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Chats with the Chair



Madeleine Appel

Two of our members have moved in the last couple of months, and their angst as they have sorted through their possessions collected over all the years has both moved me to action and set me to thinking.

It has moved me to invite our N4NN volunteer, Adele Segel, who owns Relocate and Renovate, to speak at our February 7 luncheon at Genesis. Adele is an expert in helping people not only to move or modify their homes but to decide what to keep and what to give away or toss. She is going to ask members to pick the one object that they simply could not leave behind should they downsize or move. Ponder that! She will be joined

by our volunteer, Steve Watts, who, with his wife, Julie, owns reFamily. He will talk about videoing your memories and memorabilia.

It has also set me to thinking about what I would keep, what I would insist my children and grandchildren take, and what I would give to Goodwill. And in so doing, it has awakened the memories that so many of my possessions call forth.

There is the Russian samovar with the Tsar's mark on it that my grandmother's new in-laws in Kiev sent her and their son, my grandfather, to mark their wedding. My grandmother didn't like the sterling silver plate and had it stripped down to the brass! My paternal grandmother was an original! Michael and I rescued the samovar from the Goodwill pile outside my grandmother's apartment door as she pared down her belongings.

There is the "pass" for my husband's great grandfather allowing him to move from one Russian city to another and the permit for him to rent space in a building in Russia.

There is the tea set that belonged to my maternal grandmother, passed on to my mother and then to me.

There are the trophies Michael and Michael's Dad won sailing, two shelves of them.

There are the Indian rugs Michael and I so lovingly collected over the years.

There are the photos of our young sons hanging next to the photos of their grandparents and great grandparents.

There are the drawings the boys did in kindergarten, their baby books, my father's long, delicate baby gown in which both our boys were named and our grandchildren were photographed.

There are the letters I wrote home from college...my mother saved every one, sure that one day I would write a novel based on them. There are the scrapbooks with every article I wrote for the Corpus Christi Caller Times and The Houston Chronicle.

Everywhere I look there are reminders of love and laughter, of two lives well-shared.

And just to reinforce it all, I am reading *The Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline in which a woman's life is remembered as she and a teenage girl sort through an attic full of trunks and boxes. At this point in my reading, she is keeping more stuff than she is tossing. I fear I'll be just as bad at relinquishing my possessions!

But it is time for me to try, to begin sorting through MY memories and MY memorabilia and to part with lots of it! I'm not quite there yet...but soon, I tell myself...soon!

Meet Our Members: Fran Moore

(Thanks to Jeanne Saletan for interviewing our members and writing our Meet Our Members column)



Meet Fran Moore, a member of the Founders Committee that planned N4NN for a year before we opened our doors to members. Fran met Madeleine Appel, our chair, through a mutual friend and became involved in our worthy project.

Upon graduating from Lamar High School here in Houston, Fran entered Cottey College, a small school for women in Nevada, Missouri which is owned by the P.E.O. Sisterhood, a Philanthropic Educational Organization, that provides scholarships and grants to women. Her involvement with the school continues through a scholarship in her name

awarded each year to a Cottey student.

She herself transferred to Baylor in Waco where she met her husband Les in an Engineering Drawing class where she was the only female. Her education continued at U of Houston where she earned a teaching degree in math and English. Fran was a teacher for seventeen years in Houston middle schools with a special love for geometry and Shakespeare.

Fran and Les can be seen at most N4NN events, and they are also active in their church. Fran continues to serve on our Steering Committee. They have two children, Lane, who lives in San Antonio, and Lara, who lives in Liberty Hill, and one granddaughter, Abigail.

Condolences to...

The family of our dear Faith Marshall, who passed away in January. Faith was a woman of great intellect and compassion, and she will be sorely missed.

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Falling, Falling, Falling...

Every time I turn around these days I seem to encounter someone I know who has fallen. One of our members fell in her kitchen and broke her knee cap. Another member fell reaching for the blueberries at the grocery store. Another fell as he was getting out of bed. A college friend of mine wrote me a new year greeting and noted that she had fallen the day before, stepping off a curb. I fell stepping off a different curb a year ago and spent weeks with two black eyes and several months with a black and blue leg from hip to toe. My husband's shoulder still isn't back to normal after he tripped on an uneven street corner and fell a year ago.



An article in the NY Times back in 2014 by Katie Hafner noted that "more than 2.4 million people over 65 were treated in emergency departments for injuries from falls in 2012 alone, an increase of 50% over a decade."

We older adults don't like to accept that we are aging, that our bodies are aging, that our balance, our eyesight, our response/reaction systems aren't what they used to be. We resist using canes and walkers and emergency alert systems. Terence Murphy, an assistant professor at the Yale School of Medicine, notes in the article that "you try to reason [with your parents], and they just don't want to accept that they are in mortal danger if they have an injurious fall when they're on their own...that when they fall alone in their house, it's likely to be catastrophic if they don't get help in a timely manner."

Experts encourage us to exercise in order to maintain strength. My chair yoga teacher emphasizes strengthening our thigh or "work" muscles over and over. The medical experts say that "for every day an elderly patient spends in bed, 1 percent of muscle mass is lost," according to the NY Times article. It takes a long time to regain that strength.

If it gives you any hope, the article notes that "though the risk of a fall increases significantly once people reach their 80s, researchers have found that people 85 and older in excellent health have no greater risk than someone 20 years younger." But given the incidence of falls and the healing time for us seniors, this doesn't give ME much comfort!

Take care, dear friends. Pick up that scatter rug. Put in those grab bars. Light your rooms with plug in, movement sensitive nightlights. Use that cane or walker. Get-and use-an emergency alert device. And exercise.

And come hear the talk by Memorial Hermann Trauma experts on fall safety at our April 4th Safety Fair.

- Madeleine

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Not All Gadgets are High-Tech



Age does not stifle invention.

An article in the August 15, 2016, NY Times talks about the ingenuity many older adults display as they find ways to make life easier for themselves.

Many of us elders resist "high-tech gadgetry" and instead repurpose items available at hardware and office supply stores to help them manage every day challenges, writes author Marie Tae McDermott.

She cites Barbara Beskind, 92. Ms. Beskind installed a lazy susan in her refrigerator to help her reach articles at the back. To cope with her age-related macular degeneration, she attached "tactile bumps" to her phone on the numbers 2 and 8. (Ms. Beskind now works at a design firm Ideo, "where she is developing an idea for eyeglasses equipped with a micro camera, earpiece and facial recognition software that would make it easier for those with central vision problems like hers to recognize others.")

Among the other items repurposers (also called hackers) like Ms. Beskind have come up with are:

- An old nylon stocking stuffed with a bar of soap to hang in the shower and use

as a scrub (as the soap shrinks it doesn't fall through the ribs of the soap dish and fall to the shower or tub floor where someone could slip on it)

- Medication assistance tools that can be easily transported to the doctor's office like calendars that can be tacked to refrigerators, spreadsheets, dollar store bins or shoe boxes arranged in drawers
- Sugru, a moldable putty that turns into rubber and can be used to round out sharp furniture corners
- Rubber bands used on cups to make them easier to grip
- A clothespin clipped to the rim of a cup with a drinking straw taped to it to hold the straw in place
- A pants hanger to hold a cookbook open at eye level

If you have repurposed a common every day object into an aid that makes life easier or found an unusual new gadget that helps with every day chores, let N4NN know. We'll share it with everyone in the next Newsletter.

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A Little OUCH Goes a Long Way



Have you had your flu shot? Your shingles shot? Your pneumonia shot(s)?

If not, head for your nearest pharmacist (or your doctor).

"People once vigilant about vaccinating their children aren't nearly as careful about protecting themselves as they age, even though diseases like influenza, pneumonia and shingles (a.k.a. herpes zoster) are particularly dangerous for older people," writes Paula Span in the December 2, 2016, NY Times.

The statistics bear out the author's statement:

- Only 63 percent of Americans over 65 got an annual flu shot last year. Of the 226,000 folks hospitalized for flu in an average year, 50-75 percent are over 65.
- In 2014, about 61 percent of older adults received one or both of the two pneumonia shots available
- About 58 percent of older people have been vaccinated against tetanus in the last decade but only 14 percent have received the Tdap vaccine against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. (Grandparents, take note-both in terms of protecting yourselves from the diseases and protecting your infant grandchildren who are too young to have been vaccinated. You don't want to

infect them.)

- Only 31 percent of older adults over 65 had received the shingles vaccine in 2014.

Why the dismal statistics? Ms. Span suggests the following reasons:

- They aren't a routine part of our doctors' checkups
- We have medical issues that take priority when we see a doctor
- We see specialists who are focused on a specific issue, not the flu and shingles
- The shingles vaccine was in short supply until about 2012
- Cost. "The Affordable Care Act requires private insurers to cover Zostavax (for shingles) without co-pays for people older than 60, and many cover it for policyholders over 50. But Medicare beneficiaries find that, unlike the flu and pneumococcal vaccines, which are covered under Part B and often administered in physicians' offices, Zostavax and Tdap are covered under Part D. Physicians can't easily bill for Part D. reimbursement..." As a result, patients are often referred to pharmacies where a confusion of plans "and formularies" which sometimes require the patient to pay first and then seek reimbursement can discourage use.

But, persevere. Protection is prevention. Get those inoculations. They may save your life. They certainly will ease your pain and shorten your suffering.

– Madeleine

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It's Written in the Tiles

Did you see the story in the January 19, 2017, Houston Chronicle which noted that "Houston's seniors are manic about mah jongg"?

Judy Dankers is the mah jongg facilitator at Lone Star College-Cy Fair. She says that the game can be learned in about four lessons. The main suites in mah jongg are dots (circles), bams (bamboos) and craks (characters). Wind, dragon, flower and joker tiles are also used, depending on the version of the game being played. According to The Chronicle story, traditional Chinese mah jongg sets consist of 144 tiles while American sets are played with eight additional joker tiles and score cards that are published annually.



There are five tables of mah jongg at the West University Place Senior Center,

perhaps the closest community mah jongg location to N4NN neighborhoods. The Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism at 801 Bering, is starting a mah jongg class February 1st and anyone can sign up and join the group at any time. It's free. "Mah jongg is a brain game. There's skill and luck involved. It's not a piece of cake," says Ms. Dankers. Nonetheless, as intimidating as the game may seem, it is evidently addicting once you master it.

Lynn Chorn, the new owner of Where the Winds Blow Mah Jongg Supplies and Gifts, one of the largest suppliers of exclusively mah jongg products in the U.S., told The Chronicle that "she's seen her sales increase steadily since she bought the business almost three years ago."

N4NN has several folks who are interested in playing. Anyone wanting to help make up an N4NN group can email Madeleine at mgappel@comcast.net.

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Happy Birthday ...



Best wishes for a happy February birthday and many more to come to N4NN member

John Varvaro

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Links to More Activities

(If you know a link to an entity that sponsors senior programs that are open to the public, please send the link to N4NN volunteer, Vicki Davison, at doinmypart@aol.com)

Platou Community Center: 713-726-7107, 11655 Chimney Rock (in Westbury) offers stretching exercise class, quilting, games, line dancing, ping pong leagues and a weight loss support group. The Center is open Monday-Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. and Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Call for class days, times and hours.





The **City of Bellaire** has a program that is open to anyone. It offers field trips, movies, lunches, bridge, bridge and games, advanced card games, crafts and conversation. To see the schedule go to www.ci.bellaire.tx.us/729/LIFE. Click on the Life Newsletter to see a full schedule of activities. Or contact 713-662-8290 or Victoria Arevalo at Varevalo@bellairetx.gov.

The **Weekley Family YMCA** at 7101 Stella Link Blvd., 77025, has a Silver Sneakers exercise program in which some of our members participate. Call 713-664-9622 or go to www.ymcahouston.org. On the left under "Find Your YMCA," select "Weekly Family", when the Weekly Family page comes up, click on Health in the menu across the top, select Active Older Adults, then you will see the description of the Silver Sneakers Program.



Bayland Community Center at 6400 Bissonnet has exercise classes at various levels, including Tai Chai. Go to www.pct3.com, click on Community Centers, Click on Bayland, scroll down to activities (on right side of page) or call 713-541-9951.

The Fonteno Senior Education Center at 6600 Bissonnet St. 77074, has a long list of classes in various areas of interest, including Legal, health, and General. Here is just a sampling of exercise type classes:

Zumba - Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 -9:00 AM

Senior Boot Camp - Monday, Thursday and Friday from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Hatha Yoga - Tuesday from 9:00 - 10:00 AM

Forrest Yoga - Thursday from 9:00 - 10:00 AM

Line Dancing - Thursday from 1:00 -2:00 PM

Tai Chi - Friday from 9:00 - 10:30 AM

The Center is just a little further out on Bissonnet than Bayland. To contact, go to FontenoSEC@pct3.com or call 713-981-4703.





Jewish Community Center: Join neighbors and friends at the JCC for fun and exciting programs including bus trips, cultural programs, lifelong learning courses, Kosher lunch program, films, Jewish learning, art classes, exercise, social programs and much more. Learn more at <http://www.erjcchouston.org/adultsonthego>

West University Parks and Recreation Department:

www.westutx.gov



Once you are on the web page, hover over the Services tab and click Senior Services in the Parks and Recreation column, or call the West U Senior Services Division of the Parks and Recreation Department at 713-662-5895.

Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism Senior Chai Program: [HCRJ Senior Chai](http://hcrj.org) sponsors programs dedicated to those 60 and over which is open to all in that age demographic. The programming of social, educational and recreational activities is generously underwritten in memory of Mozelle and David Barg and Esther and Robert Shelby. Contact admin@hcrj.org or call 713-782-4162 to learn more about the classes and trips currently being offered.

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Coming Events

February Events



February 7, Tuesday, N4NN monthly luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. at Genesis Steakhouse and Wine Bar, 5427 Bissonnet (in the strip center at the corner of Bissonnet and Chimney Rock). Guest speakers will be Adele Segel and Steve Watts. Adele is the owner of Relocate and Renovate and Steve and his wife produce personal history videos. Adele is going to talk about downsizing and Steve will talk about saving your family memories/history.

February 12, Sunday, HAZAK program at 2 p.m. at Congregation Brith Shalom, 4610 Bellaire Boulevard. Guest speaker will be Dr. Abraham Lieberman, discussing Streeetching-Is It Necessary. Dr. Lieberman, Pt, DPt, is the founder of Bellaire Physical Therapy, an independent outpatient rehabilitation facility.

February 13, Monday, Atul Gawande, best-selling author of Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, will speak via skype to villages across the country, including N4NN. The program is from 4-5 P.M. at Jewish Family Service, 4131 S. Braeswood, in the Board Room, second floor. Elevator available.

February 14, Tuesday, A short preview of the ReelAbilities Film Festival from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. at Houston Ballet Center for Dance, 601 Preston, street parking free after 6 p.m.

February 16, Thursday, ReelPeople: UP Abilities, reception, 6:15 p.m., Rice University Shepherd School of Music; 7 p.m., program which features Jane McGonigal speaking on How Gaming Creates an Even Playing Field; Elise Roy speaking on When We Design for Disability, We All Benefit, and Henry Evans speaking on Navigating the World With Adaptive Robots.

February 19, Sunday, Opening night of ReelAbilities film festival, Edwards Greenway Grand Palace, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Film: Enter the Faun.

February 20-23, Monday-Thursday, ReelAbilities Film Festival Edwards Greenway Grand Palace

For details on films and showing times go to www.ReelAbilitiesHouston.org

February 23, Thursday, closing event, ReelMusic, The Secret Group, 2101 Polk Street, free parking on street and nearby lots. An all-inclusive jazz and blues jam session with the pros.

February 23, Thursday, N4NN monthly discussion group, 2:30 p.m., home of Annette Novominsky, 6223 Queensloch

March 5, Sunday, dedication of Jewish Family Service new building wing (which includes N4NN offices!), 4131 S. Braeswood, 3-5 p.m.

March 7, Tuesday, N4NN monthly luncheon, 11 a.m., Genesis Steakhouse and Wine Bar, 5427 Bissonnet (in the strip center at the corner of Bissonnet and Chimney Rock). Lise Olsen, Deputy Investigative Editor and Investigative Reporter at The Houston Chronicle, will speak.

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Laugh Outloud



Many thanks to Annette Novominsky for providing our laughs!

The following are paraprosochians. A paraprosochian is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence is unexpected and often times very humorous:

- I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom, until they're flashing behind you.
- Today a man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool, so I gave him a glass of water.
- Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.
- I'm great at multitasking, I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.
- Take my advice - I'm not using it.
- Hospitality is the art of making guests feel like they're at home when you wish they were.
- Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.
- Ever stop to think and forget to start again?
- Women spend more time wondering what men are thinking than men spend thinking.
- Is it wrong that only one company makes the game Monopoly?
- Women sometimes make fools of men, but most guys are the do-it-yourself type.
- I was going to give him a nasty look, but he already had one.

- Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- I was going to wear my camouflage shirt today, but I couldn't find it.
- Sometimes I wake up grumpy; other times I let her sleep.
- If tomatoes are technically a fruit, is ketchup a smoothie?
- Money is the root of all wealth.

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Think N4NN For Gifting, Honoring, or Memorializing

An annual membership to Neighbors4Neighbors Network makes the perfect gift for a 65+ parent, relative or friend.



N4NN helps members take care of their homes, their shopping, their technology.

N4NN connects members to new friends, new opportunities to socialize and new ways to volunteer.

N4NN helps members solve problems and get help when they hit a bump in the road.

An annual membership costs \$175 for an individual and \$300 for a household. For information on purchasing a membership contact Michael Kahlenberg, Program Coordinator for N4NN at 832-998-6466 (N4NN).

If you wish to honor or memorialize a family member or friend and support N4NN at the same time, donations to N4NN may be made by check made out to JFS/N4NN and mailed to Neighbors4Neighbors Network c/o Jewish Family Service, 4131 S. Braeswood, Houston, Texas 77025, attn.: Michael Kahlenberg.

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The Marketplace

N4NN Connect is most grateful to its ad sponsors, RELOCATE AND RENOVATE, MEDIC PHARMACY, AND GREATCALL

If you wish to sponsor an ad or an event, contact Michael Kahlenberg, N4NN Program Coordinator, at 832-998-6466



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