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May 3 - Implanted Hearing Devices May Help Remedy Hearing Loss
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June 21 - Treatments of Cerebrovascular Diseases
Ashish Sonig, MD, Medical Director of Willis Knighton Neurovascular Institute

June 28 - Uncovering More of Shreveport's History
Mark and Mike Mangham with Twin Blends History Hunters

July 5 - Legal Issues Facing Older Adults
Kyle A. Moore, Elder Law Attorney and Vickie Rech, Client Care Coordinator with the law firm of Weems, Schimpf, Haines, & Moore

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Medical News & Info



Longer Naps Linked to Higher Risk of Obesity, Metabolic Syndrome, and High Blood Pressure

It is a common custom in some countries for individuals to take a siesta or midday nap. Sleeping during the middle of the day has the potential to affect sleep quality, cognitive function, and metabolic processes. A new study led by investigators from Brigham and Women's Hospital assessed adults, examining the relationship of siesta duration with obesity and metabolic syndrome. The researchers found that those who took siestas of 30 minutes or longer were more likely to have a higher body mass index, higher blood pressure, and a cluster of other conditions associated with heart disease and diabetes (metabolic syndrome) compared to those without siestas. For those who had short siestas, also known as "power naps," the increased risk for obesity and metabolic alterations was not present. In contrast, short siesta-takers were less likely to have elevated systolic blood pressure than those who took no siestas. The team's results are published in *Obesity*.

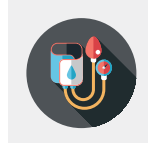
Sleep Deprivation Increases Anxiety



Sleep loss does more than just make us tired. It can undermine our emotional functioning, decrease positive moods and put us at higher risk for anxiety symptoms, according to a study published by the American Psychological Association that synthesized more than 50 years of research on sleep deprivation and mood.

This study provides strong evidence that periods of extended wakefulness, shortened sleep duration, and nighttime awakenings adversely influence human emotional functioning. Overall, the researchers found that sleep loss resulted in fewer positive emotions such as joy, happiness and contentment among participants, as well as increased anxiety symptoms such as a rapid heart rate and increased worrying. The study was published in the journal *Psychological Bulletin*.

Dementia Notes



People with Untreated High Blood Pressure May Have a Higher Risk of Alzheimer's Disease

People 60 and older with untreated high blood pressure may have an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease compared to both people who have been or are being treated for high blood pressure as well as people without the chronic condition. Researchers looked at 31,250 people with an average age of 72 who were enrolled in 14 studies that measured cognitive change and dementia diagnosis over time. After adjusting for factors such as age, sex and education, researchers found people with untreated high blood pressure had 36% increased risk of Alzheimer's disease when compared to people without high blood pressure, and a 42% increased risk of Alzheimer's when compared to people with the condition who were taking blood pressure medications. These results do not prove that untreated high blood pressure causes Alzheimer's disease, they only show an association. The new research is published in an online issue of *Neurology*.



Being Social May Delay Dementia Onset

Visiting friends, attending parties and going to church may help keep your brain healthy, according to research conducted at Rush. The study, posted online in *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, shows that frequent social activity may help to prevent or delay dementia in old age by up to 5 years. Social activity can strengthen neural circuits in the brain in a case of 'use it or lose it'. The findings show that more frequent social activity points to a 38% reduction in dementia risk and a 21% reduction in mild cognitive impairment risk, compared to the least socially active. In addition, a five-year delay in dementia onset has been estimated to yield an additional three years of life and an economic benefit of reducing dementia costs by 40%, potentially \$500,000 in lifetime health care savings for each person who would eventually develop dementia.



Internet Use a Modifiable Dementia Risk Factor in Older Adults

Self-reported, regular internet use, but not overuse, in older adults is linked to a lower dementia risk, new research from New York University School of Global Public Health suggests. Investigators followed over 18,000 older individuals and found that regular internet use was associated with about a 50% reduction in dementia risk compared with their counterparts who did not use the internet regularly. They also found that longer duration of regular internet use was associated with a reduced risk of dementia, although excessive daily internet usage appeared to adversely affect dementia risk. The study was published online in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

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Real ID and How it Affects You

What is the Real ID Act? When was the Act passed? When does it become effective? Do I have to have a Real ID? What happens if I don't obtain a Real ID? These are questions I have been asked recently by people in our community. I will attempt to answer these questions in this article for you.

Real ID was passed by Congress in 2005. The Real ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of information, such as driver's licenses." The Act establishes minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards and prohibits certain federal agencies from accepting, for official purposes, licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. These purposes are:

- 1) accessing certain federal facilities
- 2) boarding federally regulation commercial aircraft
- 3) entering nuclear power plants

The enforcement date for the Real ID in the State of Louisiana begins on May 7, 2025. Louisiana, when this Act was originally passed, received an exemption until this year that would require its citizens to comply with the Real ID Act.

Once Real ID enforcement begins, federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and TSA, can only accept state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards as identification for purposes of accessing federal facilities-including TSA airport security checkpoints-if the license or card was issued by a Real ID compliant state in accordance with the Real ID security standards. The Real ID will have a star on the licenses that shows the ID complies with the Real ID Act.

A person who is trying to obtain a Real ID will need to consult their state's driver licensing agency website to find out exactly what documentation is required to obtain a Real ID. At a minimum,



you must provide documentation showing:

- 1) your full legal name
- 2) date of birth
- 3) Social Security Number
- 4) two proofs of address of your principal residence
- 5) your lawful status

Your driver's license agency may allow you to submit other forms of proof showing the applicant's social security number if the applicant cannot find their social security card. You will just need to consult the driver's license agency to find out what type of information they will allow.

If you go to the airport and do not have a compliant license or compliant identification, you will not be permitted through the security checkpoint at the airport, unless you have a valid passport. You must have a Real ID to enter certain federal facilities. As you can see, compliance with the Real ID Act is now an important part of planning for any trip. In writing this article, I referred to and quoted the information from the Department of Homeland Security regarding the Real ID Act and what was required.

Judge Jeff Cox is judge of the Louisiana Circuit Court of Appeal for the Second Circuit.



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Nuts and Seeds Pack a Big Punch

Nuts and seeds are small, but they pack a big punch when it comes to nutrition. Whether you're sprinkling flaxseeds on your morning yogurt or snacking on almonds in the afternoon, these nutrient-dense foods offer significant health benefits. Keep reading to discover why these tiny treasures deserve a place in your pantry.

Nuts and seeds are full of nutrients that help keep our heart and brain healthy and promote overall well-being. The fats found in nuts and seeds are polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, which are heart healthy fats. These fats help reduce inflammation and improve blood cholesterol. They also lower our risk for heart disease. Nuts and seeds also contain fiber, which is important for regulating our digestive system. Fiber also helps to prevent certain cancers, regulate blood sugar, promote a healthy heart, and maintain a healthy weight. Nuts and seeds provide anywhere from 3 to 9 grams of protein per ounce, depending on the variety.



The fiber and protein in these foods helps us feel full, making them the perfect snack. They also offer a wide range of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, with each variety having its own nutrient profile. Aim to eat a variety of nuts and seeds to reap the nutrition benefits from each unique type.

When shopping for nuts and seeds, opt for unsalted varieties to reduce overall sodium intake. Roasted versions often contain added oil and salt, so be sure to read the Nutrition Facts Label to make healthier choices. At home, nuts and seeds can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature. If you're wanting to extend the shelf life of nuts, they can be refrigerated or frozen. They are good for about four months in the refrigerator and eight months in the freezer.

It doesn't take much to reap the benefits of nuts and seeds. The serving size for these nutrient-packed gems is ½ ounce, which is about a small handful of nuts or seeds. For nut and seed butters, the serving size is one Tablespoon. Be mindful that



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Kyle Moore
Elder Law Attorney

Vickie Rech
Client Care Coordinator
Non -Attorney

nuts and seeds are calorie-dense, so it's important to watch portion sizes. Nuts and seeds can be incorporated in our diets in many creative ways. Try topping your salad with chopped nuts or seeds for an extra crunch. Cashews or peanuts make a tasty addition to a stir-fry. Ground nuts or flaxseeds can be added to a variety of batters and doughs, including pancakes, muffins, cookies, and breads. Chopped nuts are a delicious addition to yogurt or cereal, adding extra protein and fiber to kickstart your morning. Ground pecans or flaxseed can be used in breading for pan-fried or baked chicken and fish. Add chopped nuts to a rice pilaf for a new twist on a classic dish. Ground flaxseed can also be added to your favorite smoothie recipe. Nuts and seeds also make a wonderful mid-morning or afternoon snack to keep you nourished and satisfied until the next meal.

Nuts and seeds are healthy, versatile, and easy to store and carry, which makes them a convenient option if you want to add more vitamins, minerals, and fiber in your diet. Incorporating these tiny treasures in your weekly routine can do wonders for your brain, heart, and more!



Abigail McAlister is a Registered Dietician and nutrition agent with LSU AgCenter for Caddo and Bossier Parishes. Her focus is adult nutrition education and promotion. Contact her at AMcAlister@agcenter.lsu.edu.



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The Case of the Mysterious Bites

When baby Bam-Bam (not his real name) was born, he had drugs in his system. Child Protective Services quickly stepped in and took the baby away from his biological mother, who had a significant history of drug abuse.

They placed Bam-Bam with a foster parent. (The State is allowed to take custody of abused or neglected children and “contract with private individuals to hold their homes open for and to care for children in need of temporary or long-term foster care.”)

About two months later, Bam-Bam was hospitalized with “severe personal injuries, which included brain damage, blindness and seizures.” To make things even more mysterious, the baby had “bite marks on his thigh and abdomen.”

A lawsuit was filed and the question became who was at fault. The medical

evidence made clear that the drugs in Bam Bam’s system when he was born was not the cause of any of these injuries. Instead, everyone was sure that the baby had been abused. Who was the abuser? The foster mother? And if it wasn’t her, how could she have allowed the abuse to happen?

Louisiana Child Protective Services argued that they had nothing to do with it: the foster parent was at fault. According to the State, it should not be liable for the actions of a foster parent. Sound right to you?

The case went all the way up to the Louisiana Supreme Court. That’s because there is a Louisiana law that says the State is only responsible for the actions of its officials, officers or employees. But in this case, the foster



parent wasn’t a State official, officer or employee; she was only an independent contractor. Therefore, according to the State, it can’t be responsible for the actions of the foster parent.

But the Louisiana Supreme Court decided that there was another Louisiana law that applied to this case: “Where the State obtains legal custody of a child, it has the responsibility



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to provide for the physical, mental, moral and emotional well-being of the child. Although the State is allowed to contract with foster parents to fulfill this duty, the state is not authorized to divest itself of this duty.” In other words, when the State takes an abused child away from the biological parents, the State “becomes directly responsible for the child’s care and well-being. The State cannot insulate itself from this responsibility by contracting it out to others to fulfill.”

In a much older Louisiana case, the State had taken an abused 6-year-old from his parents and put him into foster care. What the State didn’t know, or bother to find out, was that the foster parent had a gun in the house. The foster mother left her 9-year-old son and the 6-year-old foster child alone in the house. The 9-year-old found the gun and shot the foster child in the head. The biological mother then sued the State for damages. The Judge found the State at fault: “the State had

a duty to care for the child and if it chooses to exercise this responsibility of care through an employee, agent, or independent contractor, the ultimate duty of care is non-delegable and remains the State’s responsibility.”

The next question became how much money the biological mother should get for the loss of life of the child. The answer? \$5,000. That’s it. Why so low? The child had been taken away from the mother when the child was 3. For the next 3 years, the mother had “maintained some contact with the child and provided him with gifts on his birthday.” But the mother also hadn’t taken any steps to show the State that it was safe to return the child to her.



Lee Aronson is an attorney in Shreveport with Gilsoul & Aronson, LLC. His practice areas include estate planning and elder law.

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Whose Life is it, Anyway?

From a corner table in a restaurant called La Guadalupana, I watched a sea bass bring a Foodie to his knees. Seconds later, I watched a simple carne asada bring his partner to tears.

I'll have what they're having.

Eating my way across Italy, America and Mexico was not on my To Do (aka Bucket but "Bucket" sounds like I'm planning to die) List.

What was on the list was an evening in Venice, strolling the cobblestone streets of the Floating City, like a minstrel in search of his muse, before stepping into a gondola (Eighty Euros for 30 minutes that would last a lifetime) and drifting aimlessly beneath the stars along the Grand Canal writing love songs and poetry.

There is music everywhere you go in Venice and, on that particular night, what kind of romantic fool would I be if Shakespeare's "If music be the food of love, play on" did not come to mind?

Food? Hadn't thought of it but come to think of it, I was a little hungry. Maybe a late night snack. Maybe lasagna? Why not? When in Italy.

Oh, Lord! If heaven has a taste, if love has a taste, if life



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has a taste, all three were baked into that lasagna in Venice!

Florence was on the list. Birthplace of the Renaissance, Athens of the Middle Ages, where a 17-foot nude man and a larger than life nude woman have held rule for over 500 years. Michelangelo's David and Botticelli's Venus: inspired works of art so hypnotic that starving young artists have been known to turn and jump into the Arno just to regain their senses.

Starving?

No, but after wandering the rest of the Uffizi Gallery I had worked up a bit of an appetite. I stopped into one of the endless eateries that ring the river like a string of pearls and ordered a little garlic bread.

Impossibile! Così buono da morire!

Okay, I wouldn't die for it but one bite and I was dying for more of it.

The Alamo was on the list. What can I say? I was that kid who wore a coonskin cap and carried a wooden replica of Davy Crockett's rifle, Ol' Betsy. I was that kid who fought and died alongside Davy at least 1,000 times. To be right there in San Antonio and not touch the walls of The Alamo would be like standing at heaven's door and forgetting to knock.

To be honest, it was a tad anti-climactic but as the years come and go, I will always be happy that I did remember The Alamo.

I will also remember the ribs at The Lone Star Café on The River Walk a few blocks from The Alamo. Ah, Davy, I wish I could have shared those with you!

So what does all this travel and eating have to do with seniors?

Well, I am a senior and, for several years, I had every excuse in the world not to do what I now find myself doing.

It's too expensive.

I live on social security and a small pension. By renting my house out on a short-term lease and by looking for and finding unbeatable bargains for the budget traveler (My trip to Italy

was \$499 including airfare, hotel and a rental car for 8 days) I am able to pay for all of this with enough left over to keep the bank account growing.

I don't have time.

How much time do you have? Let's face it seniors, we have more time behind us than ahead of us. Do we sit and wait for time to run out or do we get up and go?

Foreign travel is not safe.

There were 0 murders, 87 burglaries and 11 vehicle thefts in Venice last year. In the same year, there were 478 murders, 13,151 burglaries and 10,222 auto thefts in Chicago. Just sayin'.

What will people think?

Some will think you're off your rocker, some will think you're wasting your time, some will think you're wasting your money but when you're on a warm beach watching the sun go down over the edge of a mai tai, what will you be thinking?

It's a waste of money.

I was three hours outside of Morelia, Mexico yesterday to witness one of the planet's most spectacular migrations - the migration of the Monarch butterflies. It was like being in Fairyland. Thousands upon thousands of Monarch butter flies flooding the skies like a gentle snowfall on Christmas Eve. It was like looking at all of my favorite works of art all at the same time. It was like walking breathless through the fields of heaven; like being kissed endlessly by a warm summer breeze. I looked around at dozens of people standing in absolute silence, their arms and heads raised to the sky as if in thanks to a God that has, with nothing more than a host of butter flies, said, "See? Life's not so bad right now, is it?"

Put a price tag on that.

After all is said and done ... whose life is it, anyway?

"From "Old Friends (Endless Love) available exclusively at Amazon.com



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The Positive Impact of *Volunteering*

By Sarah (Sally) Hamer

Did you know that approximately one in three older Americans experience loneliness on a regular basis? Many of these people live alone, and a few don't see or talk to another person for days on end. How do we get there? As we age and our children get older and friends either die or drift away, isolation, ill health, and lack of purpose can lead to a cold emptiness and even depression. According to the National Health Service in the UK, "Whatever the cause, it's shockingly easy to be left feeling alone and vulnerable, which can lead to depression and a serious decline in physical health and wellbeing."

There are probably as many ways to combat loneliness as there are lonely people, since the syndrome is not only personal but very specific to an individual. But finding a solution can be as easy as finding a way to help others. And one of the best ways to do that is to become a volunteer.

Volunteering wears many hats. Hospitals and libraries and non-profit organizations of every type welcome volunteers. There are organizations specifically dedicated to volunteering. For instance, Optimist International is devoted to helping kids, both through financial support and volunteerism. Rotary International works to promote peace and fight disease, as well as other well-founded projects. Lions Club International collects used eyeglasses to be recycled. All three have local groups that meet, usually monthly, and work together to help others. There are more organizations available in this area, all worthy and a place where we can follow our own interests. And meet new friends.



Lions International



Optimist
INTERNATIONAL

The
Rotary
Foundation



These are just a few organizations specifically dedicated to volunteering.



But sometimes volunteering is much more personal.



Dr. Michael Greene

Retired from a successful chiropractic practice, Dr. Michael Greene took the opportunity to use his passion of helping people heal by volunteering at multiple nursing homes in his area. Because people have a tendency to fall as they age, he provides them with exercises and other tips on how to strengthen their balance. “Even though I don’t

have an office anymore, I still get to work with people who need help. It keeps me busy and I love talking to them.”

One person I spoke to about volunteering is in her later years but still takes time to check on her neighbors and friends. A simple phone call can brighten someone’s day.

Another volunteer who followed her passion was my mother, Dorothy McIntosh, who died last year at the advanced age of ninety-nine. She was very active in the leadership of her church and also knitted prayer shawls and afghan blankets to be given out as needed. She made dozens and dozens of hats with matching mittens for a foster home every year.

She volunteered at the local historical society, making homemade peach ice cream for their social every year. All of these things were important to her, and she loved the interaction and friends that came along with it. Her small town gifted her with their highest award, “A Pillar of



The author with her mother, Dorothy McIntosh

the Community,” for her volunteerism. I asked her what she got out of all that hard work one time, and she laughed at me. “More than they get. I have friends who call me all the time and take me out to lunch every week. I enjoy my life because I know that people need me.” She continued to knit for others until she was in her late nineties.

A lovely local lady, Rosemary Short, has more volunteer jobs than anyone else I know. She and her husband play Santa and Mrs. Claus, and she performs as Beatrice the Bunny (at



Rosemary Short and her husband play Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Easter), and Cece the Clown at multiple venues, almost all of them for children. “I’ve always been part of the non-profit community, working and volunteering at almost every level. I was in the Girl Scouts early in my life, which led to my passion of helping others.” In college and afterwards, she worked for the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault as part of her degree requirements, becoming a public speaker all across the world. After marriage and children, she moved to the Shreveport/Bossier City area and,

because she didn’t know anyone, she joined the Chamber of Commerce, becoming a Top Diplomat for both cities over the years. Not only did she make friends, she loved the sharing of educational opportunities but also contributing to the needs of society. “Volunteering gives me a way of making a positive impact in lives and in the community. It also gives me faith and self-worth, along with hope for the future, both for others and for myself.” She was nominated for the Athena Award several years ago, proving that her contributions to the area are priceless.

Today, her programs in hospitals, nursing homes, including the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Home, and in almost any place they ask for her, are filled with “laughter, humor, and medicine.” “I dress in scrubs, wearing a toilet plunger around my neck for a stethoscope and bed pans for shoes, and call myself Dr. I Feel Good. Kids and adults both start laughing the moment they see me, and the medicine is in the laughter.”

Finding ways to volunteer is not about forcing ourselves into an unpleasant situation. Many lonely people have isolated themselves on purpose, through grief or anger or simply not feeling well enough to make an effort. So, trying to create an opportunity can be difficult. But following your passion can bring much joy. One of my friends told me that a neighbor taught him almost everything he knows about fixing a motorcycle. John, who had lost his own father when he was a child, had gone to ask the older man a question and, somehow, they became best buddies. He still speaks of Mr. Hickman over fifty years later. Mr. Hickman probably had no idea that he was volunteering for a young man. But it made a huge difference to John.

I asked Rosemary what she considers the most important thing about her volunteering. She said, “Small children need the teaching. Adults need the hope. The most vulnerable and needy people need the understanding that they matter. And all of us need a purpose in our life. Helping others gives us that.”

We have different purposes at different times in our lives. For instance, as a young adult, it’s often the knowledge that we’re at the beginning of an adventure – finishing our education, finding work to support ourselves, establishing relationships, maybe getting married and having children. All of these lead us into making plans and decisions and keeping engaged with others. But then, the kids grow up, we retire, and, suddenly almost without warning, we’re at a place where nothing is the same. This gives us the opportunity we need to reinvent ourselves. Which may be one of the hardest things we’ve ever done. But it also is one of the most rewarding.

Sarah (Sally) Hamer, B.S., MLA, is a multi-award-winning author who teaches creative fiction writing at LSU in Shreveport. She is fascinated by how people tick and loves to explore the world around her.



Dorothy McIntosh with grandson Blaine McIntosh and his wife Nicole with an afghan that Dorothy knitted



*Top left: Dr. I Feel Good
Bottom: Cece the Clown*

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT VOLUNTEERING:

⌘ Am I too old to volunteer?

There are SO many ways to volunteer, age really doesn't matter. If you can use a phone, you can probably volunteer. Do you have friends who would like to have someone to talk to? Or a computer where you can email people?

⌘ Do I need to have a specific skill?

No, not necessarily. Sometimes just an encouraging smile can be enough.

⌘ Where do I find opportunities?

They are all around you. You do not need to join an organization. Be open to possibilities. There are so many people who need encouragement. And, finally, find something you can be passionate about. It will help to fulfill your purpose too.

Area Volunteer Opportunities

AARP of Louisiana
866-448-3620;
225-376-1144
www.aarp.org/volunteer/

American Red Cross,
NWLA Chapter
318-865-9545
www.louisianaredcross.org

Bossier Council on Aging
318-741-7490
www.bossiercoa.org

Caddo Council on Aging
318-676-7900 Ext 239
www.caddocoa.org

Caddo/Bossier Foster
Grandparent Program
318-676-7884

Court Appointed Special
Advocates (CASA)
318-221-2272
www.vyjla.org

Food Bank of NWLA
318-675-2400
www.foodbanknla.org

Literacy Volunteers
318-869-2411
www.shreveportliteracy.org

Renesting Project, Inc.
318-747-5520
www.renestingprojectinc.org

Shreveport Bossier
Community Renewal
318-425-3222
www.sbcr.us

Shreveport Bossier Rescue
Mission
318-227-2868
www.sbrescuemission.com

Shreveport Green
318-219-1888
www.shreveportgreen.org

Shreveport Symphony
Orchestra
318-222-7496
shreveportsymphony.com

Shreveport Little Theatre
318- 424-4438
shreveportlittletheatre.com

The Community
Foundation
318-221-0582
www.cfmla.org

The Highland Center
318-673-8440
www.highlandcenter.org

Salvation Army of NWLA
318-424-3200
www.salvationarmyalm.org/shreveport

The Strand Theatre
318-226-1481
www.thestrandtheatre.com

United Way of NWLA
318-677-2504
www.unitedwaynwa.org

Volunteers of America
318-221-2669
www.voanorthla.org

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Experience a Treasure-Trove of Natural Beauty in *Everglades National Park*

By Victor Block

Some 15,000 years ago, tribes of Native Americans made their home in a wilderness area of what today is southern Florida. At that time, they lived in an arid landscape which also was inhabited by giant sloths, saber-toothed cats and South American Bears.

Later, climate change created a wetter environment which did not support those animals but did attract Spanish explorers and colonizers. A large tract of this former waste land now is preserved as the *Everglades National Park*.

This is the largest tropical wilderness in the United States. In addition to a portion which is covered by razor-sharp sawgrass, it contains growths of mangrove trees and shrubs, tropical hardwood hammocks, pine and cypress forests and freshwater prairie.

While many visitors enter the park to appreciate its natural beauty and recall its history, others come to enjoy a range of activities. These include guided sightseeing boat trips; exploring by canoe or kayak; hiking and biking; fishing, overnight camping and shelling.

Seeking sightings of wildlife also is a popular pastime. Alligators are the most sought-after prey for viewing, preferably at a distance. They're often spotted in sloughs, which are channels connecting sawgrass prairies, that also are favored by turtles, snakes and fish.



The Everglades also offers a hospitable habitat for some rare and endangered species. These include the large, cow-like manatee; American crocodiles and the elusive Florida panther. Only about 200 of those animals, which actually are members of the cougar family, are believed to remain in the wild. A somewhat surprising and, to me, endearing trait is that they lack the ability to roar, and instead make distinct sounds that include whistles, chirps, hisses and purrs.

Much more prolific are the birds that make the Everglades their home, or stop by on their annual migration flights. The warm, shallow waters have attracted countless types of birds for thousands of years, and more than 360 species have been identified in the park. Generally, they may be placed in one of three groups: wading and land birds, and birds of prey. Among favorite targets of binoculars are American bald eagles, pink roseate spoonbills and dazzling painted buntings.



I experienced much that the Everglades has to offer during an excursion in an airboat. Those practical vessels are perfect for moving through marshy and shallow areas where a standard engine with a submerged propeller could not operate. The flat-bottomed airboats are driven by a large propeller mounted on the stern, pushing them over the top of the water usually at speeds approaching 35 miles an hour. The operator typically sits in an elevated position which provides a perfect perch for spotting wildlife and other attractions.

Alligators were the primary target of our outing and we were rewarded with several sightings. They were augmented by a virtual aviary of birds with intriguing names like snake bird and long-legged gallinule.

Native Americans who first inhabited the area got around in flat-bottom dugout canoes. They were made by hollowing out the center of cypress trees and, because the water was so shallow, were propelled by push poles rather than paddles.

Evidence of human habitation also awaits discovery at some sites in Everglades National Park. Shell mounds serve as reminders that Native Americans who resided there long ago disposed of the outer casings of edible mollusks, and those that were used as tools, in heaps. Archaeologists theorize that these formations were used to identify sacred places and separate them from living quarters and other public areas.

A visit to the Miccosukee Indian Village on the edge of the Everglades provides an introduction to that tribe's history

and culture, along with touches of commercialism including alligator demonstrations, a resort, casino and golf club. Tribal members demonstrate beadwork, basket weaving and other traditional skills, and exhibits at a museum include artifacts, photographs and a documentary film.

Like many of Mother Nature's magnificent handiworks, the Everglades National Park faces a number of challenges. Climate change is causing the sea level to rise which results in intrusion by salt water and increased evaporation. Pollution, in part from phosphorous-based fertilizers, is a growing concern. The influx of people moving to Florida is adding to the need to find land for housing developments.

These factors, while a cause of worry about the future of the Everglades, have little impact upon the experience of those who visit this treasure-trove of nature, animal life and untrammelled beauty today. People who do so find a unique enclave which relates chapters of the country's past, offers a superb natural setting and provides opportunities for getting close up and personal with a widely diverse collection of animals.

For more information log onto nps.gov.



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John Denver's "Country Roads" Remains a Hit For All Ages

Fifty-five years ago this year, John Denver performed "Take Me Home, Country Roads" for the first time in public at The Cellar Door music club in Washington, D.C. Released as a single in April the following year, "Country Roads" (as it's fondly known) quickly became a pop sensation.

With its catchy, sing-along melody and heartfelt lyrics, the hit song resonated across borders – national and international – even though it paid tribute to a single U.S. state, West Virginia. Evoking deep nostalgia and the universal longing for going home, the song has remained a beloved favorite ever since.

Composed by Bill Danoff and Taffy Nivert, with Denver facilitating the ballad's completion, hundreds of cover versions of "Country Roads" appear on YouTube today where it remains as prolific as the Mountain State's dazzling fall leaves are abundant.

Among my favorite versions are performances by The Petersens, a Missouri bluegrass family, the Hermes House Band, a Dutch pop group, New Zealander Jamie McDell, and South Korean YouTuber J.Fla.

While none can surpass the original, in my opinion, one standout contemporary version comes from Down Under. Since posting it on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube,



Aussie country music singer Sara Berki has racked up over 20 million views of her 2024 live performance before the crowd at an Australian Football League match in the state of Queensland. The song has even been adopted as the Brisbane Lions' football club official team song. To listen visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqSPykG8i_g

"It was an absolute privilege to be able to play at the game," Sara told me by email. She says Denver's storytelling was not only admirable, but memorable and personal.

"His music is sentimental, honest, and sincere which is relatable to so many human beings around the world in every generation," she notes. "It reminds me of my Welsh grandmother playing it in her living room on

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This project in Louisiana is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$509,005.00 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the US Government.

vinyl when I was a little girl. It makes me think of home – tall pines, rolling green hills, and maple leaves all over the road when the weather changes. I think of my mum, and how I always travel back home down the highway to her house when I'm feeling a little lost.”

Originally from Bundaberg on the Queensland east coast, Berki now lives near Sydney. As a singer-songwriter, she has also composed numerous songs since debuting her self-funded single “Fallin’ off the Heartline” in 2022. A more recently released song “Tear You Apart” checks all the required boxes for successful country chart hit (www.saraberki.com).

Berki has plans to head to Nashville this year and hopes to one day perform in the U.S.

“I can't wait to meet some inspiring people, play some writer's rounds, work with songwriters and producers that I've had written down in my little black book since being an artist, drink some



Dr. Pepper, eat some fried chicken, and just take it all in really,” she says. “I'm excited to experience American culture, the landscapes, and all the opportunities that it can offer.”

In addition to being inspired by the Denver classic, she hopes to elicit that inspiration in others through her own music.

“It's just a well-respected song – a classic that will always remain popular,” she says. “Since playing it live and sharing it on YouTube, I've found it has meaning for each and every single person. I just remind myself that it's my job on this earth to make people feel something, that's all I can hope for.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnickt.org.



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Fresh, Filling Springtime Salads



Family Features

With fresh flavors abounding this season, the options are nearly endless – just choose your favorite base, toppings and dressings and you're set with a delicious first course or hearty meal all on its own. Not every salad requires leafy greens for the base, however. Consider these salads made with Boil-in-Bag Rice.

Quick tip: Make sure the rice is fully cooled after cooking to avoid a warm, watery result. Find more ways to enjoy spring salad season by visiting www.SuccessRice.com.

Greek Beet and Watermelon Rice Salad

Prep time: 15 minutes; Cook time: 10 minutes; Servings: 4

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 bag boil-in-bag Jasmine Rice | ¼ cup feta cheese, crumbled |
| ¼ cup olive oil | ¼ cup pitted black olives, halved |
| 2 tablespoons lemon juice | ¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced |
| ¼ teaspoon salt | 1 tablespoon fresh mint, thinly sliced |
| ¼ teaspoon black pepper | 2 tablespoons walnuts, toasted and chopped, for garnish |
| 1 cup thinly sliced, cooked golden beets | |
| 1 cup thinly sliced watermelon | |

Prepare rice according to package directions. Allow to cool completely.

In medium bowl, whisk oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Add rice to bowl with dressing and stir to combine. Let stand 5 minutes.

Transfer rice to serving platter. Lay beet slices down one side of rice. Lay watermelon slices down opposite side. Top with feta, olives, red onion and mint. Garnish with walnuts.

Tips: Substitute capers for olives, if preferred.

To diminish “raw” flavor of onions, soak in ice water at least 5 minutes before using in recipe.

Use roasted, boiled, steamed or grilled beets.



Spring Corn and Rice Salad

Prep time: 5 minutes; Cook time: 10 minutes; Servings: 4

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 bag boil-in-bag Basmati Rice | ½ cup diced red onion |
| 1 cup frozen corn, thawed | ½ cup vinaigrette dressing |
| 2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced | 2 green onions, chopped |
| ½ cup minced fresh basil | ½ teaspoon salt |
| | ½ teaspoon black pepper |

Prepare rice according to package directions. Allow to cool completely.

In medium bowl, combine corn, tomatoes, basil, red onions, vinaigrette and green onions. Fold in rice, salt and pepper.

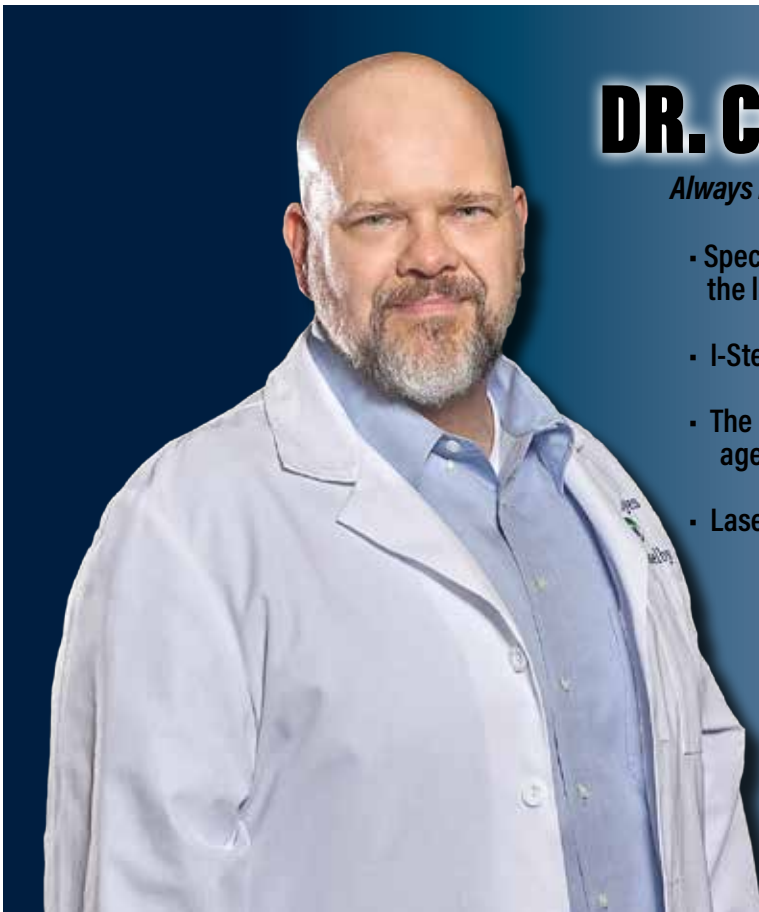
Serve salad at room temperature or chilled.



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WORD SEARCH

Locate the words in the grid which are running horizontally, vertically, or diagonally - forward or backward.

WINES

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Aficionado | Fruity |
| Aging | Gourmet |
| Aroma | Grapes |
| Barrel | Grower |
| Beverage | Harvest |
| Bordeaux | Mellow |
| Bottle | Merlot |
| Bouquet | Oak |
| Cabernet | Oenophile |
| Cask | Pinot Noir |
| Cellar | Sediment |
| Cork | Varieties |
| Crop | Vineyard |
| Crush | Winery |
| Flavor | Zinfandel |

T D R N P T V I N E Y A R D S R X S
 S Z E O D A N O I C I F A E B A U J
 B W Z H L H O E L L M H I P E L A G
 V A K X E A P Y M V Y T M L B L E V
 N A K I R G O O W I E U I N E E D F
 O J Y R R I M K R I D H R B V C R W
 T T Z O A N Z D R C P E M I E L O H
 O S W K B G Z A Z O G S S M R E B R
 L E T M V F V S N I X G K X A L E K
 R V Y W K G H E I V N S X C G R R S
 E R I O N T O N I P W F S I E O W E
 M A A L O K V C M H L T A P C N G P
 C H W L Y M D U Z Q E W I N E R Y A
 X Z I E A T G C I U A P L Q D Q D R
 V O U M O Y I R Q M C A S K K E R G
 L B O T T L E U X Q P Y R O V A L F
 F R G X O A O S R T E N R E B A C V
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SCAN to purchase tickets, sponsor an event, or to learn more:	4:30PM Letterman Association Reception (Invitation Only)	7:00PM Ultimate Reunion
	6:00PM Decades Reunion	

byrdhighalumni.org/centennial

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Large sandwiches
- 5 Jellied garnish
- 10 Cook's meas.
- 14 Fox or turkey follower
- 15 Tropical vine
- 16 ___ to the throne
- 17 Shevat follower
- 18 Fringe benefits
- 19 Sitar music
- 20 Swedish turnip
- 22 Quantity
- 24 Small freshwater fish
- 25 Social rebuff
- 26 Vast treeless plain
- 29 Smudge
- 30 Abbr. in car ads
- 33 Seed structure
- 34 Debonair
- 35 Deception
- 36 Like a churl
- 37 Places in the heart
- 38 Big name in pineapples
- 39 Drink in a mug
- 40 Squirreled-away item
- 41 Cause to happen
- 42 Owns
- 43 Openings
- 44 Kind of monkey
- 45 Mount Olympus dwellers
- 46 Charlize Theron flick, "___ Flux"
- 47 Emotional

- pang
- 50 Nerve
- 54 Artist Bonheur
- 55 Traffic sign
- 57 Kibbutz dance
- 58 Part of the eye
- 59 Trigger finger type
- 60 Bibliographic abbr.
- 61 Fit together
- 62 Social stratum
- 63 British title

Down

- 1 Christmas tree topper
- 2 Language of Pakistan
- 3 Small vessel
- 4 Span
- 5 Wool source
- 6 Military blockade
- 7 Legal prefix
- 8 Octopus's defense
- 9 Ladies' man
- 10 Pulsate
- 11 Boyfriend
- 12 Endorse
- 13 Kind of fall
- 21 Uncovered
- 23 Speechless
- 25 Assassinated
- 26 Synagogue scroll
- 27 Throat dangler
- 28 Some sculptures
- 29 Small bits used in dentistry
- 30 Healing plants
- 31 Rice cooked in broth
- 32 Stinks
- 34 Ceases
- 37 Scholarly

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21					22	23				
			24					25						
26	27	28					29					30	31	32
33						34						35		
36						37						38		
39				40						41				
42				43					44					
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47	48	49					50					51	52	53
54						55	56					57		
58						59						60		
61						62							63	

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

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

SAVE the *Date*

EVENTS

■ 2025 American Rose Center Garden Season

The American Rose Center is now open for their 51st blooming season. New hours of operation are **Wednesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Admission to the gardens is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Peak rose bloom season is expected between mid-April and mid-May. Find them on Facebook for more details (www.facebook.com/americanrosecenter).

■ Byrd Centennial Celebration

Byrd High School will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary. For details and to purchase tickets, please visit byrdhighalumni.org/centennial

• **Thursday June 5 at 5:30 p.m.** - Hall of Fame

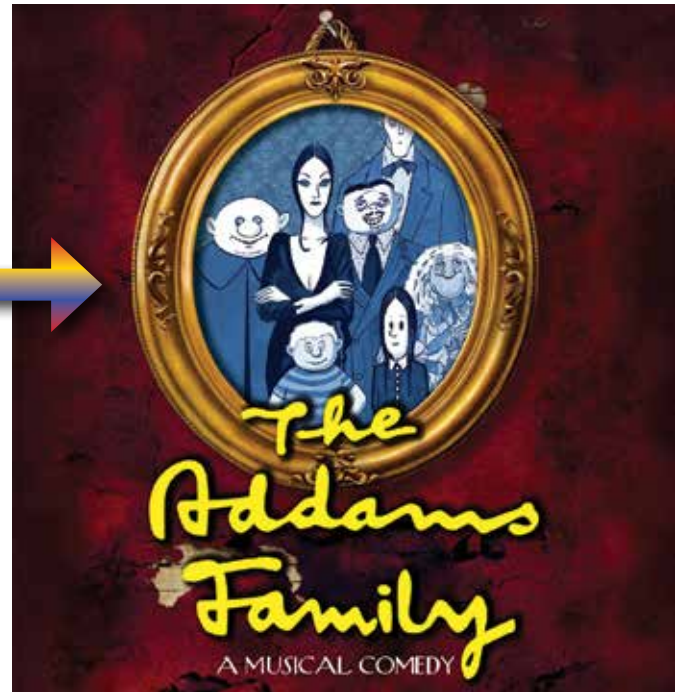
Induction Dinner

• **Friday June 6** - Golf Tournament in the morning, Letterman Association Reception (by invitation only) at 4:30 p.m. Decades reunion at 6 p.m.

• **Saturday June 7 at 7:30 a.m.** 5 K Race and Fun Run. 9:30 a.m. Open House at Byrd. 7 p.m. Ultimate Reunion.

■ CATS: Events on Culture, Arts, Technology and Science

The Glen will host events to bring a diverse group of experts, leaders and artists to residents and the Shreveport-Bossier City community. All CATS events begin at **3 p.m.** at The Glen, a Life Plan Community located at 403 East Flournoy Lucas Road in Shreveport. Each event is open to the public at no charge; however, space is limited. To attend a CATS



The Strand Theatre • Wednesday June 25

event, call 318-213-3555 to RSVP.

- **May 20** - Twin Blends Gardeners and Container Gardening
- **July 15** - Winston Hall and Shreveport Music History
- **August 19** - Astronomy 101 with the Shreveport-Bossier Astronomical Society
- **September** - performance by members of the Shreveport Symphony

■ **GloFests at the Bakowski Bridge of Lights**
Join the Shreveport Regional

Arts Council (SRAC) on the **first Friday of every month** (except July when it is held on July 4), **7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.** at Riverview Park, 601 Clyde Fant Parkway, Shreveport. Featuring light shows on the Bakowski Bridge of Lights, an arts market, food truck court, street performances, and more! For more info, visit www.shrevearts.org. **FREE.**

■ **Le Tour des Jardins**
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4:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 31, and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday June 1. Red River Research Center, vendors, food trucks and Super Plant Gardens open at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, May 31 and 12:30 on Sunday, June 1. Advance tickets are \$10 and can be purchased from any Master Gardener, at the LSU AgCenter 70th Street Office or by calling the Master Gardeners office at (318) 408-0984. Online tickets are \$15 and may also be purchased at any garden on the days of the tour for \$15.

ENTERTAINMENT

■ Shreveport Little Theatre

812 Margaret Place, Shreveport. Tickets are \$30. Call 318.424.4439 or visit shreveportlittletheatre.com.

• *9 to 5, the Musical* - April 25, 26, May 2 and 3 at 7:30 PM; April 27, May 3 and 4 at 2:00 PM. *9 to 5: The Musical* is based on the 1980 film of the same name, with music and lyrics by Dolly Parton.

■ Shreveport Symphony

Riverview Theatre, 600 Clyde Fant Parkway, Shreveport. For tickets

call 318-227-TUNE (8863) or visit www.shreveportsymphony.com.

• *The Best of Broadway* - Saturday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m. \$20 - \$69. Seasoned Broadway stars Elizabeth Southard and Gary Mauer join the orchestra for a night of musical theatre favorites, including selections from Phantom of the Opera, The Sound of Music, Wicked and more!

■ The Strand Theatre

619 Louisiana Avenue, Shreveport. For tickets visit www.thestrandtheatre.com or call 318-226-8555.

• *The Addams Family* - Wednesday June 25 at 7 p.m. A comical feast that embraces the wackiness in every family, THE ADDAMS FAMILY is the magnificently macabre hit musical featuring everyone's favorite creepy, kooky characters. Tickets: \$102.51, \$88.91, \$74.27

FARMERS MARKETS

■ Bossier Farmers' Market

Every Saturday through November, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 2950 E. Texas St., Bossier City on the south side of Pierre Bossier Mall. Featuring produce, arts & crafts, food trucks, handmade goods,

baked goods, live music and children's activities. **FREE** admission and parking. For more information visit www.BossierCityFarmersMarket.com

■ Shreveport Farmers' Market

May 31 through August 23, from 8 a.m. to noon at Shreveport's Festival Plaza, 101 Crockett St, Shreveport. Featuring homegrown produce and products, crafts and food trucks. **FREE** admission and **FREE** parking. For more information visit <https://redriverrevel.com/farmers-market>.

MEETINGS

■ Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Assn.

Meetings are held from 1 to 3 PM at the Broadmoor Branch Library, 1212 Capt. Shreve Dr., Shreveport. Offering educational programs that are genealogical or historically oriented. For more information call 746-1851 or visit altgenealogy.com. **FREE** and open to the public.

• May 10 - Sarah (Sally) Hamer will discuss Women in War.

MOVIES

■ Silver Screenings

Silver Screenings feature a matinee and luncheon for senior citizens showcasing a classic film on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Robinson Film Center, 617 Texas Street in downtown Shreveport. Movie begins at 10:30 a.m. and is followed by a buffet lunch. Cost is \$20 for movie and lunch. Ask about discounted tickets for AARP members! For information or tickets, call (318) 459-4122 or visit www.robinsonfilmcenter.org.

• May 20 - "The Third Man". Set in post-World War II Allied-occupied Vienna, the film centres on American writer Holly Martins, who arrives in the city to accept a job with his friend Harry Lime, only to learn that he has died.

• June 17 - "Blue Hawaii". Blue Hawaii is a 1961 American musical romantic comedy drama film starring Elvis Presley. After arriving back in Hawaii from the Army, Chad Gates defies his parents' wishes for him to work at the family business and instead goes to work as a tour guide at his girlfriend's agency.

There is a **real need** in the community for the service called *Meals on Wheels*. Not only is the meal **essential** to the senior, but the daily contact with the meal driver is vital to their safety and well being.

Sometimes we have to count on each other

Please help support this community resource by sending a donation to

Meals on Wheels Program
Caddo Council on Aging
1700 Buckner Street, Suite 240
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

Meals on Wheels Program
Bossier Council on Aging
706 Bearkat Drive
Bossier City, Louisiana 71111



Snapshot SLEUTH

Do you recognize any of the people or recall anything about the events in these photographs?

The Best of Times has partnered with Northwest Louisiana Archives at LSU to identify individuals and events in their collections. If you can help, please email Tina at editor.calligas@gmail.com or Laura at laura.mclmore@lsus.edu.

All of these photos are from the Lawrence Lea collection and are dated 1978. The photos below are of Brookwood Youth League teams. The fishermen are on an unknown area lake.



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? Answers from the ? Experts

EXPERTS: If you would like to help your community by answering a question here, call 636-5510

READERS: Send your questions to The Best of Times, Box 19510, Shreveport, LA 71149

Will I need glasses after cataract surgery?

This all depends on what you are trying to accomplish after cataract surgery. Most patients after routine cataract surgery will only need reading glasses for small print. If there is a lot of astigmatism present then you may even need full time bifocals. In patients with normal healthy eyes, you can have multifocal lenses implanted at the time of cataract surgery. Multifocal lenses allow patients to see distance, intermediate and near without the need for glasses. These lenses do not work like your God-given lenses so it takes your brain some time to adapt to them.



Chris Shelby, MD
WK Eye Institute
7607 Youree Dr.
Shreveport, LA 71105
(318) 212-3937
See our ad on page 25.

I broke a bone last year. Do I have osteoporosis?

In certain high risk groups the risk of a serious fracture can double after a first fracture. Those who experience an osteoporotic hip fracture have a 24% increased risk of dying within one year following the fracture. This is not only a disease of aging white women. Osteoporosis occurs in all racial groups and men have a 1:8 chance of having an osteoporotic fracture. Although there is no specific cure, you can: Get enough Vitamin D and Calcium. Get regular exercise (weight bearing and low impact). Do balance exercises to avoid falls (Tai chi decrease falls in older individuals) and if you have a broken bone talk to your doctor about a bone density test.



John J. Ferrell, M.D.
Mid South Orthopaedics
7925 Youree Drive
Suite 210
Shreveport, LA 71105
(318) 424-3400

PUZZLE answers (from pages 26 - 27)

S	U	B	S		A	S	P	I	C		T	B	S	P
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V	O	U	M	O	Y	I	R	Q	M	C	A	S	K	K	E	R	G
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8	7	1	5	3	9	6	2	4
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7	2	4	6	9	5	1	3	8
5	4	3	9	7	8	2	1	6
2	6	8	1	5	4	3	9	7
9	1	7	3	6	2	4	8	5



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