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## Chats with the Chair



Madeleine Appel

My husband, Michael, and I went home for Memorial Day. Not to our home of 46 years here in Houston but the "home" in which we grew up. I find it interesting that after all these years, after raising a family at 5223 Ariel and watching children and now grandchildren grow into teenage in its rooms, "home" is still Corpus Christi.

We could, of course, only drive by our actual homes. Others live there now. But they are still there. Michael's family home is overgrown with bougainvillea; mine appears to be in good shape. And the "old" core of Corpus Christi that we knew, the small

"shining city by the sea," is there...reinvented for tourists.

We stayed, as we always do, at a hotel on Shoreline where we could awake to a view of the sun sparkling on the bay and go to bed by the light of the moon shining on Harbor Bridge. Harbor Bridge replaced the bascule bridge-which rose into the air each time a boat wanted to go under. Sitting impatiently in our car, we had to wait for the ships to sail through and the bridge to lower before we could continue our journey to North Beach or Port Aransas. Now Harbor Bridge itself, engineered by the father of

one of my dear childhood friends, is obsolete and giving way to a 21st century bridge.

The Breakers Hotel on North Beach, where we spent Sunday mornings swimming and playing in the sand with my parents, remains in a new incarnation, but the beach is the same. My mother stepped on a sting ray in the bay off North Beach one Sunday and spent days in bed with a hugely swollen, poison-infected and painful foot resulting from the tip of the "ray" left in that foot.

The T-heads and L-Heads still house shrimpers and motorboats and sailboats. The Yacht Club of our adolescent years still has the best food in town and one of the best waterfront views. I spent many a weekend at that Yacht Club, sailing from it with Michael's father. I was a poor substitute for Michael who was away at medical school.

The downtown where my Dad ran a women's ready-to-wear store next door to the department store owned by Annette Novominsky's dad and family is no longer the retail center of town and our parents' stores are long closed. My friends and I used to watch the Buccaneer Days parade from the rooftop of Daddy's store. Best seat in town!

The white Corpus Christi Caller-Times building still houses The Corpus Christi Caller-Times. The editor and his wife were my parents' best friends. Helen grew the caladium that decorated the pulpit at our wedding in her garden down the street from our house. Bob gave me my first job as a proofreader and then as an obituary writer and then, in the end, as a reporter. The Caller-Times was my graduate journalism "school."

The elementary school I walked to is long gone...as are the cotton and onion fields that surrounded it. But my high school is still going strong. Our niece is now an assistant principal there.

Our oldest son was born at Spohn Hospital--the same hospital at which his father was born. It is now double the size and has absorbed the public county hospital. The office from which Michael's father practiced general medicine and surgery-delivering thousands of babies and their babies and their babies--still stands. A dentist owns it now.

Price's Chef where my parents ate Sunday breakfast every Sunday for years and where Michael and his friends ate lunch sometimes when we were in junior high still serves breakfast every day. The junior high still functions, too. And Michael's old elementary school still stands, its classrooms filled with today's generation.

The Naval Air Station, a focal point of our lives during World War II, is a military repair depot these days. But the piers at which seaplanes landed during the war and where we went crabbing on Sundays after the war, the buildings where summer cadets came to train and dance with us "townies," the Officer's Club that hosted a

friend's stunned rehearsal dinner the weekend after JFK's assassination are there in some form or other. But Ward Island, the old radar station between the base and the town, is now Texas A&M Corpus Christi.

Our parents are buried at Seaside Cemetery...and Michael's brother and sister-in-law. A bench marks my brother's memory there. The names on the gravestones are the names of my childhood-my parents' friends, Michael's parents' friends, the Rabbi we grew up with and who married us and his wife. An historical marker stands at the Rabbi's gravesite.

Each visit we drive past 329 Laurel and 5818 Ocean Drive and Michael's first home in Corpus Christi on 445 Ohio...and we remember the grass under our bare feet, the heat of the summer and the damp of the cold winter, the beach, the water, the humidity, the wind-it never blows less than 25 mph, -- the laughter and the tears and the love and the loved ones. And it all spells "home."

- *Madeleine*

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## Be Careful -- Don't Fall

N4NN's June luncheon will feature Christina Yazdani, PA-C, of the Bone Health Clinic at the University of Texas' Department of Orthopaedic Surgery-Trauma. Ms. Yazdani is going to talk to us about bone health in general and about preventing falls specifically.



Every year approximately half of Americans age 65 and older fall, according to an article in Consumer Reports. The article notes that Marvin M. Lipman, Consumer Reports' chief medical advisor, counsels most of his patients to "Remember, don't fall. Look where you're going, keep a nightlight on, lift your feet and don't take chances." In 2011 almost 23,000 U.S. adults older than 64 died directly or indirectly from a fall.

Impaired gait and balance top the list of fall causes, the article says. It provides some self-tests (**have someone at your side before you try these**):

- Are you limping or shuffling?
- Can you do heel-to-toe walking (taking steps with one foot directly in front of the other) without lurching off-balance?
- Can you stand on one leg for at least 30 seconds? (An inability to do so suggests a balance problem)
- Get Up and Go Test: sit in a chair without arms, rise, walk 10 feet forward, quickly turn, walk back to the chair and sit back down. Have someone time you. If it takes more than 14 seconds, you are at risk for falls.
- Functional Reach Test: stand with your feet no more than shoulder-width

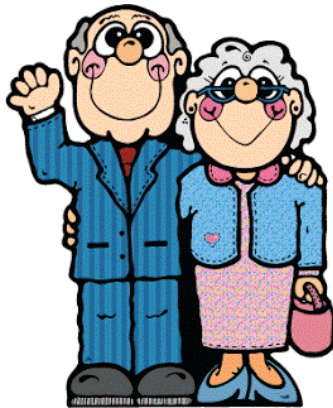
apart. Extend an arm in front of you at shoulder height. Reach as far forward as you can with that arm without falling. Have an observer measure your reach. If it's less than seven inches, you're prone to falls.

*(The Consumer Reports article was reprinted in the Holly Hall Messenger from which we took it.)*

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## Do You Really Know Your Parents?



This article is for the adult children of N4NN members and potential members!

Not long ago our oldest son spent two days doing video interviews with Michael and me. His goal was to get family history recorded in permanent form for future generations. But I'm guessing it also told him a lot about us that he didn't know...about us BEFORE we were his parents. It was, in the end, a fun two days.

A recent blog by Kimberley Fowler on the A Place for Mom website reinforced my pleasure in my son's interest and willingness to record our family stories for posterity.

Ms. Fowler talks about the reasons for getting to know your parents better:

- Preserving history, of course
- Time is marching on. You will want the stories when your parents are gone
- Alzheimer's disease or dementia may rob your parents of their memories in the future
- Knowing your parents on a deeper level may help you as their caregiver
- It's important to have context about your parents when you are trying to keep them active. For instance, my mother hated crafts per se...painting or pottery making or weaving potholders were not for her (although I have a pottery cream pitcher and sugar bowl set and several hammered copper pieces she made long before I was born!). But she did enjoy knitting. Several humongous afghans keep us warm on Houston's rare cold winter nights. She made them after she retired. She also worked part-time in a bookstore after she and my father retired from their record shop business because working gave her a sense of self.
- Learning your parents better may help you understand yourself better

Here are some of the tips and questions Ms. Fowler suggests. She warns that you should keep the questions open-ended so you can have some really interesting

conversations. And, of course, you can think up your own!

- Are there any family secrets or stories that you've never shared (but want to)?
- Did you ever have a job that you didn't keep for long?
- Did you ever learn anything surprising about your parents (meaning your parents' parents)?
- Did you travel a lot before you had a family? Where did you like best? What's left on your travel bucket list?
- Do you have any regrets in life?
- How did you spend your free time as a child?
- Is there anything you accomplished that really surprised you?
- Was there ever a time in your life when you and/or your family really struggled?
- What are some of your happiest memories?
- What are you proudest of?
- What are your earliest memories?
- Did you like school as a child?
- What things do you wish you had known about your parents?
- What was your first job?
- What world events had the most impact on you and our family?

– *Madeleine*

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## Be Alert

The Better Business Bureau offers these tips on avoiding repairman scams:

- Roofing-Avoid signing any contract that contains a contingency agreement that says the repairman will be hired to do repairs upon the approval of the insurance company otherwise you may be "on the hook" for the full cost of the roof if you try to cancel.
- Ductwork cleaning: Avoid high-pressure sales tactics where companies advertise low-cost cleaning services but end up charging hundreds of dollars more. Some dishonest companies associate themselves with well-known companies, so check out the firm you hire first.
- Chimney sweeping: Less reputable companies will often advertise special low rates for chimney sweeping and inspection. After the inspection they tell homeowners their chimneys need expensive repairs which they don't. they may offer a discount for those who pay with cash but skip out without doing the work once they have the cash.
- Gutter cleaning: Scammers go door to door offering their services at a low



price but then charge for more costly and unnecessary repairs.

- Door to Door sales: Be suspicious.
- Referral discounts: Good contractors do not need to offer discounts in order to drum up prospective customers.
- Leftover materials: Don't fall for a cut-rate price from a contractor using materials left over from a recent job.
- No phone number or address: It's a red flag if a contractor does not have a phone number or physical address. It could indicate the contractor doesn't have an established presence in Texas.
- High pressure: A reputable contractor will understand you need time to consider.
- Up-front money or cash only: Never pay for a job upfront. Payments should be made by credit card or check so you have proof of payment.

How can you avoid the scammers?

- Ask friends for referrals
- Ask at local businesses you trust
- Contact local trade organizations
- Ask for references from the contractor
- Get written estimates from several firms
- Have a contract with everything in writing-guarantees, warranties, promises, work plan changes
- Look for specializations such as Certified Aging in Place Specialist
- Get referrals from your insurance company
- Contact the Better Business Bureau Education Foundation at 713-341-6141

*(The above article was excerpted from a column in The Houston Chronicle 5-18-17).*

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## Flood Gauge Signs



No doubt you have noticed the bright yellow flood gauge signs that dot North Braeswood. Well, they may soon disappear.

According to the Westbury Crier, the City of Houston installed the flood level signs after receiving a request that they be placed. But when they appeared in residential areas, they "caused an uproar and controversy." The signs were not located in areas of unusually high risk...although all city streets are designed to hold storm water. The request was added to an existing project, but the contractor placed the signs before a change order could be properly processed. The City now says the signs will be removed. It admits that proper notification had not been made to the affected neighborhoods.

Even if the signs are removed, please remember: DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOODED STREETS. Park in a high spot and wait for waters to recede. Your brakes may fail in high water, leading your car to keep moving into deeper water where you can be caught in currents or otherwise overwhelmed by the water. Additionally, driving through flood water causes waves, and waves push water into parked cars and homes further exacerbating flood damage.

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## Geriatrician or GP?

Would those of us over 70 benefit from seeing a geriatrician? That is the question posed by a reader to Judith Graham who writes for The Washington Post. In an article on March 10, 2017, the reporter discusses her research into the issue.



She begins by noting what defines a geriatrician: an internist or family practitioner who has spent an extra year training in the care of older adults. As a result, they can serve as primary care physicians for those over 70.

The extra training means they should have a variety of extra competencies:

- To optimize elders' functioning and well-being
- To help seniors and their families clarify their goals for care and shape care plans accordingly
- Manage medications (including understanding how elders react differently to medications as they age and medications interact differently as we age; some medicines we have taken for years may, as we age, begin to cause fatigue or delirium, for instance)
- Coordinate care
- Provide palliative and end-of-life care
- Understand that older adults' bodies, minds and lives differ from those who are middle-aged
- Focus on issues of particular concern to the elderly
  - Falls, incontinence, muscle weakness, frailty, fatigue, cognitive impairment and delirium

Ms. Graham quotes John Morley, a professor of geriatrics at Saint Louis University: "if you're losing weight, you're falling, you can't climb a flight of stairs, you're tired all the time, you're unhappy and you're on 10 or more medications, go see a geriatrician. Much of what we do is get rid of treatments prescribed by other physicians that aren't working."



Ms. Graham advises that a geriatric consultation usually involves two visits-"one to do a comprehensive exam of physical, psychological, cognitive and social functioning and another to go over a proposed plan of care."

Both Baylor Medical School and the University of Texas medical school have sections of Geriatrics within their Internal Medicine Departments. The American Geriatrics Society's website is another resource in looking for a Geriatrician.

Make sure whomever you see goes over your medications carefully, asks about geriatric syndromes (like falling, incontinence, etc.), and inquires about the goals you have for your care.

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## Social Security: Death Benefit



Are you aware that there is a Social Security death benefit to help pay for funeral or burial costs?

The benefit is known as the Social Security Lump Sum Death Payment benefit. It is limited to a surviving spouse or child if they meet the required criteria. The benefit amount is \$255-not much but every little bit may help.

### Qualifications:

- Surviving spouse who was living in the same household with the deceased worker when he or she died. The surviving spouse is still eligible if the two were living apart during the month the decedent died if he or she
  - Was already receiving benefits on the deceased worker's record, or
  - Became eligible for benefits upon the deceased worker's death.

In the event there is no eligible surviving spouse, the lump sum death benefit can be paid to the worker's child or children if, during the month the worker died, the child:

- Was already receiving benefits on the worker's record
- Became eligible for benefits upon the worker's death.

To check your eligibility, search online for the Social Security Administration's Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool.

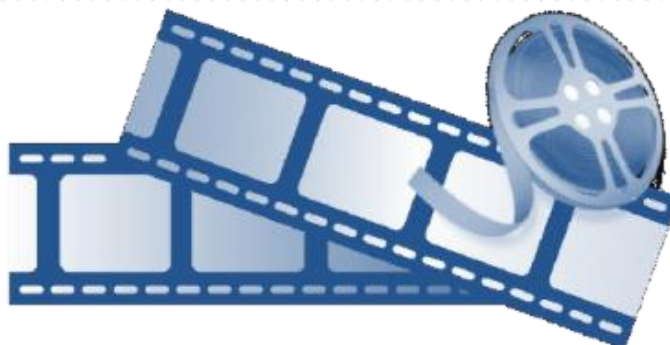
*(This item was taken from an article in The Houston Chronicle on 5-18-17)*

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## Behind the Scenes



### BEHIND THE SCENES

NEIGHBORS4NEIGHBORS NETWORK INVITES YOU TO

**AN AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 4TH**

**2:30 P.M.**

**AT LINDA AND ANDY BURGER'S HOME**

**5202 LOCH LOMOND**

**HANNAH BIGGS** WILL SHOW CLIPS FROM *YANKEE DOODLE DANDY*, *SOME LIKE IT HOT*, AND *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT* AND GIVE US THE SCOOP ON WHAT WENT ON BEHIND THE SCENES

**MS. BIGGS** IS A PHD CANDIDATE IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT RICE UNIVERSITY AND LEADS A MOVIE CLASS AT THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE. N4NN VOLUNTEER **DICK VANE** IS TAKING HER CLASS AND HAS PERSUADED HER TO SHARE HER INSIGHTS ON FILMS WITH THE REST OF US.

N4NN members, volunteers and their guests only!



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## Happy Birthday ...



Best wishes for a happy June birthday and many more to come to N4NN members

Jeanne Saletan  
Lynae Novominsky (staff)  
David Askanase

If we have missed a June birthday, please let Madeleine know (mgappel@comcast.net or 713-665-0770).

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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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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 Chi. Go to [www.pct3.com](http://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](mailto:FontenoSEC@pct3.com) or call 713-981-4703.



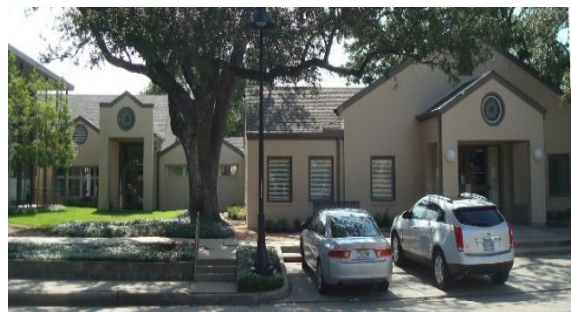
**Jewish Community Center:** Join neighbors and friends at the JCC for fun and exciting programs including bus trips, cultural programs, lifelong learning courses, Kosher lunch program, films, Jewish learning, art classes, exercise, social programs and much more. Learn more at <http://www.erjcchouston.org/adultsonthego>

**West**

**University Parks and Recreation Department:**

[www.westutx.gov](http://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](#) 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](mailto:admin@hcrj.org) or call 713-782-4162 to learn more about the classes and trips currently being offered.

**The City of Houston** will offer FREE water fitness classes for adults at Westbury Pool, 10605 Mullins, Houston 77096, this summer:

- Adult Circuit Water Fitness, Tuesday 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. A combination of cardio, strength training and flexibility that takes you through a series of stations using effective circuit training principles and the latest aquatic equipment for a total body workout. The intensity is light to moderate
- Adult Aqua Zumba, Tuesday and Thursday from 9-10 a.m. and Thursday and 6:30-7:30 p.m. This class combines high energy and Latin music with movement in the water, a combination that helps participants dance away their worries while staying in shape. The intensity is light to moderate.

Registration is online (<https://apm.activecommunities.com/houstonparks/Home>) or you can register with the instructor on class days shortly before each class starts. The first day of class will be Tuesday, June 6, and the last day of class will be Thursday, August 3, at the Westbury Pool. If you have questions, call the city Adult Sports Office at 832-395-7274.

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## Coming Events

**Sunday, June 4, 2:30 p.m.,** Movie Afternoon, Linda and Andy Burger's home, 5202 Loch Lomond (corner of Loch Lomond and Manhattan). Come hear Hannah Biggs reveal all about behind the scenes of Yankee Doodle Dandy, Some Like It Hot and It Happened One Night. Members, Volunteers and Steering Committee and their guests only.

**Monday, June 5, 4:30 p.m.,** N4NN Steering Committee, Madeleine's house, 5223 Ariel St.

**Wednesday, June 7, 5:30 p.m.,** Reel Hope, Rice University Shepherd School of Music, annual JFS gala/Chesed Award, tickets required. Contact JFS at 713-713-667-9336

**Tuesday, June 13, 11 a.m.,** N4NN monthly luncheon, Genesis Steakhouse and Winebar, 5427 Bissonnet (corner of Chimney Rock and Bissonnet). Guest speaker: Christina L. Yazdani, PA-C, Bone Health Clinic, UT Department of Orthopaedic Surgery-Trauma, speaking on bone health and fall prevention.

Thursday, June 22, 2:30 p.m., N4NN monthly discussion group, Location TBD, Topic: Social Media-when does sharing cross the line?

*N4NN also sponsors three member-organized informal groups: Our Men's Koffee Klatsch meets twice a month (schedule changes from month to month) and several of our members get together to play Rummikub at members' homes a couple of times a month. Our Bridge Group meets a couple of times a month. For information on the Men's Koffee Klatsch, contact Jay Schaffer at [js7984tx@gmail.com](mailto:js7984tx@gmail.com) for the Rummikub players, contact Annette Novominsky at [anovominsky@icloud.com](mailto:anovominsky@icloud.com) and for the bridge group, contact John Varvaro at [meyink@comcast.net](mailto:meyink@comcast.net).*

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## Laugh Outloud



*Many thanks to member Annette Novominsky for keeping N4NN Connect supplied with smiles!*

- I was thinking about how a status symbol of today is those cell phones that everyone has clipped onto their belt or purse. I can't afford one. So I'm wearing my garage door opener.
- I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is when you still have something on the ball, but you are just too tired to bounce it.
- The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.
- Ah! Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.





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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.*

## The Marketplace

N4NN Connect is most grateful to its ad sponsors, MEDIC PHARMACY, RELOCATE AND RENOVATE 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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N4NN members can use a discount code to purchase devices and the one-time activation fee by calling GreatCall's Care Center at 1(866) 490.0807 using Member Code JF/N4NN.

- 30% off all Devices
- \$10 off the one-time activation fee



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**Michael Kahlenberg**, Program Coordinator  
**Madeleine G. Appel**, Chair Steering Committee  
**Gail W. Issen**, Editor

***For more information contact:***

832-998-N4NN (6466)

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info@N4NN.org

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