

Mature Living

June 25, 2014

Leader of the Band

The music never
stops for John Faith

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The Journal

Leader of the band

By EMILY GEDDE

The music never stops with John Faith.

The first time he buzzed a trumpet in eighth grade, the longtime International Falls music teacher and director said there was no turning back.

“I was just totally sold on music,” he said of the experience.

Faith is known to many in the Borderland community. His head of white curly hair, suspenders and love of duct tape make him hard to miss. There are few International Falls natives who can say they haven’t received music lessons from “Mr. Faith” at some point in their lives, even if it was learning a few notes on a \$3 recorder.

“I love watching little minds at work,”



Staff photo by Emily Gedde

At 71 years old, John Faith says he doubts he’ll ever retire.

he said of teaching for more than 40 years. “You never know what children

are going to retain.”

Even at 71 years old, Faith said he isn’t

ready to succumb to retirement.

“I can’t stand doing nothing,” he said. “It just isn’t me.”

So he teaches. Whether its students at St. Thomas School, a community band, or anyone willing to learn, Faith will teach musicians of every skill level whatever they’d like to know.

“You don’t have to be great to be a musician, you just have to be able to play,” he said.

A young musician

At the age of 5, Faith’s interest in music was sparked by watching his father play the violin.

While the string instrument was exciting to the youngster, he said the concept of spending time to practice didn’t sink in.

Faith to 3 ►



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FAITH

► continued from 2

Until he picked up a trumpet.

It was the brass instrument that kick started a lifelong career for the then eighth grader.

“I was practicing several hours a day,” Faith said. “By the time I was in ninth grade, I was the head trumpet player in my school band.”

The love continues

The love of music continued throughout Faith’s high school career and followed him as he furthered his education. However, because he grew up in a large family, it was difficult to fund a college education when he graduated in 1961.

He decided to join the U.S. Navy, where he played with the U.S. Navy Band until 1966. During that time, Faith played for dignitaries including John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

After leaving the Navy, Faith continued his passion for music and attended the University of Minnesota–Morris. It was there he formed Faith and the Believers in 1968.

“It was the first band I led,” he said. “This was a true meaning of a garage band.”

Faith recalls neighborhood kids from a small Minnesota farming community – about half the size of Littlefork – gathering outside the garage to hear the band play rhythm and blues.

“It was really a cute band,” Faith said. “We had a lot of good times. Running that band helped me realize I’d rather be a leader than a follower.



Contributed photo

A young John Faith poses with a violin — the first instrument he learned to play.

That way, I get to choose a little more what I’d like to do.”

Borderland bound

The move to International Falls came in 1970 when Faith accepted a job as a kindergarten through 12th grade music teacher. Since then, he has taught music to literally thousands of children – many who still remember and recognize him.

“There’s always kids yelling, ‘Hey Mr. Faith, remember me?’” he said with a laugh. “I usually always do.”

In April, the music enthusiast was honored with the Maddie Simons Advocate Award by the Arrowhead Region Arts Council for his dedication and passion to the arts.

Faith to 9 ►



Contributed photo

Faith’s first band he led, “Faith and the Believers,” played together from 1968-1970. Later in life, Faith formed “Faith and the Believers, Too,” which still practices together today.



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With changing lives, drinking may not be the answer

By LAUREL BEAGER, Editor

It's been called the golden years — the time after work ends and the good life of retirement begins.

Advertisements show white haired healthy couples walking the beach hand-in-hand with a cocker spaniel at their heels.

But for many, the so-called golden years come with the loss of a spouse, lack of social life, worries about household bills, and health problems that cause pain and cost money.

And, for many, that can lead to just a few more cocktails each evening than in years past, of course just to help with sleep, and maybe those cocktails start flowing just a few more hours earlier than happy hour started years ago. Now, the loneliness, boredom, anxiety, and/or depression is more easy to handle with just a drink or two in the afternoon, and

maybe late morning.

Alcohol and prescription drug problems among adults 60 and older is one of the fastest growing health problems facing the country, according to the National Institute on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Yet, the situation remains underestimated, underidentified, underdiagnosed, and undertreated.

Gus Christianson, Rainy River Recovery, said many of his clients are court ordered to outpatient treatment groups and during the course of a year, the referrals of people older than age 60 is miniscule. That's likely because most seniors aren't out and about in the community while intoxicated, causing legal troubles and getting noticed, he said.

"There isn't anything that is being done for the senior community that has alcohol or medication issues," he said.

It may be helpful for 12-step meetings organized by Alcoholic Anonymous to be held during the day at places accessible by

the Arrowhead Bus.

"That would be something a group of concerned people, maybe from care facilities that deal with the elderly, should approach the 12-step community about organizing," he suggested.

Christianson said Rainy River Recovery is available to talk and provide information to people who have concerns about their elderly parents alcohol use, but by rule cannot talk about someone's specific issues.

"The biggest thing a family needs to do is to not be ashamed about what is going on," he said. "It is what it is."

He said it's understandable some issues elderly people face can cause feelings of depression. And imbibing "is not a moral weakness," he said. "They're lonely, isolated, afraid, angry, and grieving the loss of their life. They've worked hard, paid their taxes, done all the right things and now we say they are morally weak or making bad choices?"

Christianson said there is nothing wrong in having a drink to relax, "but when it becomes the primary coping mechanism, just not knowing what else to do, the 'choice' question becomes fuzzier."

He said the worst person to help someone is often those closest person to them. People who may be questioning their own use of alcohol or medication to get through the day should talk to someone about it.

"It does not have an effect until you're talking to someone who is going through, or who has gone through, the same thing sits down and all of a sudden they don't feel all alone," he said.

And again, he added, there are a lot of people in recovering community older than ages 55, 65n and 75.

"If there were ways to bring them into the meeting and have a conversation and be sharing their strength it would be wonderful," he said.

Alcohol to 5 ➤



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ALCOHOL

► continued from 4

Christianson said 17 different 12-step meetings are held between International Falls and Littlefork every single week. And the Alano Club offers an open meeting at 9 a.m. Sunday when people who are concerned about their own drinking or that of a loved one can attend.

“Walk into one of those meetings and say ‘I think I am drinking too much,’” he suggested. “It’s amazing what happens. It’s an amazing thing. It’s awesome.”

Bill Johnson, a licensed psychologist at Northland Counseling Center, said alcohol and medication problems aren’t as well addressed by the mental health community as they need to be.

“I think it’s going to be something we need to become more and more aware of when doing mental health assessments so we’re not overlooking it,” he said.

Part of the problem is when people seek assistance with depression, or a family member brings someone in out of concern about depression, they’re not always providing information about alcohol use.

And if asked about it, it may be minimized.

“We’re probably not in the habit of digging as much, when the person didn’t have these problems when they were younger,” said Johnson. We don’t stop to think it’s something they’re hiding now in conjunction, maybe, with a medical problem and the depression that sometimes goes along with being elderly.”

Johnson said it may be helpful for a family member of an elder suffering from depression or anxiety to encourage them to seek an evaluation. And, he said, it maybe helpful for a family member to get permission from their senior to come into a session. Some people can talk freely in front of their loved one or they may need to come in privately to provide information, Johnson said.

Northland has an “any door is the right door” policy, said Johnson. That means that when someone comes to the center and has alcohol or drug problems, staff assist with getting the help they need, working if possible with a treatment center when the client is comfortable with the idea. In the past, he said, clients were told to get care for their chemical dependency needs

first, with the counseling center getting involved after that.

Talking about a senior’s alcohol or medication misuse maybe difficult because they are experiencing guilt or shame about it, or they may not recognize the problem in themselves, Johnson said.

It’s an especially difficult subject for seniors who did not have a substance abuse problem when they were younger. But he said deteriorating health and isolation can cause those problems to “sneak up” on a person.

“Part of the problem with drinking is its gradual on set, and people gradually fool themselves into thing they’re not doing anything that’s too bad,” he said.

And part of the issue involves a change in metabolism as people age, he said.

“What they drink, or the meds they’re using might have a much different effect when they’re older,” he said. “They’re thinking they’ve used this amount all their life and it was never a big deal. But now it’s affecting them differently.”

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the American Geriatrics Society, people 65 or

older are engaged in risky drinking if they consume more than seven alcoholic drinks per week or more than three drinks on a single day. It is highly recommended that the single-occasion drink limit should be no more than two drinks for men and one drink for women.

Getting Help

■ The NIA suggests these ways to cut back or stop drinking:

■ Count how many ounces of alcohol you are getting in each drink.

■ Keep track of the number of drinks you have each day.

■ Decide how many days a week you want to drink. Plan some days that are free of alcohol.

■ Pace yourself when you drink. Don’t have more than one alcoholic drink in an hour. In place of alcohol, drink water, juice, or soda.

■ Make sure to eat when drinking. Alcohol will enter your system more slowly if you eat some food.

■ Ask for support from your family and advice from your healthcare provider.

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Cooking for one

By **LINDSI BARNHART**
Koochiching County Health Educator

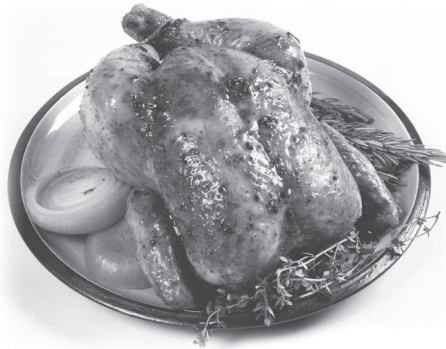
Many of us live alone either throughout our adult lives or for a period of time, and may find it difficult to feel motivated to cook for one person. I lived alone for many years and cooking is nowhere near my favorite hobby, so I understand. Some of the tips that follow are things I tried; others are things I wish I had known. A lot of these tips can apply even if you are cooking for more than one person.

If you don't love to cook, it is easy to not cook for yourself. There are many other ways to spend your time, and several options for eating even if you don't cook: Processed, packaged meals in a tray, box, or bag; fast food; or eating out

at restaurants. While these options are fine for most of us once in awhile, they are not the foundation of a healthy diet.

Cooking your own meals from real ingredients is a positive step for your physical and emotional health. When you cook, you know what is going into your body. This allows you to choose ingredients that are healthy for you, and makes you feel good for taking care of yourself. The sense of accomplishment from making yummy meals is pretty great too.

Cooking does not have to mean that you are holed up in the kitchen just cooking for hours at a time. Do something fun while you are preparing food or while it is cooking: Turn on some music or make a phone call while waiting in the kitchen for water to boil or food to cook. Or do some work that you'd rather get out of the way so you don't have to do it later:



A roasted chicken can provide protein for several meals throughout the week.

Make a grocery list, sweep the kitchen floor, wash dishes or put them away, etc.

Washing and cutting vegetables (and some fruits) can seem like a major hurdle when I am hungry right now, resulting in the choice of a less healthy snack. I like to block out some time once a week to wash,

Tips for finding motivation to cook healthy meals

cut, and package in little containers all the vegetables I hope to snack on in a week so they are easy to access when I am hungry. Try making a batch of hummus as a delicious, protein-packed, healthy vegetable dip.

Cook large quantities a few times a week so you don't have to cook every time you want to eat. Roast a chicken, then use that chicken as the protein in several different meals throughout the week. Cook several servings of pasta, rice, quinoa, or oats at once so you don't have to stand at the stove for half an hour every time you want to eat some that week.

I recently cooked two different meals in the time in which I normally cook one meal so that I wouldn't have to cook the next night but would have another food option besides leftovers. The meals had

Cooking for One to 7 ➤

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COOKING FOR ONE

► continued from 6

several ingredients in common. I was efficient with my time and enjoyed having a break from cooking the next night.

Swap meals with a friend. Each of you can cook more than you need for yourself, and you give them a serving of your meal while taking a serving of their meal. Or if you would like the social interaction, instead of swapping meals, take turns inviting each other over for dinner, or sharing lunch in the park, or wherever (including the break room at work). This will allow you to cook less often and have more social interaction. Do you have a neighbor or friend you can do this with?

Another way to alleviate cooking boredom is to get some new recipes. The internet is wonderful for this. You can type “healthy easy recipes for one” in a search engine and see some great ideas. Also, if you find a great recipe that makes several servings, don’t feel like you have to make that much; cut the recipe in half and/or freeze some leftovers.

Buy healthy little snacks for those times when you can’t bring yourself to cook. Maybe you have some yogurt, whole-grain cereal, and a piece of fruit as a meal. Or some cheese, whole-grain crackers, and raw veggies. Or an apple with peanut butter. You get the idea.

If you are limited in terms of the kitchen appliances you have available, some helpful options to remember include slow cookers, hot plates, and toaster ovens. If you are on a tight budget, you may want to check out some thrift stores or garage sales before going to a store and paying full price for one of these. As with so much related to cooking, be safety conscious when using these appliances so you do not start a fire.

Ensure you have some quality containers to store leftovers in to keep them fresh and healthy. If you will not eat something in the next few days, freeze it.

Cooking with healthy ingredients is a great way to maintain, attain, or regain physical health, and it is something really nice to do for yourself. Feel free to try some of these tips to improve your health and enjoy your food.



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Talking to your doctor when you're older

KAO STAFF REPORT

Talking with a doctor is sometimes the most intimate conversation one can have as well as the most difficult. For many people, being older and wiser does not make things easier.

It may be helpful to consider a few basic principles. You are going to have to provide information for the doctor to help you. In turn, the doctor will be giving you information about your health and options. Together you can weigh your options and make a decision to act.

When it comes to providing information, honesty is the best policy. Your doctor needs to know what is going on to make an informed decision. It's good to think ahead about the most important questions you want to ask in the time available and then stick to the point. Know your medical history and keep track of your current medications.

When the doctor offers opinions or a diagnosis or recommends treatment, you can help the communication by asking questions. What do these tests do? How will I find out the results? Are there risks? What are these medications and what do they do?

If during your meeting with your doctor you feel rushed or confused, let your doctor know. You are your best advocate to see that your questions are answered to your satisfaction.

Decision making should include a discussion of choices as well as risks and



Good communication and regular visits with your health care professionals are important steps towards the goal of healthy, happy aging.

benefits and how treatments may affect your overall life, including practical matters such as cost of coverage. And don't forget to consider a discussion about how to prevent a disease or health condition.

One recommendation is to prepare for the unexpected. Many older adults harbor fears about how they would cope with an accident, a fall, or a diagnosis of a serious illness. It might be a relief to talk with your doctor about your fears. This discussion can be a first step toward taking action to alleviate some of your concerns.

You may also talk with your doctor about who would make decisions for you if you were unable to make them for yourself. You can make your preferences known ahead of time by filling out an advance directive. Forms are available at local clinics and online as well as at agencies that serve older adults. Once you have filled out a form, make sure that your doctor, your local hospital and your proxy have a copy.

Most older adults who drive would like to drive as long as possible, maintaining their independence. Various factors can affect your safety and the safety of others, however, and a talk with your physician should include how changes in your physical health might affect your driving. Are medications or a medical condition making driving harder? Are you concerned about memory issues? Or your vision? It may be easier to make a decision about continuing to drive once you better understand your particular medical situation.

Because most of us don't like to talk about money, the costs of medical care are often overlooked until a bill arrives. Don't hesitate to ask your doctor about costs up front, including the cost of

medications. If cost is an issue, ask about less expensive alternatives, such as generic brands. Your doctor may be able to refer you to someone who can provide information on financial assistance.

Aging brings with it a full range of physical, emotional, financial and family issues. You are not alone if you have tough questions to ask about tough subjects. These areas of concern might include problems with family, with incontinence, or with memory loss. Alcohol and drug use can become a particular problem for older adults.

Problems with addictions are not restricted to young people. As people age they become more sensitive to alcohol. And heavy drinking can make other problems worse, such as high blood pressure, memory loss and mood disorders. A major life change, such as the death of loved ones, can lead to depression and alcohol misuse. Remember, alcohol and drugs don't mix. Reactions to taking both can be dangerous or even deadly. Your doctor should be able to direct you to support resources such as counseling and therapy as well as provide you with information on how medications affect your use of alcohol.

For those caring for an older person where there is concern about medication or alcohol misuse, it is recommended that you talk about your worries with the person receiving your care, provide some facts, offer help, encourage counseling and provide support during treatment. It is also important to take care of yourself, seeking support of family or friends and letting others know about your needs.

One of the best resources available to lead you through these issues is "A Guide for Older People: Talking with Your Doctor." This colorful, easy-to-read guide is produced by the National Institute on Aging and is free. It includes handy worksheets on changes to discuss, concerns you might have and medications you are taking. Copies are available at Koochiching Aging Options, along with advance directives and other helpful information and assistance.

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Medicare to cover screening, counseling for obesity

SENIOR LINKAGE LINE STAFF REPORT

Medicare will now offer coverage for preventative services to reduce obesity, report staff with the Senior LinkAge Line, a free service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging.

Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to www.MinnesotaHelp.info to chat live

with a Senior LinkAge Line specialist.

More than 30 percent of men and women in the Medicare population are estimated to be obese. Obesity is directly or indirectly associated with many chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Screening for obesity and counseling for eligible beneficiaries by primary care providers in settings such as a physician's office will now be covered under this new benefit.

For a beneficiary who screens positive for obesity with a body mass index (BMI) at or above 30, the benefit would include one face-to-face counseling visit each week for one month and one face-to-face counseling visit every other week for an additional five months. The beneficiary may receive one face-to-face counseling visit every month for an additional six months if he or she has achieved a weight loss of at least 6.6 pounds during the first

six months of counseling.

Call the Senior LinkAge Line: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433 for more information on how it can help. Specialists provide one-to-one assistance with helping older adults age well, as well as all Medicare and health insurance issues. The Senior LinkAge Line is the federally-designated State Health Insurance Assistance Program for Minnesota.

FAITH

► continued from 3

"It was an honor to receive the award," Faith said.

But, as humble as Faith is, he admits he doesn't need any recognition for doing something he loves.

"I really don't need any thanks for doing what I've loved doing most of my adult life and that is being a missionary for the arts," Faith said. "It has been nice listening to many former students comments though the years ... It's been a lot of fun."

A career as a musician has been anything but uneventful for Faith. He is full of countless stories – some not appropriate for print – of life on the road traveling from gig to gig. Most of the stories involve break downs, snowstorms and being in the right place at the right time.

"It's been a lot of fun," Faith said. "I have a lot of good memories."

The musician said he's rubbed elbows with a lot of guys who could play all

"I don't think I'll ever retire. The music is like a drug in a way – a drug we're allowed to do. Music is something you can do as an individual thing and something hopefully lifelong."

John Faith

types of instruments really well and had a good time doing it.

"I don't claim to be a good trumpet player like those guys, but I can play," he said with a laugh.

He hopes to continue to buzz his beloved trumpet until he is physically unable to.

"I don't think I'll ever retire," he said. "The music is like a drug in a way – a drug we're allowed to do. Music is something you can do as an individual thing and something hopefully lifelong."



Contributed photo

In April, Faith was awarded the Maddie Simons Advocate Award by the Arrowhead Region Arts Council.

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Your amazing brain

By **DR. ROGER LANDRY**

Your brain continues to develop across a lifespan. It has the capacity for nerve regeneration and pathway rewiring, and it has the ability to grow new tissue. In fact, your clever brain produces nearly 10,000 new cells every day! Use them, and you can strengthen your brain just like a muscle—enhancing memory and cognitive ability, regardless of age. Don't use them, and they soon die.

In the 1967 Mike Nichols film, "The Graduate," Dustin Hoffman plays Ben Braddock, a recent college graduate who gets one word from a family friend: "Plastics." At the time, it was an exploding field with great potential. If the film had been produced today, the word would likely be "neuroplasticity."

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's lifelong ability to rewire itself in response to the stimulation of learning and experience. Neuroplasticity allows the neurons in the brain to compensate for injury and disease and adjust its response to new situations and changes in its environment. This dispels the myth that the adult brain is a relatively stagnant and fragile organ. It's a muscle, just like any other muscle in the body. Like other muscles, you have to work it.

The brain's super highway

Our brains have 100,000 miles of neural pathways. Every time we move, learn something new, recall a fact or do any of the magnificent things our brains are capable of, messages travel along these

pathways at hyper-speeds of up to nearly 300 miles per hour. Just like training

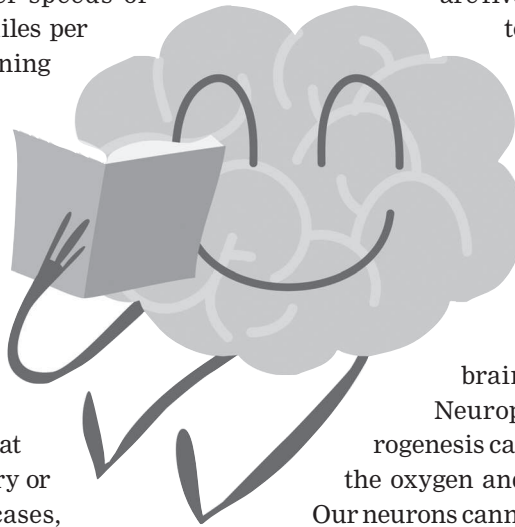
a muscle, we can train our brains. Once it learns a new pathway, reinforcement makes that pathway stronger and faster.

What happens if something wipes out that pathway—say injury or stroke? In many cases, the brain will find a route around the damaged area of the brain. That's neuroplasticity at its best—rewiring in response to the environment and behavior.

A long-term study in Minnesota tracked the lifestyles and mental decline in a group of nuns. When they died, autopsies revealed some had Alzheimer's brains—tangles of neurons, and the plaque of beta amyloid material surrounding these neurons. Yet, these nuns experienced no signs of Alzheimer's. The investigators concluded that a lifestyle of regular physical and mental activity protected these nuns from the onset of the symptoms of dementia, even when the disease was anatomically present. What that tells is that cognitive stimulation improves memory and brain health and minimizes the progression of dementia.

Five fitness tips to improve your brain

Ready to flex your brain muscles? Here



are five brain-healthy tips to get you started:

1. Exercise regularly—try taking a walk, riding a bike or swimming. Any movement, no matter how small, helps strengthen your brain.

Neuroplasticity and neurogenesis cannot occur without the oxygen and glucose in blood.

Our neurons cannot function without nutrients. Physical activity is associated with a surge of substances that stimulate brain growth. Brain-derived neurotrophic factors (BDNF) are like Miracle-Gro for the brain, as is nerve growth factor (NGF). Experiments in mammals have shown that these substances can reverse age-related memory impairments.

2. Challenge your brain—the brain needs constant stimulation to keep the pathways it has and to develop new ones. Learning new things and keeping your level of brain activity up is a virtual fountain of youth. Try learning a new language or how to play a musical instrument. See what happens when you eat dinner with your non-dominant hand or take a different route to the grocery store. New information stimulates your brain.

3. Learn to reduce stress—chronic stress rots your brain, destroying cognitive function and raising your

Tips for avoiding dementia and promoting better brain health

risk of dementia. Find what gives you joy—whether it's meditation, painting, woodworking or reading, etc. Find this quiet place within you and make sure you go there regularly to give yourself mental breaks.

4. Unplug regularly—Dr. Sandra Chapman, founder and chief director of the Center for Brain Health at the University of Texas in Dallas, and author of "Make Your Brain Smarter," advises us about the "power of one." Instead of multi-tasking, try "sequential tasking." Multi-tasking inhibits learning and can negatively affect our memory. Take time to unplug from the sensory overload that comes from being exposed to so much technology; cell phones, computers, and television all have a place, but know when it's time to unplug for a while.

5. Eat a balanced diet—a good rule to live by is this: Go fresh. Go local. If your great-grandmother never ate it, more than likely, you shouldn't either. The closer you get to a Mediterranean diet, the better. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, fish and whole grains. Limit meats and high-fat diets. One study at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that the risk of Alzheimer's was 80 percent higher in people with obesity.

For more information about better brain health and other successful aging tips, visit www.LiveLongDieShort.com.

Landry is a preventive medicine physician who specializes in empowering older adults to take control of their own aging.



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Loneliness, isolation a reality for some Minnesota seniors

By **DEB TAYLOR**

A new British study of loneliness and isolation among seniors is making waves on this side of the pond, too. The Age UK poll of 2,000 seniors found a 40 percent increase in loneliness among seniors in only the past year.

Ten percent of the seniors described themselves as often or always lonely. Sadly, four in ten said their pet or television was their main form of company.

Across Minnesota, many thousands of seniors have no more than one or two social contacts per month. For some, the highlight of their day may be exchanging greetings with the postal carrier or the cable guy. Typically, these seniors live alone and may have family dispersed around the country or no family at all. They've suffered loss as friends have died.

Isolation is on our radar and must be addressed as Minnesota's popula-

tion grows older. In the next decade, one-fourth of Minnesotans will be age 65 or older. The number of seniors age 80 and older will triple.

Enjoying or enduring?

Among this aging population cohort, loneliness can not only make life miserable for the elderly, it can be corrosive to their health, making them more vulnerable to sickness and disease.

The incidence of mental illness among older adults is expected to significantly increase as the elder population increases. Depression among seniors is widespread and most often occurs in context with physical and psychosocial problems that beset this population.

While older adults comprise 12 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 18 percent of all suicide deaths. This is an alarming statistic, given that seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population, making the issue of later-life suicide a major public health priority, reports the American Associa-

tion for Marriage and Family Therapy.

The problem is further aggravated among seniors who are lonely and isolated with little or no social support. After hospitalization and treatment for major physical illness, as many as one-third of elderly patients are prone to depression.

Seniors living independently require some support to maintain a healthy, vital and joyful lifestyle. They need to stay engaged with their avocations, friends and family. This socialization enhances physical and emotional well-being, and mental alertness, which help create a more connected and satisfying life.

Our senior centers accommodate a growing numbers of retirees who want to fellowship with friends, dine together, play cards, enjoy book clubs, and take trips to shop or attend museums and ballgames.

Seniors living at home enjoy their independence, but in time, aging reduces their ability to handle some chores.

Older adults may need volunteer help with routine tasks like yard duties or a low-cost Senior Community Services-contracted handyman for household maintenance. These helpful folks are always willing to offer a listening ear and an encouraging word.

I invite you to walk with us to strengthen our community by extending an old-fashioned sense of neighborliness, checking on and befriending the older adults and neighbors around us.

Together we can reimagine aging and ensure a healthy community for our oldest loved ones and neighbors so they are welcomed, loved, and encouraged.

And that will benefit us all.

Taylor is CEO of Senior Community Services and the Reimagine Aging Institute, a nonprofit that advocates for Minnesota's older adults and helps seniors and caregivers maintain their independence. Visit www.seniorcommunity.org for more information.

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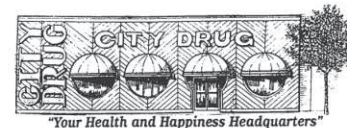


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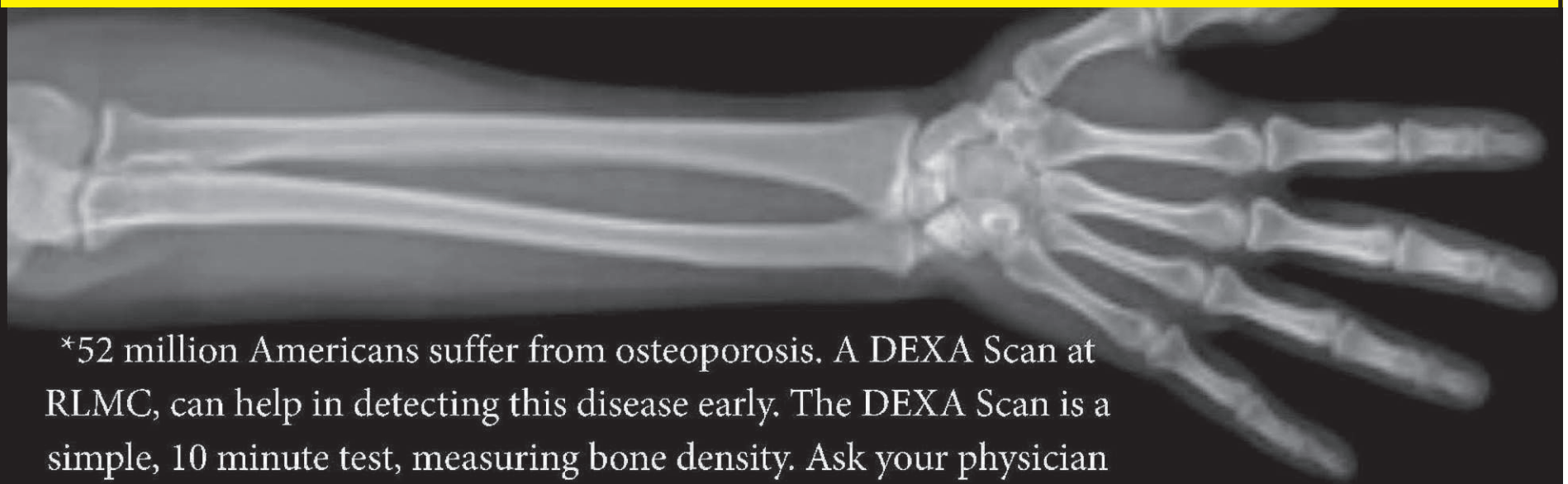
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