is a subset of the Terrorist Screening Database, or terrorist

watchlist. Generally, you land on that list because you might blow up a plane. Airlines also maintain smaller lists of passengers whose business is unwelcome. You can get on it by threatening a crew member or misbehaving on a flight.

If you've been wondering whether the airlines should expand their own no-fly lists, you're not alone.

Inconsiderate passengers

Joseph Flanagan, an engineer from Golden, Colorado, thinks the kind of passenger he sat next to on a recent flight should be blacklisted.

"We were barely 10 minutes into the flight when he pulled off both his shirt and his shoes," he recalls. "The sight of a bare body in an enclosed public environment was disconcerting. Then he propped his damp feet on the chair in front of him. Judging by the ensuing stench, neither his socks nor his shoes had seen water or sunlight for quite some time."

Inconsiderate passengers come in all shapes and sizes. They're the ones who occupy the bathroom for half an hour, doing their hair and makeup while the other passengers grit their teeth and wait. They're the bin hogs who place their carry-ons above your seat and then walk 10 rows back.

Should passengers have to take a basic manners test and submit to personal hygiene inspection before they're allowed to board a plane?

Irritating passengers

One of the most irritating passengers, of course, is the one who talks nonstop. As a result, you can't sleep, can't listen to music, can't get any work done.



On
Travel

But that's not the only thing that irritates air travelers.

"Everyone who sits down in their seat and then immediately reclines as far back as possible should be banned," says Phillip Berg, who works for a library in Cedar Knolls, New Jersey.

Airlines are already working on that in their own way. Spirit Airlines locks some of its seats in place (the term it uses is "pre-recline") to keep passengers from fighting. Delta recently implemented similar restrictions to "protect customers' personal space."

Want to know how to protect passengers' personal space? Give them more of it instead of taking it away. Just a thought.

Infectious air travelers

One category of passenger that can and should be banned – are people who are ill. Sharon Lawrence, a mental health therapist from Largo, Maryland, says people who know they are sick shouldn't fly.

"I have had to sit next to individuals who are sick, coughing, barely covering their mouths or using hand sanitizer

after wiping their nose or mouth," she says. "As a result of a few of these flights, I have become ill after flying."

She says if you have a potentially infectious disease, you should stay grounded. Unfortunately, airlines take a dim view of people who cancel their flights because they have a cold, the flu or some other contagious disease. They rarely, if ever, offer a refund. And in an age of highly restrictive "basic" economy-class fares, you might even lose your ability to change your ticket and fly after you recover.

If passengers look sick or can't show a doctor's note (stating they are not infectious), an airline should keep them from boarding. And they should offer a full refund on the ticket, even if it's nonrefundable. But that's not profitable.

What can be done?

Expanding the airline blacklists is easier said than done. Airlines must carry out their responsibility to provide safe and secure air travel in a nondiscriminatory manner, according to experts.

"Even though it is the case that airlines have rules in their contracts that

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allow them to remove a passenger under certain conditions, they have to have a sound legal basis,” says David Reischer, an attorney and CEO of LegalAdvice.com, a legal advice website.

He says Federal Aviation Administration regulations permit airlines to remove passengers if the safety and health of other travelers are affected. “But such procedures do not allow for the removal of a passenger without proper legal justification,” he adds.

How to not be one of those passengers

Keep your volume down. Use a headset, don’t talk loudly and only engage in conversations with people who want to talk to you.

Don’t invade people’s space. A plane is a shared space. Don’t lean back unless you ask and receive permission. Don’t hog the armrest. Don’t sprawl.

Take a shower before you board. And use deodorant. You don’t have the right to smell bad on a plane. Keep your shoes and socks on, especially if you have a foot odor problem.

Christopher Elliott’s latest book is “How To Be The World’s Smartest Traveler” (National Geographic). This column originally appeared in the Washington Post.

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BRAIN EXERCISE

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A unique love story from World War II

BY KAYLEEN REUSSER

Melba Thorn Jackson stared at the Mother's Day card in her hands. Her sister-in-law, Georgia DePoy, had received the note in the mail at her home in Huntington, Indiana. To anyone else, the card would not appear frightening. But something about it had so alarmed Georgia that she had rushed it to Melba's home.

Melba understood Georgia's concern.

The card contained no signature or message. On the envelope the sender had penned Georgia's address. But instead of her name, he or she had written her sister-in-law's, Melba.

Melba was the newlywed wife of Gerald's brother, Gerald. A student at Union Township High School in Huntington, she planned to graduate the following May.

Against the wishes of her family, Melba had eloped with Gerald, a farmer four years her senior, in October 1942, shortly after he was drafted into the Army. Melba loved Gerald and believed as his wife, she would be kept informed of his whereabouts during the war.

Immediately after exchanging nuptials, Gerald had left for boot camp training at Camp Croft in South Carolina. Melba continued to live with her parents and attend school. She wrote to her new husband often, praying for his safety.

At first, the couple had kept in touch via letters. Melba knew that after completing boot camp, Private Gerald Jackson traveled by troop train to San Francisco where he boarded a troop ship to Australia. He had written her as often as he could and she treasured each response.

Then, the letters stopped.

For five months Melba received no word from Gerald. Melba's father tried to lighten her mood by singing a mournful country tune entitled 'No Letter Today.'

In April 1943, Melba's worries increased when a stack of her letters sent to Gerald in Australia were returned, unopened. When she took her concerns to the Army, officials tried to reassure her. "They said he was probably on the move and unable to write," she said.

Melba tried to stay positive. "I refused to believe Gerald was dead," she said. "I knew he would come home but not in a box."

Now, the unsigned card Melba held

in her hands which had been sent to Georgia offered the first clue to Gerald's whereabouts.

As the women examined the return address on the envelope, they noticed it had been sent from Darnall General Hospital in Danville, Kentucky. Neither Georgia

The handwriting on the envelope was familiar. Both women had seen it in other correspondence, though not for several months.

It was Gerald's.

— — —

Hoping the card had not been sent as part of a misguided joke, Melba and Georgia contacted the local chapter of the Red Cross. Maybe someone there could help them discover who had sent the card. If it was Gerald, what was he doing at the hospital and why had he contacted them in such a haphazard method?

A few weeks later, the sisters-in-law heard from the Red Cross. "They told us the card had been sent by a patient at the hospital," said Melba. The patient, who had been there since early March, was diagnosed with a severe mental illness. His identity was unknown.

Melba and Georgia were convinced the patient was Gerald. Hurriedly, they made plans to visit the hospital, purchasing bus tickets to Danville and arranging time



Gerald Jackson



Melba Thorn Jackson

nor Melba knew anyone who lived in that area or worked at the hospital.

Despite the card being unsigned, mailed by an unknown person from a hospital in a different state, the women felt hope.



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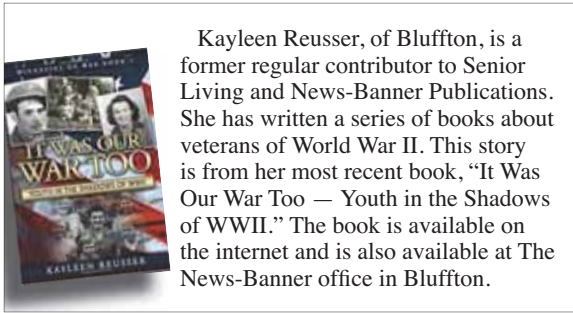
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Kayleen Reusser, of Bluffton, is a former regular contributor to Senior Living and News-Banner Publications. She has written a series of books about veterans of World War II. This story is from her most recent book, "It Was Our War Too — Youth in the Shadows of WWII." The book is available on the internet and is also available at The News-Banner office in Bluffton.

off for Melba from her job at a munitions factory in Huntington. Georgia found friends to watch her children.

The women rode the bus to Danville, checking into a hotel before hopping on a street car to Darnall Hospital. Throughout their journey they had prayed that the mystery would be revealed and Gerald — if the patient who had sent the card was him — would be in good health to return home.

When Melba showed hospital staff Gerald's military serial number, which she had written down to prove her identity and that of his, they agreed she and Georgia could meet the patient. Melba nearly collapsed upon viewing the man lying in bed.

It was Gerald!

Sadly, he didn't appear to recognize Melba or Georgia. He didn't know his name, nor did he recall sending the card. When Melba showed him family members from photos she had brought, Gerald exhibited no response.

Privately, the medical staff told the women the few details they knew about what had happened to Gerald Jackson prior

to his illness.

From Australia Gerald and other soldiers had sailed to the island of New Guinea. The invasion there against the Japanese had begun in January 1942 and would continue through August 1945. Gerald and other troops were sent in as replacements.

No one knows what happened the day Gerald Jackson took refuge during combat in a foxhole with another soldier. At one point it is believed he discovered the soldier in the foxhole was dead, killed by an enemy sniper.

When Gerald was found in the foxhole, he was delirious with a fever of 108 degrees. Military medical personnel diag-

Continued on page 23



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More to Mounds (State Park) than meets the eye

BY TANYA ISCH CAYLOR

I have a vague memory of being overwhelmed by Mounds State Park as a kid.

Maybe it's the name. "Mounds" doesn't resonate like "Stonehenge," though the origin stories of both sites are ancient and mysterious.

Apparently my childhood self mis-

understood "Indian mounds" to mean burial sites; the absence of totem poles or artifacts on the weirdly geometric landforms likely proved disappointing.

Oddly enough, it was reading about the clamp-tipped emerald green dragonfly that made me want to stop at the park for the first time in decades on the way back from a recent trip to Indianapolis. We didn't expect to see the dragonfly, which I'd read exists almost nowhere else on the planet, this late in the year. But this obscure bit of nature trivia made me wonder what else I'd overlooked the first time around.

Hunger interfered with our sightseeing that day. Unenthused by chain restaurants near the interstate, we drove into the heart of Anderson and wound up at one of the coolest Mexican restaurants we've ever tried – and we've sampled quite a few over the years.

It wasn't just Burro Loco's veggie-centric take on Mexican pizza, or the Mexican draft beer on tap that won us over. Honestly, I think we'd go back just to gawk at all the vintage photos, some of which are incorporated into the design of the furniture and décor.

Afterward we naturally felt compelled to check out the warehouse-turned-distillery across the street. It was ridiculously warm for late fall, and the Oakley Brothers Distillery had its garage-door style windows cranked



**Hoosier
Fun**



The Great Mound today, above, and an artist's rendering of an ancient Indian ceremony. (Photo and illustration courtesy of Mounds State Park)

open. We checked out the vats and whiskey barrels in the production area before settling in with an Apple Cider Old Fashioned and a Diet Coke for my husband, the designated driver.

By the time we left, it was dark. We drove through the park, just a few minutes away across the White River, but couldn't see much.

Funny thing, though: After all these years of never being the least bit tempted to pull off the interstate at Anderson,

the following week we made that our destination for a Friday night out.

This time, we intended to explore the park first.

We didn't make it there in time to tour the Nature Center, where I'd hoped to see specimens of those rare dragonflies. But I was curious about their habitat — an unusual kind of wetland called a fen, which is also home to other exotic species such as the star-nosed mole and the

Continued on page 24

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World War II love story

Continued from page 21

nosed him with malaria. The terror of the proximity to a death, combined with a fever may have compelled Gerald to tear off his dog tags, worn around each soldier's neck as a means of identification, and fling them into the dense jungle.

Deep into his delirium, Gerald could not identify himself. A search by military officials for the dog tags turned up nothing.

At that point the soldier known as Gerald Jackson ceased to exist. The Army had a seriously ill soldier to care for with no name.

Believing the soldier had suffered a nervous breakdown, medical officials packed his body with ice while strapping him in a straitjacket. When he was able to travel, the military returned him to the United States for intense medical care, first to a hospital in California, then Kentucky.

As the Army had no way of identifying the soldier, officials could not contact his next of kin to relay his developments.

The staff relayed one unusual fact about the patient they now knew as Gerald Jackson. Although he didn't speak much, he did talk about one person — Adolf Hitler. This seemed odd as Gerald's theater of operation had been in the Pacific, not Europe.

Regardless of his mental state, Melba loved her husband and wanted him home. During the next few days, she and Georgia visited Gerald often. However, their presence seemed to agitate him so that the staff had to strap Gerald to his bed.

When Gerald developed a fever, possibly as a recurring bout of malaria, his doctor suggested the women return to Indiana and allow Gerald to heal on his own.

Devastated, Melba received assurances from the doctor that her husband would soon be well enough to travel. "They said he could be admitted to the Veteran's Administration (VA) Hospital in Marion, Indiana," she said. The hospital, about an hour's drive from Huntington, would be close enough for Melba to visit him often.

Gerald arrived at the hospital in Marion on May 25, his birthday. "He had no uniform or personal items," said Melba. "Everything that had belonged to him had been lost overseas."

With Gerald now close by, Melba visited him each Wednesday after work,

riding a bus, then trolley to the hospital. As the weeks passed, Gerald seemed to make little progress. Melba felt discouraged, but his physician raised her spirits. "He said Gerald was getting better," she said.

One day when Melba went to visit Gerald, she sensed something had changed. "He remembered everything," said Melba. "I saw a different husband."

Gerald's condition improved so that in November 1944 he was released from the VA hospital to Melba's care. At the same time he was discharged from the Army.

Gerald and Melba moved into their own home. Melba continued working at the factory while Gerald slowly recuperated and resumed farming. They became parents to a daughter. Over the years, Gerald suffered from malaria attacks. He died in 1989.

Melba credits her church, Zion United Brethren Church in Huntington, and the local community for providing support to her family during the challenges with Gerald's health. "I could not have gotten through it without them and my own faith that Gerald would come home alive," she said.

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More to Mounds

Continued from page 22

shining ladies' tresses orchid.

We drove around the park but couldn't find any signs — not even of the “keep out” variety — identifying where the fen might be located. So we decided to walk the trail that led to the Great Mound, one of five that appear on the park map.

I can see now why my childhood self was unimpressed. Though as an adult I can appreciate the difficulty of building a uniform circle, a quarter-mile in circumference, with openings that mark astronomical events, the ordinary grass and trees that now cover it makes it seem overly familiar for something built 2,000 years ago.

You definitely have to slip on your history goggles and crank up your imagination to picture the people archeologists call the Adena — and later, the Hopewell, who may or may not have been ancestors of the Miami — performing ceremonies here.

With a limited amount of daylight remaining, we decided to explore the trail that led to the White River. Walking the bluffs high above the river, hearing the

rapids far below before they came into view through the trees, made for some extremely satisfying hiking.

We never did find that darn fen, but we saw several seeps and springs along the trail, along with the remnants of an artesian well, an artifact from the era when this land was an amusement park.

According to the Mounds State Park Interpretative Master Plan, which I later found online, a kiddie train once circled the Great Mound and chugged past a merry-go-round, a skating rink and a wooden roller coaster called Leap the Dips.

In 1909, more than 20,000 people came to the amusement park to watch a reenactment of an Indian battle.

We didn't see any sign on our hike of the many caves, some once filled with artifacts, that permeate the riverbank. Most were dynamited shut in the 1920s for safety reasons after a concessionaire's daughter got lost in one.

I have a feeling we'll be heading back to Mounds State Park soon, maybe on Dec. 14 for the Pioneer Christmas Celebration at the Historic Bronnensberg Home, named for the family that once owned this land.



Stairs make a trail at Mounds State Park easier to climb. (Photo by Bob Caylor)

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While in Anderson to visit Mounds State Park, an Apple Cider Old Fashioned and a flatbread pizza might hit the spot at Oakley Brothers Distillery. (Photos by Bob Caylor)

Maybe the park should be named for them, since they had the foresight to avoid looting and leveling the mounds when they cleared the land, which is what happened to so many similar structures throughout the Midwest.

Adena or Hopewell State Park would be even more fitting. Any of the above beats "Mounds." But whatever you call it, there's far more to this park than meets the eye.

The writer, a Wells County resident, can be reached at tischcaylor@gmail.com.

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A decade in the works

BY BOB CAYLOR

Dave Aker of Bluffton isn't one of those classic-car buffs who see old cars as masterpieces to restore just as they rolled off the assembly line and then preserve. For him a vintage automobile provides inspiration — and a starting point.

That's certainly the case with Aker's 1940 Pontiac. Aker, 70, began looking for a project as he approached retirement from Franklin Electric (and, later in his 34 years there, Bluffton

Classic Car Corner

Motor Works). Years before, he had partially restored a 1954 Ford pickup. "I got it done to the point of primer, and I'd redone the interior," he said. "Then our oldest son started college, and I sold it. That was the end of that project," he said.

He started hunting for a project car that would catch his eye and motivate him. After a wide search online, he found it relatively nearby, in Frankton, a town about the size of Warren, located 20 miles west of Muncie.

Project car? Check. It was gutted — but the body itself was intact and generally sound. "It seemed pretty solid," Aker said. "It had no interior in it." The body's worst shortcoming was that the housings for both of its headlights had been lopped off. The previous owner had dropped in a 454-cubic-inch engine and a transmission from a much later model Chevrolet, so its drivetrain was anything but stock.

Although the 1940 Pontiac is the first classic he restored, he thinks his father's work on cars planted the bug in him. "He'd actually taken five cars, cut the roofs and the trunks out of them, made pickups out of them, and sold them," he remembered. "He could cut, weld, refabricate, fix about anything."

Putting the Pontiac on the road took the better part of 10 years, and it was a team effort with Rodney, one of his sons. Rodney, who lives near Delphos, Ohio, and whose day job is designing molds to make plastic components for medical devices, enjoys restoring cars for friends on the side.



One mark of an antique car is a trunk big enough to pitch a tent inside. Dave Aker of Bluffton has won a number of trophies at area car shows the past few years with his "reborn" 1940 Pontiac. (Photos by Bob Caylor)

He wasn't sure the 454 that came with the Pontiac would even run, and it didn't have a carburetor. He pulled and sold both that engine and transmission and replaced it with an all-Pontiac drivetrain a generation or two newer than the car: a 326-cubic-inch engine from a 1965 LeMans, paired with an automatic transmission from a late-1960s, hooked to a rear end from a 1978 Trans Am.

The body took some work. He needed to replace the floor of the trunk. The bottoms of the doors were rusted, and he ended up replacing the doors entirely. Although the body stayed true to the look of a 1940 Pontiac, beneath the skin, it's a hybrid. The frame ahead of the firewall is from 1978 Nova. The car

An early emblem for Pontiac, used before the familiar stylized arrowhead adopted in the 1950s.



now includes power steering and disc brakes. He found a replacement dashboard in a 1968 Corvair, cut a bit from both ends of the dashboard and fit it inside the Pontiac.

Throughout the rebirth of this car years older than he is, Aker coordinated closely with his son. Rodney rebuilt the

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engine, and fitted the Pontiac with new motor mounts. Aker bought all new suspension components, and he and Rodney again worked together installing them. His son did the eye-grabbing paint job, and Aker did the interior — front buckets, rear seat, center console, all lifted from a 2006 Pontiac Grand Prix.

There were other hurdles to clear before his vintage Pontiac took the road. But he remained confident that he would find solutions.

“I knew I could do it, with the help of my son,” Aker said. “I’ve helped him on his cars before, and I helped my dad with his cars.”

This father-and-son project has been on the road for about three years, and Dave and his wife, Linda, have discovered the fun of taking their transformed Pontiac to shows around the region. It’s fair to say he’s still babying the car.

“We’ve been out to Bummie’s a couple of times,” he said.

“Cruising out River Road,” Linda adds.

“I’ve had it over to my son’s a couple of times since it was finished,” he said.

The farthest destination they’ve hit



Dave Aker shows off the 13-year-old interior of his 79-year-old Pontiac. The oil pressure, temperature and charge gauges in that dash certainly aren’t stock, no more than the Kenwood stereo mounted below them. The dash itself was rescued from a 1968 Corvair, Aker said. Meanwhile, under the hood is a 326 engine from a 1965 Pontiac LeMans. And that decidedly 21st-century floor shifter came from a 2006 Pontiac Grand Prix.

is Gas City, Linda Aker said. But even their tentative steps into the world of car shows is paying off with recog-

nition. “He’s won nine trophies,” Linda Aker said.

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Hoosier family has welcomed hundreds of exchange students over nearly 40 years

BY TYRA BAHANAY

The Pharos-Tribune (Logansport)

LOGANSPOUR — Sharon and Don Strasser have welcomed hundreds of foreign exchange students into their home from across the globe.

The Strassers hosted their first exchange student in 1981 — a boy from Japan — and are currently hosting their 36th and 37th student. But that's the tip of the iceberg.

"We've had tons more than that," said Sharon. "One year we didn't host, we had 11 kids stay with us during that year during periods of time. I don't have any idea how many altogether we've had come through our home but it's been a lot."

Their current students are 17-year-old Lassi Hiilinen, who is from Finland, and 18-year-old Daiki Ichihara from Japan. They are both students at Logansport High School.

Hiilinen has been at the Strassers' home since the beginning of the school year but Ichihara arrived in the United States in mid-October.

"I've enjoyed watching these two boys ... when Lassi first got here he was really quiet ... and then we got (Daiki) and I mean it's like they work together so well, it's fun to watch the two of them together," said Sharon.

Sharon said that Ichihara's English has improved a lot in the two weeks he has been here.

They are both interested in sports and are in the math and science academic clubs.

Most of the exchange students that the Strassers' have hosted have gone to Logansport High School, except for a few that started off with host families in the Lewis Cass school district. They wanted to let those students finish the school year where they began.

The Strassers' first got into hosting exchange students when Don was approached by one of his coworkers whose brother had just gotten back from an exchange in Germany. The brother mentioned that they were trying to find host families.

She asked Don if he and Sharon



Sharon and Don Strasser attend a reunion with some of the exchange students in Germany in 2015. (Courtesy Photo)




would consider hosting since they did not have kids of their own.

They filled out an application and didn't hear back for a while. One day, the phone rang. They were asked to host a girl from Japan.

"The Japanese girl ended up being the Japanese boy that we have up there," said Don, referring to the wall that displays all their past students. "This was on a Friday night and they said he would be here on Tuesday and wanted to know if we would still take him."

They had the weekend to prepare.


"At first, I thought it was a lot like having a visitor," Sharon said. "You try to get everything ready, everything had to be perfect I thought you know, which it doesn't, they're a part of your family for the year. You don't want them to be a guest in your home — not even for one day. And so then he came and Don and I looked at each other and we thought, 'What were we thinking? It was such a shock to us for a while. It turned out to be the best experience ➔"

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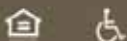


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we've ever had. We fell in love with him, we did so much with him and he still calls me mom."

The Strassers' said they have kept in touch with most of their students throughout the years, especially on Facebook.

The Strassers' went on a trip to Germany about three years ago and one of their former exchange students, who was 18 at the time, planned the entire trip for them. She contacted all of their former students and she wanted to throw them a big party.

"The girl's mother gave her her car and her credit card and said, 'Show them your country.'" They visited all over in Germany and were able to meet up with 18 of their former exchange students.

The girl took them on a cruise along the Rhine River to see the castles. They also went to Switzerland and ate in the clouds on top of a mountain there.

They ended the tour at the girl's house in Bremen, Germany. The girl had contacted and invited all of the Strassers' former students to come and stay as long as they wanted to and then they had a big party.

Several of their former exchange students were able to travel back to Indiana to attend the Strassers' 50th wedding anniversary celebration. (Courtesy Photo)



About 10 of the Strassers' former exchange students ended up at the house that night for the party.

"We had them flying in from London, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, just countries all over the place," Don said. "They were either coming by flights, by trains, by all forms of transportation. They were all ending up there for at least a couple days and then we had this big party. We had them all lined up by the years that they were there and they

talked about their year. So we got to meet up with 18 of them while we were there, which was pretty amazing. The one we hadn't seen her in 25 years and some of them had just gone home, you know."

The Strassers, Hiilinen and Ichihara recently went on a trip to Florida.

"Florida was cool, but also very hot. It was a nice place ... I can't stand heat that well," said Hiilinen. "Finland is cold."



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Hiilinen was sporting his NASA shirt from the Kennedy Space Center and his Deathly Hollows necklace from The Wizarding World of Harry Potter themed area at Universal Studios. They also went to Clearwater Beach.

While in Florida, they met up with Julia, who is one of the Strassers' former exchange students from Russia who immigrated to the United States.

The Strassers' paid for Julia to come back to the United States on a work visa after she graduated. She came back twice and worked at Indiana Beach both times.

"Some of our friends had a big bonfire and one of their relatives was coming up from Florida," Sharon said. "She met the cousin and ended up falling in love with him, getting married. When she was living in Russia, she said she made more money in the summer than her parents would make all year. They lived on \$75 a month in Russia. She told me some of the things they had to do over there and it was not good. Now she's living in a gated community in Florida beautiful home and a big pool and everything and they've got the best of everything down there. Now she was

able to get her parents over here too so she's got a wonderful life now."

She was 1 of 2,000 people who applied for this scholarship and she won the scholarship. "If she hadn't won that scholarship, her life would have been totally different."

They also visited a former exchange student who was from Sweden while on this trip.

The Strassers' did not plan on hosting exchange students again this year but, like many years before, "There were still students who needed a home and we still have two empty beds."

Meanwhile, the couple have had their share of heartache when it came to growing their own family. Sharon and Don eventually adopted a girl who had been in foster care and aged out of the system and had no place to go.

"So she came to live with us and we ended up adopting her when she was 22," Sharon said. "And she had a baby and then the father of the baby killed her — strangled her when the baby was three months old. The baby is now 13 and we have visitation rights for him every other weekend."

Story, photos courtesy of The Pharos-Tribune



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



LaNae and John Abnet got rid of most of their possessions, literally measured what was left, and built walls to fit when they constructed a 750-square-foot home on 32 acres of prairie and woods west of Geneva last year. Their attached garage is much larger than their one-room living space. (Photo by Tanya Isch Caylor)

Kayaking couple

Continued from page 13

pealed to her.

“I want to do that,” she thought.

The important thing, both agree, is to decide what you really want to do, and then do it.

“Today is 10 years ago in 2029,” John says, borrowing a concept LaNae talks about when they do presentations on their trip and her book.

“What are you gonna wish then that you’d done now?”

Do you have a story to tell or know someone who does? tischcaylor@gmail.com



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TDD: 1.800.545.1833 x359



The person below has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's regulations implementing Section 504 (24 CFR, part 8 dated June 2, 1988). Stuart Hartman, Vice President of Operations, 911 N. Studebaker Road, Long Beach, CA 90815 562-257-5100 • TDD (800) 545-1833 ext. 359