

Senior Living

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SPECIAL SECTION

UNCOVERING HISTORY



Andre Dominguez cleans tombstones at Rohrerstown Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery in Lancaster this summer.

VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CEMETERY SLEUTH

Genealogist Andre Dominguez solves mysteries while restoring graves

GAYLE JOHNSON
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

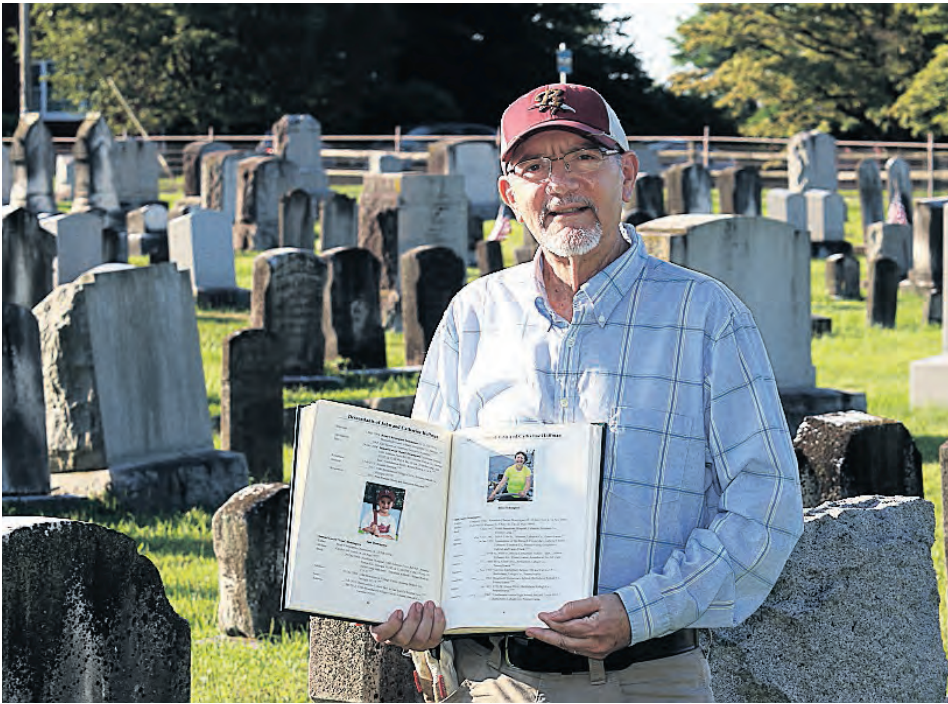
Many people who visit cemeteries mourn, pray or pay their respects. Lancaster native Andre Dominguez adds one more reason to that list. He often goes to graveyards to solve mysteries.

Dominguez spends much of his time locating, photographing and documenting Lancaster County graves for the Find a Grave website (findagrave.com). Owned by Ancestry.com, the grave website matches people looking for lost relatives to volunteers who can walk graveyards and conduct research.

The genealogist discovered the website while researching his own ancestors. That hobby turned into volunteer work, and the 74-year-old has found and studied many graves in Lancaster County. He also cleans and repairs headstones.

“Basically, my initial interest was my family,” the former systems engineer and nuclear plant manager explains. Dominguez’s father hailed from Chile, while his mother came from Hershey. He began studying his relatives before he and his wife moved to Homestead Village, a retirement community, in 2012.

In addition, Dominguez takes on about one to two paid clients each year who ask him to re-
GRAVE, page 7



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Andre Dominguez displays a hardcover book he created on family lineage at Rohrerstown Cemetery. He will do ancestral research for one or two paid clients each year.

County CCRCs to welcome visitors

Explore Retirement Living open house returns after two-year COVID-19 hiatus

MARGARET GATES
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When Bob and Linda Yurejefcic decided to downsize from their Mountville-area home, they spent several years researching continuing care retirement communities in Lancaster County. While living spaces and amenities were among the key deciding factors, Bob says what really stuck with them was their conversations with the residents of those communities.

“I asked them if there was anything they didn’t like,” he recalls. “Then I asked if there was one thing they would change if they could change it. One hundred percent of the time they would say, ‘I would come here sooner.’ It was shocking to hear that from everybody you talked to. Go there sooner. Go there while you can enjoy it.”

The Yurejefcics ultimately moved to Brethren Village in 2017. Their advice to others who are contemplating a similar move is to attend the Explore Retirement Living open house, a collaborative event hosted by the county’s 17 continuing care retirement communities.

This year’s open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 15. All 17 CCRCs will put out their welcome mats, inviting visitors to stop by and take a campus tour, enjoy some refreshments, check out living spaces, learn about programs and amenities, and do what the Yurejefcics did — chat with residents.

“The open house is a great way for people to dip their toe in the water who are just starting to learn about life plan communities and what options are out there,” says Christina Gallagher, director of marketing at Homestead Village in East Hempfield Township.

Those eager to dip their toes in the water have endured a two-year drought thanks to COVID-19. The year 2020 would have marked the 10th anniversary for the open house, but the pandemic canceled those plans. Organizers are happy to celebrate that milestone this year, even if it’s a little overdue.

“I was there for the very first one,” Gallagher says. “We’re pretty proud of the fact that it’s still going on.”

Another point of pride is the collaborative aspect of the event, which is unusual given the fact that the communities are essentially competing for residents.

“It just goes to show the quality of commu-
TOUR, page 2

Quest for Learning plans in-person program for fall

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After 40 years away pursuing a career, Diane Carroll moved back to Lancaster in 2006 and looked for ways to get reacquainted with her hometown.

“I ran into a person at F&M who started taking me around Lancaster, showing me all the good stuff that goes on — theater, concerts, that sort of thing,” she recalls.

One of those good things was Quest for Learning, a series of educational fall and

spring seminars held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. She attended a talk on “America and the World in the 21st Century” and was hooked.

“I think I’m one of these people that could have been a full-time college student,” says Carroll, who joined the Quest board of directors a decade ago and now serves as its president. “My training in college was I was a (mathematics) major with a minor in Russian. ... I love music. I love history. I love science.”

Now in its 46th year, the Quest for Learning program covers all those interests and more in pursuit of its mission “seeking the encouragement of mental stimulation and growth, the excitement of new knowledge and the pleasure of new friends.”

Following two years of Zoom programming due to COVID-19, Quest for Learning plans a full, in-person return to that mission with its fall series, which runs six consecutive Thursdays, from Sept. 29 to Nov. 3.

Quest offers eight lectures each week, four

from 9:40 to 10:30 a.m. and four more from 11 to 11:50 a.m., with a refreshment break in between. Participants can choose one lecture from each time slot. Registration for the full six-week series, a total of 12 lectures per person, is \$20.

“We try to have as much variety as we can possibly get in our programs,” Carroll says.

Topics include everything from history, current affairs, politics and law to art, music, mathematics and science.

QUEST, page 7

JOB CHANGE

How two local women went back to school to pursue a new career after 50.

● Page 3



TRANSITIONS

Three family businesses discuss turning over the reins from one generation to another.

● Page 4



Explore Retirement Living
Open House details and participating communities at
www.ExploreRetirementLiving.org

2022

Saturday
October 15
10 AM - 4 PM

Tour

Continued from 1

nities and the wonderful way we all relate to one another and support one another,” Gallagher says. “We understand we all have different options and a different vibe. It’s kind of like college. You have to go to the community that fits your personality best. We all play well in the sandbox together.”

They play so well together, in fact, that if a prospective resident visits one community and doesn’t find what they’re looking for, that community will likely recommend one of the other CCRCs in the county.

“I love the fact that as retirement communities, we’re working together for the good of Lancaster County, not necessarily our own individual good,” says Tara Ober, vice president of communications and resident life for Brethren Village in Lititz.

In addition to the event itself, the communities collaborate by offering a website, [exploreretirementliving.org](#), that includes an overview of each of the participating CCRCs. They also pool their resources to do a direct mailing that reaches 150,000 households, notes Megan Weiss, director of marketing and development for United Zion Retirement Community in Lititz, one of the county’s smaller CCRCs.

“For our community, it’s really helpful,” Weiss says. “It allows our name to reach a larger market. Because we all contribute to that advertising, it gives us a much larger reach on our direct mail than we would probably each be willing to do alone.”

As helpful as the open house is for those exploring their retirement options, it’s equally important as a marketing tool for the communities themselves. While many had virtual tour options during the pandemic, it just wasn’t the same, says Margie Seagers, manager of sales for Willow Valley Communities.

“You have to get in the



Brethren Village residents Bob and Linda Yurejefcic ride their bikes in the retirement community south of Lititz. The couple attended an Explore Retirement Living open house before moving to Brethren Village in 2017.

space, feel the energy, talk to the people who live here,” Seagers says. “It means everything to us to have this event back.”

What to expect at the open house

Most communities will follow a similar format, with a central location for registration, a tour that includes a variety of residences, amenities and services, and opportunities to interact with current residents. Some of the CCRCs will also do COVID-19 screening.

“In the beginning, when we first started doing this, people were coming blind,” Ober says.

Now, they’ve often done their research in advance. Past open houses have drawn visitors from 40 states to Willow Valley Communities, says Maureen Leader, public relations and communications manager. And many of them come with Excel spreadsheets in hand, ready to compare the communities based on a variety of criteria, from food, fitness and entertainment

to location and pet-friendly amenities, she says.

Any one community can have hundreds of visitors descending on it during the six-hour open house. Exactly how many often depends on factors like the size of the community, its proximity to other CCRCs and whether it has something new to show off to visitors, Weiss says, hinting that United Zion planned to announce some “exciting news” during the Oct. 15 event.

Homestead Village will be showcasing floor plans and renderings for its new Townstead apartments, which are still in the pre-sale phase, Gallagher says.

Moravian Manor Communities in Lititz just completed the final phase of carriage homes on its Warwick Woodlands campus and will showcase a variety of cottages, carriage homes, townhomes and apartments on its Founders and Warwick Woodlands campuses, says Nicole Michael, corporate director of sales and marketing.

At Willow Valley Communities, open house visitors will get to tour two models

in the newly opened SouthPointe Village luxury apartments, representing the last opportunity for new construction on the community’s main campus. New residents began moving into the first building of 24 apartment residences in July. Four additional buildings are planned. All apartments include two bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths, spacious kitchens, a gas fireplace and patio.

“This is going to be our rock star of the tour,” Leader says.

Mindful of the collaborative nature of the day, all the participating CCRCs plan their presentations so visitors have ample time to visit additional communities. They won’t tie people up with lengthy programs or opportunities for long chats with members of the sales team.

“It’s a great way to discover what makes each community special and determine if they are the right fit for you ... at your own pace,” Michael says, noting open house visitors always have the option of scheduling a more in-depth personal follow-up appointment.

“The thing that’s nice about opening our doors to the whole community is that the people coming on campus feel less pressured because they’re en masse,” Ober says. “People feel more comfortable coming on a tour like that where they’re not necessarily one-on-one with a sales counselor and they don’t have to give financial information.”

Important first step

Vivian Colatta stayed in her Leola-area home for five years after her husband died, until maintaining a home finally got to be too much. Attending the Explore Retirement Living open house gave her the opportunity to sample several communities and talk to residents, some of whom had similar experiences.

“I really appreciated people

putting themselves out there,” says Colatta, 81, who eventually moved to Landis Homes. “At that stage of your life, you just don’t know if you’re making the right move in selling your house.”

Choosing a cottage over an apartment at Landis Homes turned out to be just the right move for her, “because I didn’t want to give up my yardwork yet.”

Even for those who aren’t quite ready to move to a retirement community, the open house is an important step in planning ahead. Sarah Short, director of residency planning for Landis Homes, says a significant number of current residents, like Colatta, attended an Explore Retirement Living open house, sometimes years before moving to the community.

“Many communities have growing waiting lists, so it’s really valuable for people who are planning ahead to include these visits to retirement communities,” Short says. “Even if they’re not ready to move, they can gather information to use if they consider getting on waiting lists.”

Gallagher, of Homestead Village, notes that those who wait for a health crisis to start looking into retirement community options often miss out on many of the benefits of CCRC living, whether it’s wellness programs, socialization or the multitude of dining options.

“You miss all those years of enjoyment if you wait until there’s a crisis,” she says. “You’re kind of stuck with what’s available.”

At Willow Valley, where residents are welcome starting at age 55, Leader couldn’t agree more, noting the community offers everything from a Cultural Center with a 500-seat theater, day spa, aquatics and fitness center, and art gallery to a Clubhouse with a bowling alley, golf simulator and vintage arcade.

“People come in here and say, ‘I should have done this 10 years ago,’” Leader says. “We have so much to offer. You don’t want to wait until you’re physically unable to enjoy it all. Get here on your 55th birthday.”

SEARCH TIPS

- Here are some tips from local continuing care retirement communities on how to make the most of the open house event:
- Plan ahead by visiting community websites and picking the campuses you’d like to visit.
 - You’re not running a marathon, so you can’t visit them all. Two or three is realistic. Four is possible if you choose a location such as Lititz where there are several in close proximity.
 - Bring family members or friends along so you can bounce thoughts and ideas off one another.
 - Check ahead to see if the campuses you are visiting have any COVID-19 protocols in place.
 - If you want to avoid crowds, consider visiting in the afternoon.
 - Choose communities of different sizes that have the amenities you want. The open house is a great way to get an idea of the variety available.
 - Get the vibe. Much like a college visit, walk the campus, talk to people, get a feel for the culture of the community and decide if you can see yourself living there.
 - Talk to the residents of a community to get a real-life perspective of what it’s like to live there.

- Additional tips to narrow your search:
- Decide what kind of living space you want. Do you prefer a home or an apartment? A garage, a basement or a loft? Every community has one-bedroom apartments, but not every community has luxury homes with tons of square footage.
 - Consider location. How close is a community to your health care services or the things you like to do, whether it’s golfing, shopping downtown or going for a hike?
 - Consider the amenities that are important to you. Do you want a community that has a pool, volunteer opportunities, a club or other outlet that supports your hobbies and interests?
 - Ask about support for independent living residents. Does the community have a nurse, social worker or transportation services?
 - Don’t discount cost. Do your research on contracts, entrance fees, monthly fees and what happens if you leave or require additional care in the future.



Willow Valley Communities’ new luxury apartments at SouthPointe Village offer two floor plans at 1,704 and 1,868 square feet. Options include two bedrooms with two-and-a-half baths or two bedrooms with two-and-a-half baths and a study.

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Over 50? It’s not too late for a new career

REBECCA LOGAN
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Susan Parker spent roughly half her life working for one of Lancaster County’s largest fitness centers. There, she climbed through the ranks to executive director. Now, at 53, she’s making a change and is halfway through the Water and Environmental Technology (WET) associate degree program at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

“I worked at my other job for 27 years, which is a very, very long time,” Parker says. “I had just come to a point in my life where I thought, ‘I’m just going to go off the board here and do something totally different.’”

Parker joined the ranks of those who are changing careers after 50. And she’s excited — albeit still nervous — to be there in a moment when several factors have aligned in her favor.

“If ... somebody might be looking at switching jobs or identifying a new career pathway to start on, now is probably one of the most optimal times,” says Thaddeus Stevens President Pedro Rivera.

The market is robust, Rivera says, noting that many students are getting hired before they even finish their programs. And employers — including those in the trade skills where there’s traditionally been a reputation of rigidity — are increasingly offering ways to work around schedules and life conditions, he says.

Gen Z is well known for an insistence on flexibility. Fortune magazine reported that a LinkedIn survey from January found that 72% of that generation — the eldest of whom were born in 1997 — claim to have left or considered leaving their job due to an inflexible work policy. But, while not as many, 59% of baby boomers surveyed



Susan Parker tests water in the Water and Environmental Technology lab at Thaddeus Steven College on Orange. She’s pursuing a new career in her 50s after 27 years at a fitness center.

did say the same thing, Forbes reports.

“One of the things that we’re hearing from those who are looking for flexibility is: You have grandparents ... that need to drop a grandchild off to school or provide that system of support,” Rivera says. “That’s a flexibility that we’re starting to see many more of our employers start to take on.”

‘See what I can learn next’

In Ivomne Berengeres’ case, it’s an increasing flexibility in her own schedule that is prompting a new career. The 57-year-old native of the Dominican Republic worked as a sous-chef in New York years ago.

“Then I decided to become a mom. And that’s what I was doing, being a mom,” she says. “My daughter is now 17 and I decided to go back to school. Take a challenge. See what I can learn next.”

She plans to be a plumber. Mechanically inclined her whole life — be it car parts or pipes — she’s learned those kinds of skills over the years largely by trial and error. She’s upping her game by studying at Thaddeus Stevens.

“Finally I have the time and the opportunity to do this now,” Berengeres says. “I’m learning the proper way with the proper materials.”

She thinks being a woman entering the plumbing field may give her a bit of an edge in the hiring process given

that makes her somewhat unique. But that remains to be seen, says Berengeres, who is, regardless, happy about the prospect of inspiring other women who might be hesitant to go a trade skill route.

As for age? She’s not sweating that. Though the bulk of her current classmates aren’t much older than her aspiring-lawyer daughter, Berengeres is confident when it comes to the physical rigors her intended profession involves.

“All my life I’ve worked hard and I like it. I don’t like to be sitting. I like the physical,” she says. “I know that maybe I won’t be able to carry 20 toilets a day. But maybe 10. Maybe 8.”

She’s expecting prospec-

tive employers will understand that. Not all statistics support that.

AARP published a piece this year that noted that according to the most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics available at the time, 36.1% of workers age 55 and older were long-term unemployed, meaning they had not been able to land a job in 27 weeks or more. The long-term unemployment rate for those between 16 and 54 was noticeably less at 23.7%.

“Unfortunately ageism is real in hiring,” says Dr. Dawn Graham in an email.

Graham’s resume includes time as a licensed psychologist, corporate recruiter and career director for the Executive MBA Program at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She talks about dealing with red flags — which can include age — in her book, “Switchers: How Smart Professionals Change Careers and Seize Success.”

Graham says that 2018 book has renewed relevance as the pandemic caused many to reevaluate their relationship with work.

“Also, with a tighter labor market in favor of job seekers, it is a great time to pursue a transition,” she says. “What’s still very important is spending time to narrow down your target and rebrand yourself on your resume, social media and interview responses so companies can see how your experience and transferable skills can help them achieve their goals.”

Graham says many companies are actively recruiting veterans leaving the military, welcoming “returners” (those who took years off to raise a family) and offering what are being called “mid-ternships” for mid-career switchers.

“Take advantage of these if they fit with your path,” says Graham, who also sug-

RESUME TIPS

AARP on its website offers several tips for “age-proofing” a resume. Here are three:

- Remove dates for education and certifications if they’re more than 15 years old.
- Get rid of your old AOL or Hotmail email account. Gmail offers free Gmail addresses into which you should incorporate your name.
- Put your LinkedIn profile URL at the top of your resume to make sure it’s easy for employers to find the right profile. If you’ve been avoiding LinkedIn, it’s time to jump on that bandwagon.

gests checking out companies that have signed the AARP Employer Pledge Program, signaling that they welcome the 50-plus workforce. A search on aarp.org showed 99 such companies in Pennsylvania. The largest of those close to Lancaster County is Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Co. One Lancaster-based employer came up: Advanced Cooling Technologies Inc.

Age brings experience

Rivera said Thaddeus Stevens has hired a number of 50-plus employees in recent months.

“They’re amazing,” he says. “They bring really good skills sets and experience.”

Job seekers should highlight their experiences in addition to how they’ve achieved specific competencies that an industry is looking for, he says. Church treasurer? If your desired job deals at all in finance, be sure to work that in, he says.

“Far too often when we’re going to apply for a job, unfortunately we’re thinking very linear. It’s just about

CAREER, page 8

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GENERATIONAL TRANSITIONS

How the heads of 3 family businesses are turning over of the reins and preparing for the next season in life

REBECCA LOGAN
LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Brian Black is a longtime lawyer who sort of fell into the world of family business and didn't want to leave. "In Lancaster County and in this region, unlike all but a few other places, we're very uniquely driven by the strength of our family businesses," says Black, a partner at Lititz-based North Group Consultants. He specializes in succession and estate planning and often helps businesses transition from one family generation to the next. Black says he gravitates to that role in large part because of the values he tends to see in those circles. It's not that family businesses aren't interested in profit and growth, he says. They are. But often a commitment to family, to employees and to putting others first are higher on the priority list, he says. Many clients come to him seeking a way to make sure things stay that way. "Think about the generation sitting in the chair, in their 60s, 70s and (late) 50s ... and the generation coming behind," he says. "Maintaining values and culture is harder as the generations move, because the culture in the world around us has changed." It's tough to find accurate and current statistics on the percentage of family businesses that last into the second and third generations. Some often quoted ones — which put the percentages at less than 13% into the second generation — are dated and in many ways problematic. They do, nonetheless, underscore a challenge.

Some relates to the increasing precision required to tackle tax implications and the like, Black says. But much comes down to whether or not the right conversations are being had along the way. Black says honest talk among generations is something he recommends for anyone whether they're in a business or not. "We have a tendency to avoid hard conversations. I get it. None of us like to really dive into the hard stuff. It can be emotional or conflictual," he says. "But even as you navigate life, as you age, there are real conversations that we need to be having with our children, grandchildren, with each other if we're a couple, and with our friends, to really get to the things that matter." Throw business into the mix and that can get pretty tricky. But Black is one of countless consultants who say it simply must happen if a family business is to survive. "That's part of the secret sauce on how to do generational transitions well ... knowing that there are things that are difficult or challenging but that we need to talk through them and find a way to the other side together," he says. "That's true whether you're in business ... or just trying to figure out how to do seasons of life." We checked in with folks who are in varying phases of handing over the helm of three Lancaster County businesses — Stoltzfus Meats, The Jay Group and Linden Dale Farm — to see how they're doing just that.

The Jay Group

Dana Chryst, CEO of The Jay Group, has been building a small animal farm. So far she's got two mini-donkeys, four goats, two alpacas and seven chickens as her post-retirement plan. And Chryst, 63, is already bonding with them now that she's spending more time at home. Chryst's 32-year-old son, Blake Dudek, is running the day-to-day operations at the Lancaster-based company that her father, the late Jay Chryst, started in 1965. Promotional materials were a huge part of his initial focus. Jay Group services today include fulfillment, contract packaging, e-commerce management and supply chain solutions. Between employees and temps, about 480 people currently work for The Jay Group. Dudek has been president for some time. Chryst promoted him to COO last year. "It was building to that even the prior year. It really accelerated during COVID. Our business doubled last year and the year before," Chryst says. "We have a very strong management team so he was already poised. The team was poised, and of course I'm still here. I just haven't been going to the office every day."

What's your reaction to statistics like those often quoted saying that only 12% of family businesses survive into the third generation and only 3% make it into the fourth and beyond?

It wasn't the first time I'd heard it. Of course, when you have to speak to it, you're a lot more thoughtful about it. And I just thought, that doesn't make any sense



ANDY BLACKBURN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dana Chryst, right, with her son, Blake Dudek, inside the warehouse at The Jay Group.

to me. (Chryst found and shared a 2021 Harvard Business Review article that points out several flaws with those frequently quoted stats. It's called: "Where did that three-generation idea come from?" The article's short answer: "A single 1980s study of manufacturing companies in Illinois. That study is the basis for most of the facts cited about the longevity of family businesses.")

When you think about it, particularly in this day and age of VCs (venture capitalists) and everybody investing in all these small businesses, their lifespans are very short. And family businesses — particularly in this county (where) they're the bedrock — I think are much more long lasting. And I think that Harvard research bore that out. A couple things in that article that ... I think are really true is that family businesses ... dominate most lists of the longest-lasting companies. And that they're well-positioned ... You have to be able to withstand the ups and downs. Family businesses have maybe more at stake, but they've got the flexibility to do it. You can take a hard hit as a family and still stay in your business. I actually did that. The best decision I made ... was not selling the business when it got really tough. Without question. I got a lot

of pressure to do that. But I had absolute confidence in our model Our business has been very nimble over a lot of different economic circumstances... Over the years we morphed several times Now we're largely e-commerce fulfillment and the more we specialized the more healthy we got.

So why more flexibility than a privately held company that isn't necessarily family?

You don't take a few paychecks. Or you invest more of your savings into the business. A family business in some cases implies generational wealth and there might be accumulated wealth. No. 2, you've got this pressure to sustain the business for the next generation. Once you work in a family business you really have a hard time seeing yourself doing anything else ... Even Blake at the young age of 32. He looks at his friends who are not in family businesses and he thanks me on a regular basis for giving him the flexibility and the opportunity to grow something himself and to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

What two adjectives best describe how you felt back when you were about to take the company's reins?

The transition from my dad to me was very different than from me to Blake. He's

my only child, which makes things a lot simpler I was 30 years old when I became president. My dad had a health scare and decided it would be a good idea to go to Florida for three months every winter. He bought a condo and he left. And we had not had any discussions about transitioning me to president. My dad was the kind of guy who was essentially a benevolent dictator. He was running this small business in a way that his fingers were in everything ... We had a lot of devoted people — to him and to the business. We didn't have a (true) management team. So when I thought about adjectives? Absolutely frightened and intimidated. It was daunting for me because it was so swift and I was not prepared to manage the business the way he did. My first job was to go out and hire a management team. Early on people would say "you're a brilliant strategist" and I was like, "Oh, no. I was just terrified."

What two would you use to describe how you're feeling handing them over?

We have changed so much as an organization since I took the helm. We are now very much a well-managed organization. We have professionals in every aspect of the business. So Blake is in a completely different position than I'd been ... and can-

JAY GROUP, page 5

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Jay Group

Continued from 4

didly I think he even had a better start than I had. ...

We knew he was going to do what he's doing from very early on, whereas my rise in The Jay Group was somewhat of a surprise. My dad didn't think I was going to be that when I was 15. I came after college and we kind of winged it. It was really only after I was there four or five years that he sort of took me seriously and we started looking at more serious roles. Blake has a better foundation for success. So when I thought about these adjectives? I feel calm and confident.

Anything about age in general that your father taught you?

The one thing my dad always was for me, and I have found I am the same for Blake, is the calming influence during any tough time. I get calls. And some are really great calls and some are the calls where he's saying, "Oh my God, this happened." ... I think it's just perspective, experience and age. When ... you've done it for 30 years, things don't seem as big to you when they happen. You've already been there. You know you're going to survive it ... When I would think that the sky was falling, my dad would talk me in off the ledge and say things are going to be fine. This is what's going to happen. I've weathered this kind of storm before and here's how you're going to move forward. Now I'm that person for Blake. It's really a fulfilling place to be. I'm really enjoying it.

Any advice to fellow family business owners who are a few years further out and whose next generation is currently made up of, say, young teenagers?

Absolutely I would have (them) work in every aspect of the business from the loading dock to the mail room and in our case the call center. ... The earlier they start — (doing) a real job within those various areas and (walking) in the shoes of employees — you're going to have a much stronger foundation. ... You have this unique opportunity to educate a child in those areas. ... Straight out of college they'd never have that opportunity. It's almost like you're stealing something from them if you don't have them do it because they'll never get that chance again. And I think it also helps keep them humble.



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Stoltzfus Meats

Myron Stoltzfus once had a second-floor office with a bird's-eye view of the packing floor at Stoltzfus Meats.

The company's CEO remembers looking out there, watching his then-young daughters and son when they were on the floor packing and chatting.

"That teared me up. It just did," he says. "Man, those were some of the proudest times in my life."

Having the chance to work together toward a common goal is his favorite part of being in a family business. You can call Stoltzfus the second generation to lead his if you start things off in 1954 when his parents began selling meats and other Lancaster County goods at a market in New Castle, Delaware. You can call him third if you go back to when his grandfather was slaughtering hogs on the farm during the Depression and selling some bacon, ham and scrapple.

Stoltzfus, 64, is now working out what happens next for the business that now includes — in addition to the Delaware presence — a retail store and restaurant in Intercourse and a production plant and corporate office in Gordonville. And it's not easy.

He's working with Brian Black, an attorney with North Group Consultants who works often with business succession. Black recently met one-on-one with Stoltzfus' children and their spouses then compiled a report.

"I already felt this way. But what he confirmed was — especially for our daughters — they are not interested in the business," Stoltzfus says. "Their husbands are all industrious guys. They have their own things going."

His son, Zach, works at Stoltzfus Meats and is instrumental in online sales.

"My son is interested to a point," he says. "But he got his Ph.D. in history last year. And he really is a gifted scholar. Very gifted. And he probably should be pursuing that passion. ... That's not to say he doesn't have a place in the business."

Stoltzfus is considering all kinds of options including an ESOP, which gives employees stock ownership. He's still thinking.

"I told my board that one of these times I'm going to come home from Florida (vacation) and say, 'This is



Myron Stoltzfus, right, and son Zach at Stoltzfus Meats in Intercourse.

what I'm going to do.' And I'll direct whoever the attorney or talents are to work it out," he says. "I feel like in my head I'm already kind of there. I just don't know exactly how it looks. I'm still aiming to find that out."

What's your reaction when you hear those often circulated (though dated and in many other ways problematic) stats that less than 13% of family businesses survive into the third generation?

I'm not surprised. In the work that Brian did — especially with my daughters — while they totally appreciate everything that I did and the sacrifices I made, they were not prepared to do that. And that's OK. As a dad and a grandfather now, I can appreciate when my sons-in-law and my son make time for the family. And I know that I left my wife alone too often with our children. Business folks know that unfortunately sometimes that's what it takes.

This generation coming up? They have a different set of values. I'm not criticizing. It's not necessarily all bad. And this is sort of humorous, but my kids don't even wash their cars. I wash my car about twice a week. When I was coming up when I went to pick my (now) wife up, it was a country road. I'd stop about a mile away, go back in my trunk, get a towel, get the dust off. ... Some of those things now just aren't as important. ...

There are other obvious

reasons. For example, my dad used to do business with a bank on a handshake. He actually bought this farm from my grandfather in 1966 and I remember him telling me that the bank manager said, "Amos, you go ahead and buy the farm and we'll work it out." I do a loan today? It's a minimum quarter-inch-thick papers. ... So it's a different world financially.

What two adjectives best describe how you felt back when you were about to take the company's reins?

Excited and apprehensive at the same time.

How would you describe how you're feeling as you move in the direction of handing them over?

I feel a great sense of blessing, reward and accomplishment. About a year ago we had an employee outing here on the farm. ... I was sitting there in a chair ... and I just

thought, "Man, I didn't set out to do this. This blows me away." ... These folks ... have counted on me to provide them jobs, to provide for their families. ... At the same time, maybe sort of the same as in the beginning, I feel a great sort of heaviness (trying to know) how to transition, to try and preserve the brand, preserve the workplace for our employees, to preserve the culture.

Preserving your brand is essentially preserving your family name?

Sure. Even though they aren't necessarily interested — and I'll speak for my daughters — in owning the company, they're very interested in and very hopeful that it continues. ... And it goes beyond me. It goes to their grandfather. For my kids and my nephews, a lot is about my dad. ... He was Grandpa. ... They have great admiration for him.

Are there any key les-

sons you learned from other family businesses?

Some family businesses feel so inclined to keep the family business going at any cost. So there are times that there are certain family members who are leading the company and somebody else could probably do a better job.

Let's just say it's the oldest sibling and the youngest sibling could do a better job. There are politics there obviously. It's a realization that the best person to lead the company might not be your family member ... It could be someone outside the family. But then, maybe it's not, because you know the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

...

And people always suggest that the children work somewhere else for like five years at least. My children have worked at all aspects of the business. But they've also worked at other places. And they appreciate that.

And there is — especially in Lancaster County — the classic 80-year-old dad sells the farm to the 60-year-old son. ... Well, the 60-year-old son says, "Wait I don't have that many years left." So one of the keys is for the elder generation to begin the process early enough so that the next generation has a chance to really capitalize. ... The owner that's 50 or 60 should be thinking about and very active about moving it on to folks who are 30 or 40. My dad did that. He sort of backed away ... from the day-to-day in the meat business when he was about 62 or 63. And I think some of that happened by default. He was just tired. He was ready to say, "Guys, take it over."

I'm finding myself feeling that way. I don't have the stamina that I had when I was younger. I get more tired at the end of the day.

STOLTZFUS, page 6



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Stoltzfus

Continued from 5

I can't always get accomplished what I once did. My mind might not be quite as sharp.

But that's just speaking for me. We've got a 79-year-old president. Reagan was 80. People still crank away at older ages. It's just for me personally, I understand that there is a time and a season for everything. And I think it's the wise one who understands the timing of that season.

Did your dad teach you anything about aging in general?

He left at an age when he and my mom still enjoyed life. Unfortunately my mom passed when she was 64. But they were at a place where they could do some things and do some travel. With our society, our culture, you wonder if it's a good formula where you work your tail off while your kids are small and then when you get older you finally have time but then your kids are grown.

Maybe that's the whole grandpa thing. I know for myself I go way out of my way for my grandkids now. And I just didn't (as a father) take the time to do that. I was going to say I didn't have the time, but I didn't take it.

So I think those are the kind of things that I learned from my dad. Again maybe by default.

Any advice to family business owners whose next generation is currently made up of, say, young teenagers?

You can't say, "I'll wait until I'm 60 to start doing this" because you'll be 70 by the time you figure it out. Start early. I'm 64 and I'm glad I started when I did. I'm not worried yet. I can still work a pretty hard day. But I'm glad I'm where I'm at. I've been working at this and thinking about it for probably 15 or 20 years. No answers. But I've been thinking about it and sort of making some life decisions based on that.

In one of the books I've read on succession ... (the author) starts ... out by saying you can decide when to sell your business, who to sell it to, how to sell it. But you will not decide whether to transition. You will transition your business. At the end of the day, you're not taking it with you.

Linden Dale Farm

Andy Mellinger had just a few minutes to discuss succession in family businesses from the vantage point of a 35-year-old who — with a younger brother — now runs one.

"You have to realize it's a tenure. It's an appointment. It's not yours. It's one generation to the next," he says. "You have to be very comfortable with that."

Then, in a flash, Andy was off to make feta.

His parents had a little more time to talk. Andrew and Mary Mellinger still log plenty of hours at the Strasburg Township-based Linden Dale Farm, which converts milk from more than 100 goats into cheese, yogurt, caramel and more. But after decades in charge, they've been turning the reigns over to two of their children. That's their oldest, Andy, and his 33-year-old brother, Abe.

The elder Mellingers are thrilled and say things are working out nicely in terms of the obligation they feel to their children, their business and to the land that has been in Andrew's family for more than 200 years and seven generations.

"As farmers, it's kind of unique. It's such a lifestyle choice," says Mary, 59. "And it was really a spiritual calling for us. That helped us weather some of the challenges."

It was during Andrew and Mary's tenure that the farm pivoted from cows to goats — a move that Mary says had neighbors scratching their heads.

At 60, Andrew says he



ANDY BLACKBURN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary and Andrew Mellinger, center, are handing over the reins of Linden Dale Farm in Ronks to their sons, Andrew Jr., left, and Abe, right, along with Abe's wife, Melissa, and children Azariah, Hans and Gideon.

has a new appreciation for the kinds of things his father was thinking when he stepped back from running the show.

"It's gradual," he says. "Things are revealed to you over time. And then at the end of it you realize, 'Now I'm looking at it from the other side.'"

What's your reaction to those stats (that are dated and problematic but have been quoted countless times) that say less than 13% of family businesses survive into the third generation and only 3% make it into the fourth and beyond?

Mary: It is really a challenging thing to do. It seems like it should be easier. It's sad. But it didn't surprise us.

Andrew: The next generation has to want to do it. Our

generation has to want to do it. And especially in the current economic situation the business has to be viable. There are just a lot of things that have to line up for it to happen. And if it doesn't? I don't even see it as a failing. I just see it as the planets didn't align.

Is there anything specific about the current business landscape that makes it harder, easier or just different to be a member of a middle generation today?

M: The global pandemic ... has really thrown any small business into a unique set of challenges. ... We're in a global setting now and that makes it unique compared to previous generations, particularly being a farm business. In the past we would have been more influ-

enced by what was going on locally.

What adjectives best describe how you felt back when you were about to take the company's reins?

M: Excited and enthusiastic. We were upbeat and positive. ... When we took over, already the economic conditions had become unfavorable for dairy farmers as opposed to his father. His generation would have been the dairy heyday. ... But we were just so optimistic that we could do it. We were ready. We had ideas for change and were very, very upbeat.

A: But we were naïve. Now we might have second thoughts.

M: Youth is important. You go into it believing in yourself. You don't have to know all the challenges that are going to be before you. You just take it one challenge at a time. Naivete is an important part of youth.

So how would you describe how you're feeling as you move in the direction of handing them over?

M: Even more excited about retiring and passing it on to our children because we are tired. Running the farm was physically challenging and we are so excited that the boys want to do this. So there is not any sadness there. We're ready.

Was there something you learned during the transition from your dad that is helping you pass the baton?

A: With the transition between me and my dad, he was happy. And he was more than willing to let me do it, to let me make decisions and let me make mistakes. And that was important. We're trying to do that.

What's something you love and something you don't love about being in a family business?

M: The answer is the same. The thing that we love is that we are still working very closely with our children. Our lives are still very connected. And that is a beautiful thing. But it is also

very challenging. You have to have healthy boundaries and separation. And that becomes a challenge. On certain days that is what I dislike the most.

A: We're always talking about cheese or farming.

M: Because the children helped us build this business they do understand it in a unique intimate way and I think that's what helped them fall in love with it.

A: You can't totally separate the personal from the business. ... It is part of all our identities and that's just the way it is.

M: It was the boys who were like, "Can we just not, every time we're together, talk about the business?" They really brought it to our attention. It is something that I feel like we're still figuring out and trying to do a good job at.

Any advice to owners who are a few years further out whose next generation is currently made up of, say, young teenagers?

M: If you want to keep it going to the next generation, you have to involve them as teenagers. But you can't force them. We have a very strong belief that they all needed to leave and go to college. We encouraged them to study abroad, have a global experience outside the United States, which they did. That is very important that they go off and figure out, "What do we want to do?" And then they can make that decision "Yes we want to come back."

A: That's something I did as well before I made the decision to come back to the farm. I came very late. I didn't go to college right away. Three years I worked with my dad and then I decided I was going to a two-year degree and that went to a four-year degree. It was in agricultural education. I considered ag teaching. But after experiencing that, that's what sort of crystalized for me that I should come back to the farm.

M: He does feel that if he would have just stayed after high school we wouldn't be farming today. ... His parents were not thrilled that he wanted to go to college. They were tired, just like we are now, physically tired. So he did that on his own. ... We knew how important that was and we wanted to give that opportunity to our children.

A: I looked at the farm differently after that. Before that I didn't see the opportunities and the possibilities of what I could do or what I really wanted to do. That's what it took.

Senior expo returns Sept. 21

The 26th annual Lancaster County 50plus EXPO will return Wednesday, Sept. 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Spooky Nook Sports, 2913 Spooky Nook Road, Manheim.

The free event will include informational exhibits, free health screenings, flu shots, COVID-19 boosters, entertainment and more.

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Quest

Continued from 1

This fall's offerings will include eight topics, with six lectures in each. The topics are: Keller Memorial Lecture Series (presented by the history faculty at Millersville University); Short Story Discussion Group; "The World Created by Science"; "Movies as Mirrors of Their Times"; "The Rise of Western Civilization"; "La Convivencia: When Christians, Jews and Muslims Lived Together"; "Landmark Documents of American Democracy and Their Authors"; "Big Names in Philosophy and How They Have Changed Our Lives"

Within those topics, Quest participants can choose from lectures like "Atomic Anxiety in Post-War Movies" and "Thaddeus Stevens and the 14th Amendment."

In the past, Carroll says, some of the most popular offerings have been music series and presentations by local architect Gregg Scott.

Quest presenters are as varied as their subject matter. Some, like Scott, are experts in their field, whether they are musicians, artists, writers, clergymen, businessmen or community leaders. Many others are college professors, both current and retired.

"We want to have as much diversity and as much range of age and topics that we can possibly get," Carroll says.

The joy of teaching

Finding presenters has never been an issue. Many, in fact, have come to the board offering to participate and share their expertise on a particular subject, she says.

Jean Boal, who retired from Millersville University's department of biology in 2018, gave her first Quest for Learning talk, on climate change, in spring 2019. Since then, she's given a six-talk series on the natural history of the mid-Atlantic shore and another on animal behavior.

"I still want to give back to my community, and what I know how to do is explain science to people, so it seemed like a natural fit," Boal says.

Several local colleges also contribute a full six-week lecture series.

This fall's Keller Memorial Lecture Series is part of an annual tradition begun to honor the late Richard Keller, a longtime chair of Millersville University's history department and a former chairman of the Quest for Learning board.

Full-time, part-time, ad-

junct and retired faculty volunteer their time and choose their own topics for the Keller lectures, says Erin Shelor, current head of MU's history department, who has given five talks for the annual fall series since 2011. Shelor says presenters will sometimes choose topics based on their current research or on something they hope to eventually use in one of their college courses. Other times, it's just to satisfy a personal interest.

"My lecture last year was on how COVID compared to historical epidemic experiences," Shelor writes in an email. "Not something I'll use in a course, but it seemed timely and interesting."

Shelor will have the Oct. 27 slot in this fall's series, with a discussion of the disability rights movement, something somewhat related to her current research on autism. Although she already knew the basics, Shelor says preparing for a Quest for Learning talk gave her the opportunity to delve deeper and gather information that will likely find its way into her History of Medicine course at MU.

On a personal level, Shelor says, Quest for Learning also offers a nice change of pace.

"We participate because it's something the department committed to many years ago, but also because it's fun!" she writes. "The audience at Quest lectures are curious, interested and raise fabulous questions in response to our lectures. Our college students are sometimes more concerned about how much of this material they 'need' to know and how they will be assessed on that knowledge. That practicality makes sense for them, but Quest audiences are there simply out of intellectual curiosity and interest. And it leads to really fascinating conversations with the audience."

Looking ahead

Although Quest for Learning is billed as a program for people of retirement age, Carroll says there is nothing prohibiting people of any age from taking part. However, the weekday morning sessions make it more difficult for young working adults to attend.

Like any organization, Quest is constantly looking for new ideas and new people, whether it's board members, lecturers or attendees.

"Our goal has always been to try to recruit new blood because that's what's going to keep us alive," Carroll says.

While Quest for Learning has had some ups and downs

over its nearly half-century history, it was thriving before the pandemic, she says, with registrations somewhere between 450 and 500.

Quest originally began in 1976 with the financial backing of several downtown churches and a committee of representatives from each of those congregations. In 1999, Quest for Learning was incorporated as an independent, not-for-profit corporation with a board of directors. Much of the program's recent success is due to that dedicated and well-organized board, Carroll says.

COVID-19 hit right before the start of the spring 2020 session, forcing Quest to cancel its programming for the first time since its inception. By fall 2020, they were able to pivot to an online format, offering free lectures via Zoom. But as many educators and students will acknowledge, it just wasn't the same.

Ironically, even though Boal retired from college teaching before COVID-19, she still found herself having to adjust to virtual teaching as a Quest presenter.

"With it virtual, I'm just talking to a screen. I don't have a sense of working with people, and I really prefer to be with live people," she says. "What's exciting about teaching — well of course I have a passion about the material I'm teaching — but it is actually working with people and helping them understand the world from whatever place they are."

With a new website and a full slate of lectures, Quest is hoping for a return to normal this fall.

"Our concern now is ... getting people to come back who have gotten maybe into a different routine," Carroll says. "I'm optimistic that we can build back up to that wonderful registration number ... that's what keeps our budget balanced, but I honestly think we're going to have to work for that because it's a different time now."

Thanks to the hospitality of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and those who volunteer as organizers and presenters, Quest can keep its registration fee low to make the program available to as many people as possible, Carroll says.

"The real bottom line is how many people come," she says. "We think it's just a wonderful organization that we want to live forever."

Registration is now open for the Quest for Learning fall program, which starts Thursday, Sept. 29, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 31 S. Duke St. To register or to view a full seminar schedule, visit questlanaster.org.

Grave

Continued from 1

search their ancestors. He charges about \$50 an hour for research. The cost of printing and binding a hardback book is around \$40.

Dominguez uses word of mouth instead of advertisements. "I like to have fun," he says. "It's more than fascinating. It's exhilarating."

Painstaking work

No trees shade the weather-beaten headstones at the Rohrerstown Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery at Wood and Walnut streets. No sounds disturb the morning stillness as temperatures climb into the upper 80s.

Dominguez eventually will fill out a data profile after he cleans the stone that will include the type of writing (engraved or raised letters), the measurements, the orientation (this one faces west) and the shape of the tablet (this one has a slight arch). He will note the person's name, and dates of birth and death.

Although Dominguez usually completes cleaning or repairing solo, others have noticed.

"The quality of his work is excellent, and he's very fastidious," says Tim Breneisen, president of the cemetery association for the Rohrerstown Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery. "I'm learning a lot from him."

Breneisen has accompanied Dominguez to workshops dedicated to preserving headstones.

Breneisen says Dominguez has stopped at every stone in the cemetery to record inscriptions. The cemetery is an independent corporation whose board members are appointed by Holy Spirit Lutheran Church and the Church of Christ.

"He helps to restore graves. He'll take water and he'll scrub. He does research," Breneisen says.

Nathan Pease, who formerly directed Lancaster-History's research center, says Dominguez often volunteered to help others at the library.

"This guy's a real genealogist, and he's willing to share

laying the pieces of earth separately so he can put them back after he's done. "You don't want to do anything that will damage the stone," Dominguez explains.

Once the weathered marble is visible, Dominguez first takes out a prybar to lift the headstone but then decides he can use his arms to place it on nearby grass. "We want to be as specific as possible," he says as he measures the stone.

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Nathan Pease, who formerly directed Lancaster-History's research center, says Dominguez often volunteered to help others at the library.

"This guy's a real genealogist, and he's willing to share

his knowledge," Pease says. "The products he creates are professional level."

Pease often would see Dominguez at the research center, poring over a microfilm machine, reading newspapers from the early 1800s, before publications separated out obituary sections. He noticed Dominguez looking for marriages, deaths, baptisms and other genealogical information.

One day, Pease says, he walked over to chat. "I would ask him questions. It became this back and forth," he says. "What Andre is doing is big in terms of pulling out all this genealogist work. I would go hit him up for information."

Although Dominguez volunteers most of his time, he does charge people to research and create a family tree that includes pictures and information about ancestors and descendants.

"He's just beyond anything you can imagine in his expertise and knowledge," says Susan Kirk of Bushkill Township in Northampton County.

Dominguez researched and created a 262-page hardback book that traces Kirk's father and his family from 1774 to 2016. Dominguez created this book for free because he and Kirk met in junior high school and continue a friendship.

"I was flabbergasted," Kirk says when she received the volume during the pandemic. She grew up knowing about genealogy because her mother's family has seven volumes of documentation. "It always bothered me that I knew so little about my father's family."

Dominguez's research unearthed Kirk's relatives who died while fighting in the Revolutionary War and who are buried in Lower Saucon Township.

Says Kirk: "Andre is never afraid to take the next step, to learn something, to get involved."



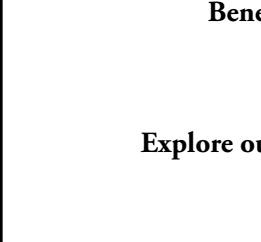
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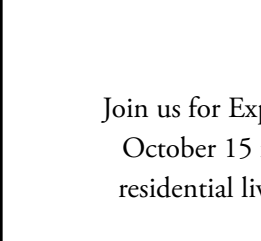


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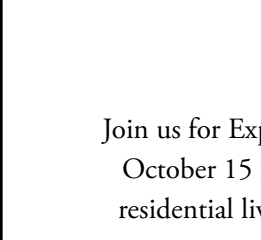


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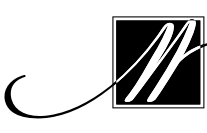
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A No Entrance Fee 55+ Senior Rental and Assisted Living Community, Lancaster, PA

Career

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the job,” he says. “That’s not how this world works anymore. When an employer hires you they want you to be a part of their community. And it’s everything. It’s everything that you bring to the table ... Use those (experiences) to answer the questions as to what the employer is looking for.”

That’s Parker’s plan.

“I know I have to ... make my age an asset. Otherwise it’s just a liability,” she says. “I can’t say, ‘I know I’m 53 but please hire me anyway.’ I have to go into it saying, ‘Hey, I’m 53. I’ve got lots of experience.’”

She plans to emphasize all the hats she wore at the fitness center.

“I was front counter, I was back office, I hired, I fired, I did customer service out the ying-yang for a million years. I managed up. I managed down. I managed sideways,” she says. “There’s really no role that you can put me in that I won’t excel at. So use that to your advantage. Plus, I know all about water. By the way, I know how to do what you do.”

Parker says she’s impressed by Thaddeus Stevens’ career placement services and is taking full advantage. She’ll be stressing a couple of points to would-be workplaces, including the fact that since age 17 she was gainfully employed by two employers — one for nine years, the other 27.

“Loyalty is a thing for me,” she says. “It’s not uncommon for the younger generation to jump from job to job. If you hire me? I’m all yours until I’m ready to retire.”

That’s No. 1.

“No. 2? You don’t need to teach me how to be a grown-up,” she says. “I spent many years hiring people right out of school who didn’t

know how to write a return address on an envelope. ... Those kind of simple things that you could spend years teaching someone to do? I already know. I’m already a grown-up.”

Such realizations can, in some ways, make the idea of switching careers all the more daunting. Graham spends time in “Switchers” helping readers to evaluate whether a switch is something they actually want.

“Are you willing to trade control and comfort, perhaps just temporarily, for excitement and career satisfaction?” she writes. “It might mean working for someone junior to you. Having to perform menial tasks again. Or clocking in when you’re used to coming and going at will. It will also mean proving yourself and likely making mistakes as you’re learning, which can be tough things to swallow.”

Change brings challenges

Parker says there have been adjustments already and chuckles at the irony of the example she’s about to give.

“I had a hip replacement. I know. It’s true. Nine months before school started,” she says. “And when my hip starts aching, sometimes I just need to stand.”

She wouldn’t have thought twice in the gym world.

“If you just sort of flipped over and put your hands underneath your feet, people didn’t care,” she says. “It was totally normal to randomly start stretching in the middle of a meeting. And now it’s like, ‘Ooooooh. Regular people don’t do this.’”

Getting back into math wasn’t easy either.

“The math lab was my second home and if it weren’t for Mrs. Barbara Starin, my tutor, I would have failed



Ivonne Berengeres works in the plumbing lab at Tec Centro West in Lancaster. The former sous chef and stay-at-home mom is back in school at 57 to take on a new career challenge.

BRANDING YOURSELF

Bottom line, age can be a red flag for hirers, says Dr. Dawn Graham, author of “Switchers: How Smart Professionals Change Careers and Seize Success.” And as with any red flag, you don’t want to lead with that, she says.

“The key is to appear confident not apologetic. Confidence breeds confidence and confidence is something we all want as a part of our brand. So don’t wave your red flags, and make these a part of your brand,” Graham writes. “Don’t dwell on what you’re missing, or the negatives, rather brand yourself in a positive way. Give the hirer enough information to address the concern and then move forward, disusing how you’ll bring value to the organization and solve the department’s pain points.”

algebra and possibly chemistry,” she says. “She’s amazing.”

Parker jokes about many aspects of her ongoing career change journey. But there are some serious notes. Her husband died four years ago of pancreatic cancer. Parker got sober in July 2020.

“I went to rehab, got control of a drinking problem that had gotten out of control,” she says. Parker stayed at her fitness center job for about a year after that before deciding it was time for a change. She remembers telling her kids she had quit. She’d scrutinized the expression on the face of her then 16-year-old, 6-foot-3-inch basketball player son.

“I thought, ‘Oh my God, what is he going to say?’ He looked at me. His only words? ‘What are we going to eat?’” she says. “Sixteen-

year-olds ... Will there be food?”

Insurance money from her husband allowed Parker to hit pause and pivot.

“But that runs out. I couldn’t just forever not work,” Parker says. “That was part of the reason for a two-year program ... I couldn’t go back to school and get a degree in French literature. It had to be a career path that would lead me to a job.”

She was drawn to the WET program, which she learned about when she took one son to a Thaddeus Stevens open house. She already has her bachelor’s in education from Millersville University. She likes that this associate degree can take her in multiple directions.

“You could work in a wastewater treatment plant. You can work in conservation. You could work in a company that does ... un-

derground pipes. You can work in a lab,” she says. “You can work anywhere not just in the state, not just in the country, but anywhere in the world. Everybody in the world drinks water and everybody in the world poops. It’s true. There’s even a book.”

Parker’s oldest son is 20. Her youngest is starting his senior year.

“I don’t have any real fam-

United Zion hosts health fair

United Zion Retirement Community, 722 Furnace Hills Pike, Lititz, will kick off its Successful Aging Series with a health fair for seniors and their loved ones from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 8.

The event will feature over 20 stations with community partners covering topics such as financial health, physical health, hearing and legal support. There will also be free blood pressure screenings, balance checks, a cooking demo and giveaways.

Attendees will be required to complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire and wear a mask. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit uzrc.org.



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Falcon Pointe, a 35-unit, four story apartment building is coming to Woodcrest Villa summer 2024! This 'boutique' apartment experience is big on style, from exterior and interior finishes, to the rooftop terrace! The two-bedroom or two-bedroom with den floor plans range from 1,230 sq. ft. to 1,710 sq. ft. Join us for a **Look & Learn** information session on **Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 10AM** to find out more about Woodcrest Villa and Falcon Pointe. Please visit www.woodcrestvilla.org/events to RSVP, or call us at 717-390-4103 to sign up. Woodcrest Villa is a non-profit life plan community located on Harrisburg Pike across from Penn Medicine-LGH Suburban Pavilion and adjacent to Park City Center.

