

Senior Living

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SPECIAL SECTION

PEOPLE



VINNY TENNIS PHOTOS

Robert Desrochers shows the workings of a grandfather clock inside his Lititz workshop, Timekeepers Workbench.

CLOCKWORK

Robert Desrochers keeps time marching on in his Lititz workshop



Desrochers, 76, restores analog clocks from across the United States and currently has so many clients that he is not accepting new work.

GAYLE JOHNSON | FOR LNP/LANCASTERONLINE

Time tells a story inside Robert Desrochers' Lititz workshop. Hours and minutes strike, musical notes chime, gears shift, and heavy pendulums swing back and forth amid a sea of grandfather clocks, mantel clocks, wall clocks, shelf clocks and other old-fashioned timepieces.

"I have always been attracted to mechanical pieces," says Desrochers, pointing to a large group of intricate gears smoothly gliding inside a timepiece. The artisan tries to use as much of a clock's original parts in a renovation. If that's not possible, he will make a piece needed for a clock. "I have a passion for clocks."

Don't bother looking for anything made by Apple or Fitbit here. Desrochers, who owns Timekeepers Workbench, restores analog clocks from across the United States in a building behind his house. In fact, he has only one electric timepiece in his inventory, a significant brass clock face from the University of Virginia's Alderman Library in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"He's going to work with us exclusively," says Henry Hull, a UVA historic preservation project manager, about Desrochers. "Bob's wealth of knowledge is really cool."

Lancaster attorney John Pyfer would agree. "I can't go to a catalog and order parts for a clock that was made in

1799," says Pyfer, who started collecting clocks after he inherited a Christian Forrer grandfather clock from his parents in 1985.

"I don't have a clock that Bob has not worked on," says Pyfer, who now has 29 timepieces made by Lancaster County clockmakers displayed at his home in Willow Valley Communities and in museums at Lancaster History and Historic Rock Ford.

"Bob is a marvelous craftsman," Pyfer says. "He does a wonderful job."

Word seems to have spread. "We are really busy," says Desrochers, 76, who traces an interest for mechanical devices to his childhood in Holyoke, Massachusetts. "I love anything mechanical," Desrocher says. "Everything is a step" in a process.

The beginning

Desrochers was a sophomore in high school when he asked his father if he could switch to a technical school. He

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TECHNOLOGY

9 apps that help you stay healthy

How you can use your phone to track medications, stay calm and sharpen your brain

MADDY PONTZ
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

At the 2023 Lancaster Senior Games, participants were invited to step away from their sporting and recreational events, put their competitions aside and join a lesson in the potential health benefits of technology.

Andrew Mayers, owner and lead consultant at AJM Technology Solutions & Training and a regular technology instructor at the Lancaster County Office of Aging, was tasked with leading a class showing older adults how they can use certain mobile phone apps to stay healthy.

"My goal for my students is really to empower them, make them have an enriching experience and — ultimately — to educate," Mayers says. "All of my workshops are full of lifelong learners ... I always tell people, no matter what, in society, our technology is going to continue to advance. If we don't choose to sharpen our skills as older adults, we're going to feel left behind societally."

Priscilla Dejessa, a 69-year-old Lancaster County resident, has taken a number of classes with Mayers.

"When people — and it's anything, it's not just computers — but when anybody has learned something when they're young, it becomes almost second nature," Dejessa says. "The younger generations have grown up with computers, so it's really a second language. It is not as easy when you start later in life for a new language."

After about a year and a half of these technology classes, Dejessa writes in an email that she uses the Apple Health app to track

APPS, page 5



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Priscilla Dejessa checks her progress on the Apple Health app.

IN THE BLOOD

Longtime Bart Township firefighters discuss why they still have a burning desire to answer the call and their concerns about the future of volunteer firefighting.

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GOOD WORK

Working is good for brain health, but can delaying retirement help ward off dementia? There's no definitive answer, but studies show promising results.

Page 3



DANCE-AGE

How a program hosted by Lancaster Rec and AARP Pennsylvania is bringing generations together to promote health and well-being.

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HOW TO AVOID ‘TRANSITION TRAUMA’

A smart move is all about good planning

MARGARET GATES
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In early 2020, just weeks before COVID-19 started sweeping the nation, Tom and Julie Schmidt sold the Manheim Township two-story where they had lived for 30 years and moved to a maintenance-free condo in the Regent's Park neighborhood of East Lampeter Township.

While it was purely good fortune that they completed the move before the pandemic struck, it was good planning that ensured they accomplished that major life change without a hitch.

“Start early because it’s going to take longer than you ever thought it would,” says Sue Gunselman of Ephrata, a real estate agent and life coach who started Smart Moves with Sue eight years ago to help older adults like the Schmidts navigate the emotional and physical challenges of making a lifestyle transition. “Do it before crisis mode. Make a manageable move, one that you are in control of, versus change, or life, controls you.”

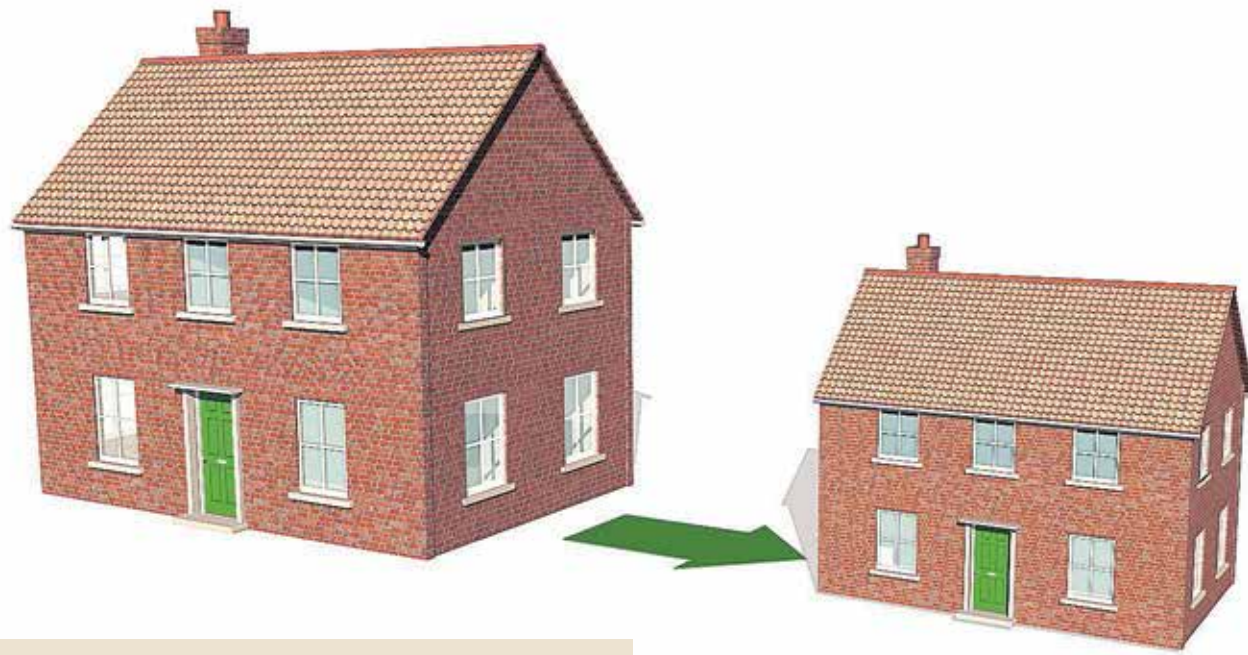
The signs

Leaving a house full of memories — and a whole lot of stuff — can be an overwhelming move, Gunselman says, but there are signs it could be the right one. Among them:

— **You have too much home maintenance:** Repairs and upkeep of an older home can be challenging. It’s something Gunselman, 66, and her husband know well themselves.

“Back in the ‘80s, you weren’t cool if you didn’t have these manicured landscaped beds. ... We created a monster in our backyard,” she says. “It’s so much work.”

Three years ago, after much complaining about all the weeding, edging and mulching, the Gunselmans decided to pay someone to do the work. But, she says, that’s not an affordable op-



GETTY IMAGES

DECLUTTERING TIPS

Sue Gunselman of Smart Moves With Sue and Erica Kelly of WayForth offer this downsizing advice:

- **Start early:** Not only will it make it easier to sell your home and move, but it will also prevent a panicked last-minute purge where you throw away items that could be useful to someone else.
- **Make it a habit:** Gunselman’s philosophy is reuse, recycle, repurpose. She keeps an ongoing box of items to donate or take to consignment shops, and she empties it every week.
- **Start small:** Focus on a junk drawer or a junk closet, then move on to other places where you’ve accumulated a lot of stuff — such as the attic, garage, basement or shed — and start by whittling down those items you haven’t even looked at in five or 10 years.
- **Identify your favorite things:** “Focus in on items that are important to you and have sentimental value, but they have to serve a purpose in your life going forward,” Kelly says.
- **Make a memory box:** Rather than keeping sentimental items for which you have no use or room, photograph each item and attach a note describing why it has meaning for you. Make or purchase a box to hold the photos and notes so you can enjoy the memories from time to time.
- **Find like items:** “If you have seven decorative butter dishes, do you really need all seven? Pick out your favorite,” Kelly says.
- **Go digital:** Reduce your collection of bulky photo albums by scanning photos and storing them online or uploading them to digital photo frames, where you will likely see them and enjoy them far more than you do now. You can do the same thing with important documents.
- **Don’t make matters worse:** “Don’t go bulk shopping,” Kelly says. “Buy what you actually need and really put a thought process when you buy. ... Some people shop because it’s a coping mechanism or it’s relaxing to them or kind of a hobby ... You just have to be true to what your goals are.”
- **Sort your stuff:** When it’s time to fully downsize a larger area, such as a room, basement or attic space, Kelly suggests using four boxes labeled: keep, sell, donate and trash.
- **Get a floor plan:** Once you know where you’re moving, measure your furniture and create a scale drawing of your new space to determine what will fit and what needs to go.
- **Take a picture:** To ensure a new space feels like home, take pictures of how things were arranged in your old home — such as photo collages on a wall or items in a china cabinet — so you can recreate them in your new place.

tion for everyone.

— **Your home no longer fits your needs:** In addition to the yard work required,

perhaps the home has too many steps, a basement laundry room, a steep driveway or other features that make liv-

ing there impractical.

— **You’ve had a change in lifestyle:** That could be a drop in income due to retirement, a physical condition that makes it difficult to navigate your home or a family relocation that fuels a desire to move closer to children and grandchildren.

— **You’re not using all of your house:** From a practical standpoint, you may not want to pay the heating and cooling bills, taxes and insurance on a 10-room house when you only routinely use four of those many rooms, Gunselman says.

— **You desire a lifestyle change:** You may want to downsize and simplify your life so you can free up time and funds to pursue other interests, such as travel.

The Schmidts saw several of those signs, but one of the main ones was mobility. Tom, now 69, developed back issues that made yard maintenance impossible and a two-story home impractical, Julie, 67, says.

“I knew that time was ticking,” she says. “He would go upstairs once a day. Since then, I’ve had knee replacement surgery. Stairs became hard for both of us. We knew we needed to make accommodations for that and the yard.”

The plan

While some of Gunselman’s clients, like the Schmidts, are firm in their desire to move, others experience what she calls “transition trauma.”

“People hate leaving what’s comfortable,” Gunselman says. “They don’t want to leave that house that’s filled with memories.”

That’s especially true if they don’t have a plan for where they want to go and how they’re going to get there, she says.

If aging in place where you are now is not the goal, then there are many questions to consider before deciding on

your next home, Gunselman says.

What amenities are important to you? Do you want a yard or a walking trail nearby? Do you need to be close to your doctors? Do you need a home office, room to entertain, personal space or storage?

What type and size of housing best suits your needs? Is it a condo like the Schmidts’, a 55-plus neighborhood, an apartment, a continuing care retirement community or just a smaller home?

And don’t forget the financial component, Gunselman says. Will you be retiring completely or working part time? What is your budget? Do you want to take out another mortgage?

“You have to look at the whole big picture,” she says. “This is why it’s all so overwhelming.”

Gunselman encourages older adults to develop a transition plan that includes a detailed timeline with goals and objectives.

“The other thing you have to know is what’s going on in the housing market,” Julie Schmidt says. “At the time (we were moving) the market was pretty much a seller’s market ... Part of the advice we got from talking to Sue, we did not want to take the risk of selling our house and being stranded and not having a place to go. We wanted to find the house we wanted to move into before we listed ours.”

To that end, Gunselman helped the Schmidts figure out financing so that the purchase of the new home was not contingent upon the sale of their old one. The Schmidts also learned that it was better to secure that financing early, while they were both still working, rather

PLAN, page 6

Make your home appealing to new buyers

MARGARET GATES
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Nearly two decades ago, Sue Gunselman and her husband spent \$22,000 to add a sunroom to their home. They not only got years of enjoyment out of it, but they will likely get their money back when they sell. A similar room would cost about \$50,000 now, she says, and certainly wouldn’t offer a great return on investment for someone who planned to move in a few years.

That doesn’t mean it’s always a bad idea to spend thousands of dollars on home improvements in the years leading up to a possible sale, but it’s helpful to get some expert advice before you do, say Chris and Christine Wilson, owners of Renovation Sells Lancaster, a franchise that helps people update their homes so they will sell more quickly.

A home is the most valuable asset most people own, Chris Wilson says. Ensuring they get the most out of a sale is important, especially for older adults.

“They need that money to carry them as much as possible,” he says.

The Wilsons’ recommendation: Talk to a Realtor and a home inspector.

A Realtor can walk through the home and tell you what changes might make it more appealing to today’s buyers, such as replacing old carpet or repainting in more neutral colors.

Hiring a home inspector, even a few years before a planned home sale, will cost about \$400, the Wilsons say, but you’ll end up with a master list of projects you should address that could ultimately affect the sale of the home.

“If you find a major issue because you spent \$400, that’s a great \$400,” Chris Wilson says.

Gunselman, whose business Smart Moves with Sue, helps older adults with major lifestyle transitions, works closely with Realtor Patrick Trimble of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices. Trimble recommends that homeowners considering a sale keep their homes clean, decluttered, functional, neutral in decor and upgraded.

Today’s buyers, scrolling through their phones, can take as little as eight seconds to decide if a home is worth looking at in person, the Wilsons say.

“They have already, in their mind, purchased that home from looking at an image online,” Christine Wilson says. “It’s the pretty Instagram photos.”

Adds Chris Wilson: “If the first four pictures they see don’t look appealing, they’re going to the next house.”

Where to start

So how do older adults make their homes more appealing to what is likely to be a younger buyer, especially when a move might be a year or more down the road?

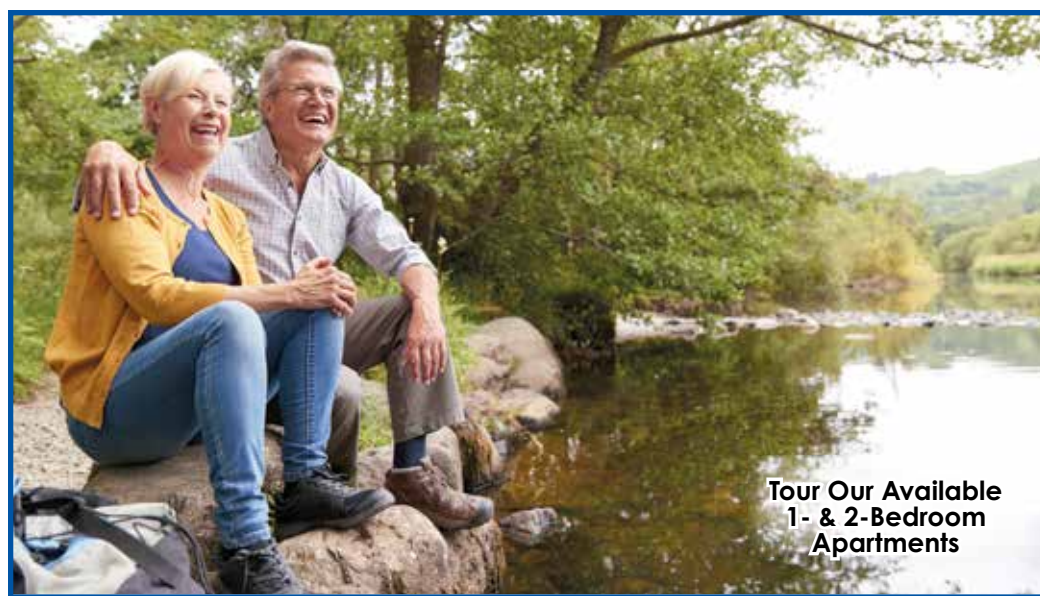
“The most affordable and biggest thing you can spread out throughout a house is flooring and paint,” Chris Wilson says, noting that young buyers prefer things light, bright and neutral.

If neutral isn’t exactly your vibe, you can always use decor and accessories to add a personal touch that can easily be removed when it’s time to sell, Christine Wilson adds.

Gunselman suggests concentrating on the areas that buyers care about most: the kitchen, bathrooms and social zones.

“Do something you like and something that 90% of the population will say, ‘Well this is nice,’” she says.

HOME, page 6



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Still answering the call

Longtime Bart Township firefighters share the highs, lows and challenges facing volunteer companies

REBECCA LOGAN
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

If Bart Township Fire Company's siren is blasting its baritone notes, chances are John Graybill is headed toward the station.

That is, if it's during the day.

"I don't run nighttime calls anymore. And mainly I just show up to make sure they get out the door," says the 72-year-old volunteer firefighter. "If there are guys here to drive? Fine with me. If not, I'll cover."

Graybill no longer goes into the thick of burning things. But he is still plenty comfortable cranking the wheel of a big red engine, steering it down roads that he's had memorized for decades.

"I joined in 1967. My first fire was on Wilson Road. A chicken house," he says. "I tailboarded on a 1954 GMC."

Tailboarding is the term for grabbing on tight and riding on the back. Bart firefighters don't do that anymore. That's one of countless changes witnessed by a group of volunteers in their 50s to their mid-70s who still log long hours at the company that covers a 36.68-square-mile territory made up of Bart Township plus portions of Paradise, Eden, Sadsbury and Colerain townships. They work in various capacities — from directing traffic to, in Graybill's case, handling money matters as treasurer.

There was a time when some of them had to rely on the siren to wake them up. Then came pagers. Technology and, especially, training have evolved. And the men sitting around a conference table fielding questions have themselves changed too, says Mike Hoover.

Hoover suited up as a teenager in 1977. His first date



Bart Township volunteer firefighters, from left, Levi Glick, George Lefevre, John Graybill, Cliff Johnson and Mike Hoover gather at the station on Furnace Road in Quarryville.

with the woman who became his wife was at the fire company banquet. He was fire chief at the time and she was vice president of the fire company's ladies auxiliary. Their son Travis is now fire chief.

"I think all of us will agree, when we were younger, as long as you got an hour or so of sleep you were fine the next day," Hoover says. "Now if you lose an hour or two of sleep, you're worthless the next day."

More than a quarter of this country's firefighters are 50 or older, according to the National Fire Protection Association's 2020 U.S. Fire Department Profile. That includes the 10% who are at least 60.

Limitations do come with age and need to be respected, says Levi Glick, 71.

"If you catch a high beam

at night at our age, it takes a little bit to get back," he says.

Glick's first call was a 1969 brush fire along railroad tracks.

"There have been so many of them I don't remember my first," says Ike Fisher, 72, one of the company's Amish members. He does recall one of the worst — a house blaze on Lancaster Avenue.

"I remember at that time going back there, thinking ... 'I'm gonna make sure these guys don't run out of water,'" he says. "But they did."

Fisher looks over at Hoover.

"You were up at the skylight, right?" he says. "Trying to get the girl out?"

No, that was the girl's brother, Hoover says.

"She pushed him out. He reached down to grab her, but the flames came up and

he rolled back and she wasn't there when he tried again," Hoover says. "I found her."

Hoover squares his shoulders and sets his jaw as he describes that fatal fire. But his brow furrows slightly — same as it does as he talks about their fire hall becoming a packed operations center following the 2006 tragedy that gripped people across the country and beyond. For the Bart firefighters, a surreal week of clearing helicopter landing sites and handling masses of media began as a medical call to an Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines.

There have no doubt been tough days for this group. They don't sugar coat that. But they do jump at the chance to lighten the mood and share their favorite piece of equipment.

FIREFIGHTER AGES

Here's a look at the makeup of firefighters in the U.S., both paid and volunteer, by age:

● 16-19: 3%	● 40-49: 23%
● 20-29: 20%	● 50-59: 17%
● 30-39: 27%	● 60 and older: 10%

Source: U.S. Fire Department Profile 2020

Hoover's was the 1979 tanker.

"That was everybody's, wasn't it?" says Cliff Johnson, 74.

His compatriots nod.

"We took it to a couple local parades and won," Hoover says. "We were kind of an underdog and then we used that momentum to enter a state parade that we would never have even considered and we won."

That tanker was rare, Glick says.

"I think there was one over at Silver Springs that was a pumper tanker. But there was not much of anything like it in the county," Glick says. "It just came together really, really well."

Countless hours went into polishing, painting and otherwise making that tanker as pristine as possible, Hoover says.

"When that went to a parade, you could crawl underneath it and the nuts and bolts on the springs were painted gold," Graybill says. "Spotless."

The fire company got a replacement tanker in 2008 but hung onto the old one for a couple years, letting it go sometime around 2010. So what happened to it?

"You don't want to know," says George LeFevre, 54.

Laughter follows. The irony of what the retired tanker is used for these days is not lost on this crowd.

"It's on a farm," LeFevre

says. "It has a silage box on it."

These members are happy to offer their mentorship, institutional knowledge and time. But they have concerns when it comes to the future of volunteer firefighting.

Johnson wonders how long the volunteer model can hold up in the face of more development across more communities. Graybill wonders if there will be enough volunteers.

"I can see it coming.

There's going to be a day when more and more companies merge because the volunteers are just not coming in," Graybill says. "We get young ones. A bunch of young, Amish boys. But they ain't gonna drive those big red trucks. In a couple years, they get married and then they leave us."

Some aspects of what the company does require a particular sweet spot of experience and youth.

"It makes a difference the older you get," Graybill says. "But I've enjoyed every minute of it."

To be a true volunteer firefighter, the calling must be in the blood, Graybill says.

"If it's not in your blood you're not going to stick it out," he says. "It's been in mine since I turned 16 and I joined that first meeting. There were eight people here. We had five sets of gear. First come, first served. You have to love it."

Can working prevent or delay dementia?

Experts: Research isn't clear, but it does have cognitive benefits

GAYLE JOHNSON
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Lancaster nurse Terre Smaldone, almost 68, first thought about retiring about three years ago. That's when her older sister, now 79, talked her out of it.

"Working is vital," explains that sister, Noreen Saurbaugh, who owns Noreen Elizabeth's, a Lancaster hair salon. Saurbaugh, a Mountville resident, still cuts hair during nine-hour shifts on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. She works half a day on Thursdays, continuing a career she started 60 years ago. Keeping regular hours at a job "plugs you into communications that are happening in your town," she says. "I don't want to disengage."

Smaldone, who lives in Conestoga, feels the same way. She says she has cherished her full-time job working as the health coordinator for Homestead Village retirement community's independent living residents, who number more than 400.

Medical professionals believe people who delay retirement to work full or part time receive another benefit than just getting out of the house. Working, they say, can keep brains active and could possibly delay or help prevent dementia.

Smaldone says she has given cognitive assessments and sometimes has seen dramatic changes in people after they stop working. She also has dressed wounds, handled emergencies and trained staff members in CPR for the Lancaster re-



Terre Smaldone, left, talks to resident Joanne Kaiser during her last week as health coordinator at Homestead Village. Smaldone is leaving full-time work behind, but she plans to continue working part time to keep her mind busy and, hopefully, healthy.

irement community. "It's not just an eight-hour day," the licensed practical nurse says.

"People's health sometimes changes quickly," she says. "You have to be ready to make decisions."

And Smaldone has just made a new one — to trade her full-time job for a part-time one as she approaches her 68th birthday. Smaldone doesn't want to leave the workforce because she shares her sister's belief that a busy mind is a healthy one.

The nurse talks about her own father, who died about three months after he retired, and says that memory has helped her decide to continue working as long as she is able.

Yet, Smaldone wants to spend more time with her husband, four grandchildren and five adult children, including a 26-year-old son who has Down syndrome.

"I want to use my nursing background," Smaldone says about whatever job she finds next. "I want to be connected to helping people."

Vivian Faircloth, a neurologist who treats patients with dementia at Well Span Heath, mentions a study from Scotland that showed people who delayed retirement had a much lower incidence of dementia than people who stopped working at a younger age.

The doctor also talked about a study from England that showed people who avoided isolation had a better chance of delaying or avoiding dementia.

"I recommend that people stay physically active, mentally active and stay tied into their community," she says.

People don't need a job to reach these goals, but that mental stimulation from working can help, she says.

WORKING, page 4

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Program helps all ages boogie to better health

KARYL CARMIGNANI
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

It's no secret that physical activity has a plethora of health benefits for people of all ages. Staving off disease like cancer and diabetes, lowering blood pressure, strengthening muscles and bones to prevent injury, increasing brain function, and improving mood by day and slumber by night are just some of the gains, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If the activity engages the noggin, all the better. If it has a social component, that's ideal. For the toe-tapping folks participating in the six-week Dance-Age program, they are surely box stepping their way to health and happiness.

Presented by Lancaster Rec and AARP Pennsylvania, Dance-Age is an inter-generational dance program to improve health and well-being, drawing people from senior citizens to elementary school students to learn different dance steps and styles.

The goal for the group is to learn a dance routine to the song "Footloose" and perform it at the Lancaster Rec's eighth annual Open Streets Lancaster on May 21. The family-friendly event, closed to vehicle traffic, encourages physical activity like walking, biking and roller blading. It will be held on Water Street from Walnut Street to Conestoga Street. (Learn more at openstreet-snc.org.)

"We're working on a teachable and easy dance so the community will dance with us," says Grace Rustia, associate state director for AARP Pennsylvania. "Whatever dance we're most comfortable with we'll do."

Dance-Age is part of the Age-Friendly Lancaster City

Action Plan, which aligns with the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities' framework; AARP is a sponsor and collaborator on the Dance-Age program.

"The Age-Friendly community is a holistic look at serving all ages — it means more than just grab rails and ramps," says Chris Kennedy, consultant for Age-Friendly Lancaster City.

The program's goal is to raise health awareness and keep people engaged.

"It is continuing our social connections to the community of Lancaster city," Rustia says.

Led by dance instructor Lydia Baranoski, the exuberant group — ranging from about 10 to 24 dancers week to week — warms up before getting down to business learning the 4/4-time cha-cha steps and shuffle at the Lancaster Rec Center. Baranoski demonstrates the moves, then the class "copies" the dance.

For Kim Caggiano, 70, of Landis Valley Road, the class is extremely enjoyable, though she says she has some trouble coordinating her feet while listening. She says it's a new exercise for her, besides just walking around her neighborhood.

Baranoski says the classes are a mix of new and experienced dancers.

"The class is accommodating to brand-new students but still challenging," she says.

While her background is in jazz, ballet and hip-hop, Baranoski studied up on cha-cha, as AARP wanted that included. "It provides a connecting opportunity in the community."

Kay Burrichter, 64, of Windolph Landing, says she signed up for the class as a way to make exercise more fun.



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

Instructor Lydia Baranoski, top, leads participants of all ages through a dance routine at the Lancaster Rec Center.

"I love square dancing," she says, but adds that she appreciates that this program doesn't require a partner. "They have a lot of classes for kids, but not many for older adults."

Dance-Age draws together the best of both worlds.

During one session, a dozen eager kids were matched up with an adult, and the room was abuzz with possibility.

"Dance exercise is a good way to move because it's not

just machines at the gym," Baranoski says. "It's good for the joints and the soul — and it's fun!"

Seventy-five-year old Rita Nutter of West Hempfield agrees. She is active with tai chi and Zumba and says she danced most of her life.

"Tap dancing is my forte," she says. But two knee replacements later, she has to watch her activities. "I do a little bouncy thing instead of running or jumping."

Dance-Age is a great way

to be active without harming aging body parts.

Boogie background

The goal for AARP is advocacy, connection and community engagement, Rustia says. During the pandemic, when people were on lockdown, AARP started an online flexercise program for folks to dance at home — as a way to stay flexible and get exercise, she says. They used music from the 1960s to the

1990s to forge connections and reduce isolation.

That online program is still offered nationwide — along with other online exercise classes — and free to AARP members and nonmembers. Dance-Age Lancaster City, featuring the cha-cha and merengue, is part of that program. It is the first year it has been done in person.

The six-week class that just ended will be recorded and used for upcoming online AARP flexercise events.

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Independent Living | Transitional Care
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Working

Continued from 3

"Having a job can help maintain cognitive abilities," says Connie Metzler, a program coordinator for the Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health Physician's Alzheimer's and Memory Care practice.

Scientific research falls short of proving that those who continue working will escape dementia, Metzler says, but studies do provide promising results.

For instance, consider that study from Scotland that shows people who work later in life have fewer incidences of dementia. The results might have something to do with the fact that people who remain mentally sharp are more likely to stay in their jobs longer.

Still, Metzler notes, "Working is good for brain health. There's not enough research that shows getting

a job is the best thing you should do, but the physical, cognitive and social benefits are there."

Metzler offers one caveat, though. Stay away from jobs that cause high levels of stress, she advises.

Karyn and Bill Regitz had hoped to follow that advice but found themselves thrust into a new venture once they retired to Lancaster in 1999.

"I never expected to start a business," says Karyn Regitz, now 65.

She and her husband, 84, originally bought the Drumore Estate in Pequea and decided to restore the mansion and gardens as a private residence for their family.

Then the brides came, knocking on the front door and begging for permission to stage a wedding on the grounds. The couple slowly relented, first offering their gardens in 2005 and then their home. Finally, the couple moved to Willow Valley

Communities about three years ago as their event business took over the property.

About 20 employees now host more than 100 weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, quinceañeras and other special occasions at Drumore each year. The estate also is zoned as a bed and breakfast. Staff numbers increase during events with more servers and other workers.

Karyn Regitz, who used to run a restaurant, supervises employees and helps cook for events.

"My oldest sibling has dementia," Bill Regitz says, explaining why he keeps working, handling finances for the business and his family. "I don't read a lot, but I do a lot of spreadsheets, and I do a lot of (accounting) books," he says. "I do believe you need to keep your mind busy."

Says Faircloth, the neurologist: "We have to use our brain cells rigorously and academically."

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Apps

Continued from 1
steps and heart rate. The Health app is just one of many that Mayers included in his Senior Games seminar.

Here are nine apps, as recommended by Mayers, that seniors can use to stay healthy as they age:

Apple Health

Free

Samsung Health

Free

“Overall, one of the biggest things I tell the seniors to download is the Health app,” Mayers says. “The great thing about the Health app, whatever platform you’re utilizing, is that it really helps us maintain our health.”

The Apple Health app can be used to track steps, distances traveled, calories burned and movement goals. It can help users manage their medications by scheduling reminders and providing information about potential interactions between the medicines on a user’s list. An app user can even track symptoms and their vitals.

“In addition to it being great for exercise, it can really help us keep an accurate diary, if you will, of our health,” Mayers says. “When we go to the doctor, instead of somebody pulling the paper out of their pocket and writing all these details down, (they can use this app) ... It really is all-encompassing.”

Mayers also encourages everyone — regardless of their age — to set up their Medical ID within the Health app, which allows first responders to access your critical medical information and an emergency contact. (For Android users, a comparable app is called Medical ID.)

“One of the major things that I asked Andrew to do is to help people put their emergency contact information in their phone,” says Lisa Paulson, senior center program director at the Lancaster County Office of Aging. “That’s a push from the emergency management agency to get people to have their identification in their phone. That way, if they’re in an accident, they know they can go right to the phone and pull up their emergency information.”

“I personally think this is imperative for everybody,” Mayers says.

MyChart

Free

“The MyChart app is what Lancaster General Health uses for their patient records,” Mayers says. “When (patients) want to talk to their practitioners, they want to see their test results, they need to communicate, (they use) the MyChart app. “However you log into your MyLGHealth portal, you use those same credentials in the MyChart app, and now everything about your medical history is accessible in the palm of your hand.”

GoodRx: Prescription Saver

Free

“GoodRx is how we can find the cheapest prescriptions possible,” Mayers says. “Let’s just say we need a prescription. Well, we go to GoodRx, we type in what prescription we need, and we type in our ZIP code. ... It tells me every single pharmacy and the price of that drug (at that pharmacy). It may be \$100 at Walgreens and maybe \$40 at Weis.”

The GoodRx app works with more than 70,000 pharmacies across the U.S., according to their website.

Calm

Free (In-app purchases available)

Calm offers its users guided meditations, as well as soothing stories meant to encourage better sleep.

“In my health workshop, we focus on both body and mind. Physical wellness, as



Priscilla Dejessa tracks her steps while walking in Lancaster County Central Park.

well as mental health,” Mayers says. “The Calm app is ideal for mental wellness, peace of mind and meditation and really de-stressing and unwinding.”

Lumosity: Brain Training

Free (In-app purchases available)

Lumosity includes “games designed to exercise memory, speed, flexibility and problem-solving,” according to the app.

“(Lumosity) is a brain-strengthening app. It is all for helping improve memory, helping improve cognition,” Mayers says. “It’s almost like how we say that you do a crossword puzzle a day, you keep your mind sharp. It’s how we can train our brain.”

Fitbit

Free (In-app purchases available)

Google Fit

Free

Apple Fitness

Free

These apps are paired to one’s use of a “wearable” device, like a Fitbit, Apple Watch or Samsung Galaxy

Watch, in order to track activity.

“Depending on what their goals are, the wearable will help enhance our lifestyle,” Mayers says.

Both the Apple Watch and Samsung Galaxy Watch can also detect some hard falls, potentially allowing the wearer to send an alert to their emergency contact if such a fall occurs.

“I knew (a) person who had an Apple Watch. This was an older gentleman who still rides his bike and is very active,” Mayers says. “He’s on his bike trail, and I don’t know if he didn’t see the rock or what happened, but he hit the rock and flipped over. Flew up in the air, had a really hard fall on his side, fractured his hip, fractured his wrists.”

Mayers continues, “The Apple watch detected that he had a hard fall. ... The Apple Watch sent a message to his son ... and guess what? They found him. They found the man immediately. He wasn’t out there stranded. But it’s all because his Apple Watch had fall detection turned on.”

Time

Continued from 1

enlisted in the Air Force as a machinist after graduation, making tools and parts for ground equipment and airplanes.

Then came a stint near Oxford, England, from 1979-1982, and a foray into antiquing. Desrochers, who brought his own lathe and a power drill overseas, began falling in love with timepieces. He wanted to buy a shelf clock at one store but thought the price was too expensive. He believed his wife was helping him negotiate when she kept commenting on how ugly the timepiece looked and how buying it would be a huge waste of money.

Desrochers eventually bought the clock and thanked his wife on the way home. Turns out, Sue Desrochers wasn’t trying to be helpful. She hated the timepiece her husband purchased.

The machinist worked

on restoring the clock in an old airport hangar at night, after work, using skills learned in the Air Force and in technical school.

“I took the clock apart,” Desrochers recalls. “If a part looked worn, I replaced it.” If he couldn’t find a part, he made one.

Sue Desrochers thought her husband had bought her a gorgeous new clock when he put the restored timepiece on a shelf in their home a few months later.

“Where did you get that?” Bob Desrochers recalls his wife asking. “It’s gorgeous.”

Desrochers joined The National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors, based in Columbia, while stationed in England and decided to attend the now-defunct Bowman Technical School in Lancaster in 1990, when he retired from the military.

The couple lived in a travel trailer while Desrochers learned timekeeping secrets. They liked Lancaster County so much, Desrochers says, that they decid-

ed to relocate.

Although clock experts generally agree that the first mechanical timepiece hailed from England in the late 1200s or early 1300s, you won’t find anything that old at Timekeepers. However, visitors might see Desrochers or one of his two employees working on a wall clock from 1650.

Timekeepers Workbench has so many clients that Desrochers temporarily has stopped accepting new work. A voicemail recording alerts callers that they must make an appointment to visit the workshop.

Pyfer, the attorney, says he worries that clock artisans are retiring, but Desrochers is trying to generate interest.

Take Eric Fink, 42. The York resident wanted to leave a career in graphic design and met Desrochers through a friend.

“This is refreshing,” says Fink, who started working at Timekeepers about a month ago. “I like working with old items.”



Mantel clocks, wall clocks and shelf clocks fill Timekeepers Workbench, the workshop Robert Desrochers operates behind his Lititz home.

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Home

Continued from 2

Gunselman's clients, Tom and Julie Schmidt, had made improvements to their Manheim Township home throughout the 30 years they lived there, including a kitchen upgrade about 10 years before their 2020 move. Then, months before they even met with Gunselman in 2019 and more than a year before selling their house, the Schmidts decided to get proactive about preparing their home for a potential sale. They started decluttering, repainted the front door, stained the back porch and remodeled the main bathroom. Although their personal preference would have been a walk-in shower, they kept a tub in their only full bath thinking it would be more appealing to young families with children, Julie says. The Schmidts sold their house in a month.

Other ways to appeal to younger buyers, the Wilsons say, include replacing or removing features that might date the home, such as scalloped wood valances

over the kitchen sink, mismatched or cream-colored outlet covers, flush-mount dome lights or pink bathroom tile. Such things may seem insignificant, especially if they are in good condition, but they are guaranteed to trigger what Trimble refers to as the money meter and time meter: Potential buyers will want to replace them, and they are going to start calculating the time and money it will take to do it.

Nowhere is that more apparent than the kitchen.

"Kitchens sell homes," Chris Wilson says. "People want a move-in ready home. ... When buyers walk in a home and see a dated kitchen, it's not just unattractive. They see dollar signs. If the seller can remove that objection, it's a home run."

Case in point: The Wilsons recently updated a '70s-era kitchen and bath in a home that sat on the market without any offers. The project took five weeks, and the home sold two weeks later, they say.

Cost versus return

Although updating a kitchen

can be as simple as painting cabinets and adding new hardware and flooring, it can certainly turn into a major investment. That's why the Wilsons stress the importance of consulting with a Realtor to ensure a big home improvement is worthwhile to sell a home.

It's also a good idea to consider such renovations long before you're ready to sell, Gunselman says. Contractors are busy and it may be difficult to get your project on their schedule. Plus, she says, prices can change. She renovated a full bath in her own home for \$7,800. Two years later, a similar renovation at a rental property came in at double the cost.

"Not every home renovation that helps a home to sell translates into a big return on investment, but some can," Chris Wilson says. "It is possible to invest \$25,000 and sell a home for \$100,000 more."

It's also possible to get no return at all on a major investment, especially if it's a necessary one.

"If someone says, 'My house is worth more because I put a new roof on,'

Why? Just because it's new doesn't make it more valuable," she says. "It's a must-have in a house."

That's why the experts say the most important thing anyone, including older adults, can do in the years leading up to a potential home sale is to keep up with basic home maintenance.

"If the heat's not working, the windows are shot ... those kinds of repairs are so costly and they don't help buyers sing a happy song," Gunselman says. "Even if it's priced well below market it's going to take them \$50,000 to make it up to standards."

While those big-ticket items are important, don't discount the importance of little things, such as a rotted mailbox post or chipped exterior paint, Christine Wilson says. "Curb appeal is everything," she says.

Just like that fresh coat of paint inside, it doesn't always cost an arm and a leg to make your home more attractive to a potential buyer.

"I call it lipstick," Gunselman says. "You can put lipstick on your house, and a lot of times it will make a huge difference."

Plan

Continued from 2

than waiting until after Tom had retired.

Downsize or right-size?

Of course, another part of the transition plan is downsizing and decluttering. Just how much depends on whether you are moving to a much smaller place or to a home of similar square footage that is simply designed to better fit your needs.

"The best time for downsizing is when you're actually contemplating when you're going to be moving," says Erica Kelly, Lancaster-based client experience manager for WayForth, a moving management company that specializes in services for older adults. "It's a lot, especially if you're transitioning from a three- or four-bedroom home into maybe a lot smaller villa or one- or two-bedroom apartment."

Those who are on a waiting list for a retirement community face an additional challenge, Kelly says.

"They could be on (the wait list) for a year or two or they could be on it for three months," she says.

"The sooner you have this process done, the easier the transition is for ... the senior, the senior's family and lastly the community."

The experts say it's never too early to start decluttering, even if a potential move is a few years away.

It will be one less thing to worry about if, or when, you decide to move, especially if that move is sudden and unexpected due to an unforeseen lifestyle change.

"Once you start it and it gets underway, a lot of people feel relief or they feel a sense of accomplishment," Kelly says. "The hardest part is just starting."

Julie Schmidt agrees. "We had a whole basement that was full of stuff we hadn't used," she says. "It just became the dumping ground for old furniture, boxes of kids' toys through the years. ... Even though we had accumulated stuff, it felt good to me. I'm not afraid to throw things away."

Once people work through the pain points of emotionally letting go of a house and physically purging, Gunselman says, they can orchestrate a successful transition that will hopefully lead to a new beginning.

The key is having a plan.

"Start planning," Julie Schmidt says. "Start figuring out a little bit what you're looking for. ... Look at your house. Is it sellable as it is? Do you want to make some investments in it?"

"(Planning) let us achieve our ultimate objective, which was to find a beautiful home to fit our needs that we can age into in place," she says. "We did it easily, intelligently, in a hassle-free way. We weren't panicked. We did it on our own terms because we had knowledge and support."

18 IMPROVEMENTS THAT DON'T ADD VALUE TO YOUR HOME

Realtor Patrick Trimble offers this list of renovation projects that could end up costing you more than you'll get back:

- **Converting a bedroom into a walk-in closet:** This is only practical if you have enough remaining bedrooms that it won't affect your home's value.
- **Going overboard on built-ins:** Built-ins can limit the flexibility of a room.
- **Going over the top with murals:** Some buyers may have difficulty seeing beyond such an extensive personalization.
- **Investing in too much tech:** Smart technology won't add value to your home and may turn off buyers who prefer more traditional methods.
- **Changing the garage into a gym:** Garages and parking spaces are in high demand. Bricking up a garage door to create a space for gym equipment could seriously dent your profit at sale time.
- **Growing a high-maintenance yard:** While a good-looking yard attracts potential buyers, one that requires a lot of upkeep may turn them off.

● **Ripping up the lawn:** Buyers may not want a lot of upkeep, but they value their green space.

● **Investing in solar panels:** They are energy-efficient but usually have little impact on property value. Buyers may view them as eyesores, hard to maintain or a hindrance to future renovations.

● **Overspending on a luxury kitchen:** You can get a completely new look for less by replacing worn countertops and upcycling cabinets with new paint and handles.

● **Building an entertainment room:** A basement cinema or bar may seem like a cool idea, but those large, built-in fixtures may not appeal to a new buyer.

● **Installing a swimming pool:** Buyers may view pools as a hassle to maintain and a safety risk if they have small children.

● **Overdoing the decking:** Decking has lost some of its allure and may seem dated. A stone patio will stand the test of time and won't require restaining.

● **Going all out for alfresco:** Unless you're a barbecue enthusiast, forking over big

bucks for a built-in grill or pizza oven is likely not a good investment. Even buyers who like it won't pay extra for it.

● **Fitting wall-to-wall carpet:** Many people today prefer a mix of carpet and hardwood. If you do choose carpet and are planning to sell, stick to neutral shades.

● **Replacing the roof:** Consider it a once-in-a-lifetime job and not something to do for purely aesthetic reasons.

● **Doing up just one or two rooms:** A new bathroom could impress buyers, but if it's next to an old-fashioned 1980s kitchen it will only highlight how much work still needs to be done.

● **Installing invisible upgrades:** If you're selling your home soon, don't waste money on improvements you can't see. Concentrate on something buyers will notice, like new windows, which offer one of the best returns on investment.

● **Covering up period features:** Character features like a hearth, original wood flooring or ceiling roses could add to the value of your home.



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