

Grownups getting stronger

# ReGeneration

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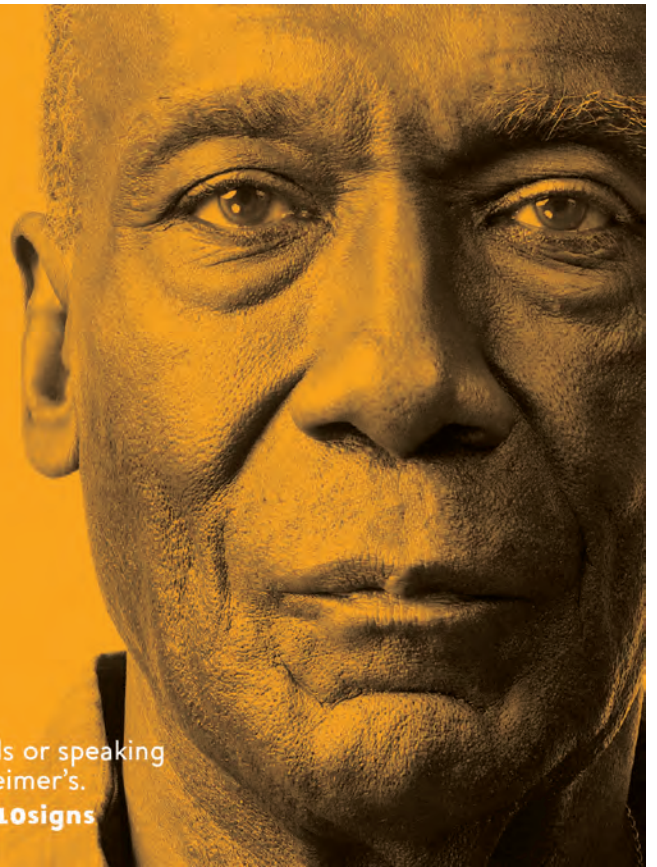


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Photo courtesy of Roeser's Bakery

Roeser's Bakery in Chicago offers gingerbread people for the winter holidays.

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Cover photo by Maria Ansley

## ReGeneration Winter 2022

ReGeneration is the magazine for active and creative grownups, members of The ReGen generation. The ReGen is age 50-plus, yet this generation is not so much an age but a lifestyle. The ReGen includes people willing to try new adventures, to give back, to reinvent themselves and their community. They've done it all at least once before, so they like "re-" words: reenergized, resurrected, reclaimed.

Our cover story, on tattoos as "healing art," features younger helping older, and "Happily ever after" is about sweethearts reunited after 40 years. "Ageism is not OK" reminds us how to accept aging without falling into stereotypes and jokes. In "Famous old bakeries of Illinois," we take a nostalgic trip to childhood favorite places still open for business.

There's a lot here for the active 50-plus crowd, the ones we call "Grownups getting stronger." Please send your reactions and suggestions to [editor@illinoistimes.com](mailto:editor@illinoistimes.com). —Fletcher Farrar, editor

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# Happily **ever** after

**Nick and Patsy, teenage sweethearts,  
hadn't seen each other for 40 years**

By DiAnne Crown



Nick Ciaccio and Patsy Stivers were married Oct. 5, 2022, in the east dining room of Springfield's Brenden Gardens.

Dreams do come true, eventually. For Brenden Gardens residents Patsy Stivers Ciaccio and Nick Ciaccio it took 40 years.

The two met in Springfield in the late 1970s when Patsy was working at Orange Julius in White Oaks Mall. "I would go in and flirt with her," Nick says, reminiscing about their early days. "I sat right in front of the store and would offer to drive her home. After about two months of this, she finally said 'yes' and we started dating and ..." he pauses, smiling, "doing what teenagers did. Later, she got a job with the state and I kept giving her rides home. We hit it off real good."

One night on that ride home, though, they had an argument. Nick pulled to a stop and, as they continued talking, Patsy got out. The car slipped out of gear, rolled forward and hit her. After her hospital stay, Patsy says, "My mother forbid me to see him again. I was living at home and I had to follow her rules."

They reluctantly quit seeing each other, married other people and had families, but Patsy never got over him.

Patsy's marriage ended in divorce. Nick's marriage ended a few years ago when his wife died. That was hard enough, but then two other dear people in Nick's life, his mother and his best friend, also died within a few months. Anger and grief sent Nick into deep despair and depression. It was an extremely difficult time.

"I thought my life was over," he says, admitting he prayed fervently that God would put someone in his life to love again. Eventually, Nick's brother-in-law suggested he downsize his New Berlin house and move into an independent living center. They decided on Brenden Gardens.

The very day he walked through the south door of his new home, Nick saw a familiar face. Actually, not just a familiar face. Nick, at six-foot-one, also recognized the stature of a petite but feisty four-foot-six-inch-tall Patsy sitting in the lobby. "Are you Patsy?," he asked. "Yes," she answered cautiously. "I wanted to make sure it was him before making a fool of myself if he was married. And I didn't remember him being that tall!"

The conversation ended there, but she decided to find his room and look at his nameplate to make sure.

"I went up and down the halls looking for his door." When she finally found it, the tag said, "Nick and Makenzie." Married, she thought, and sat down nearby to watch for them.

When Nick came down the hall alone, they finally spoke with each other and he answered her question. "Makenzie is my cat."

Reunited at last, they talked for hours, admitted they had both made mistakes, turned the calendar back 40 years, became inseparable, moved in together a month later, and were married soon after by a retired pastor also living in Brenden Gardens. Now, Nick says, "We're together. We're happy. We get along."

The staff loves the story and the change in Nick. "Nick has changed a lot," says Christine Brimer, interim executive director. "Before he came to Brenden Gardens, he was so depressed. His brother-in-law wanted to get him into a community where he would eat, take his medications, and become friends with people. And that's exactly what happened."

One morning at breakfast before Nick and Patsy really got together, describes marketing director Kathy Chastain, Nick said, "You guys are my family." Shortly after that, she says, "It really was a whirlwind with Patsy." Now she is his family.

They take care of each other, go shopping, and attend the Baptist church where Nick was also recently baptized.

They love life together. "I told him when I first met him," says Patsy, "I'm going to marry you some day."

Nick calls this their miracle. "There is a God, and God listened to me and put her in front of me, into my life, to show me there is love I can share with another person. Every day I wake up and thank God for Patsy and what we can do for each other. We encourage each other, help each other, go out together. We have a good time. We don't worry about anything. Patsy is one of a kind."

"When I saw him, I thought, 'Finally maybe I'll get my wish. I've always loved him. He's kind, gentle, and caring,'" says Patsy.

They don't consider those years apart wasted. "Those years made me grow up," says Patsy. "Both of us were jealous," says Nick. "[And] neither of us could leave our families. Separating was the best move possible."

Any advice for others? "Never give up," Nick says. "Never give up when you're looking for love. There's always someone there for you. If you're lonely, keep your faith. There's someone for everyone. Don't give up."

"Patience," says Patsy, who waited and watched for 40 years for the love of her life to return. And he did. □

*DiAnne Crown of Springfield is a faithful freelancer for Illinois Times.*



Retired pastor and Brenden Gardens resident Richard Ahlgrim performed the ceremony. The guests were Brenden Gardens residents, whom Patsy and Nick describe as their family.

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Rich and Sarah Van Dorn, who relocated to Springfield from Florida earlier this year, outside the new business they opened in October, Stella Coffee and Tea, 1135 W. Governor. PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS

# Start something **new**

From *Springfield Business Journal's* e-newsletter *Biz Bites*

## **Entrepreneurs with life experience grow their own businesses**

Rich and Sarah Van Dorn have had a busy year. In March, the couple relocated from Florida to Springfield, and on Oct. 8 they opened their new business, Stella Coffee & Tea, at 1135 W. Governor St.

"Our daughter lives here, and during the pandemic we would come up to visit and stay in hotels. It was such an expense that we bought a house so that when we visited, we would have somewhere to stay," Sarah Van Dorn said. "My husband is an engineer who works on rockets, first for NASA and

now Blue Origin, and he ended up being able to work remotely. So we moved up here at the end of March and started working on our coffee shop concept."

The couple partnered with a supplier out of California to produce their house blend, a medium-bold roast called Orion. "Because of my husband's background, we wanted to have different blends named after constellations – Orion is our first one," said Van Dorn, who noted that the business name, Stella, is another word for "star."

While Springfield already has a number of coffee shops, Van Dorn said theirs is targeted to people who are not in a hurry, as evidenced by the lack of

a drive-thru. "I want this to be an old-world coffee shop where you come in and read the newspaper, and can stay there and hang out if you want, not a drive-thru mentality."

Along those lines, the couple has partnered with Oddities and Esoterica, an online bookseller based in Springfield. "We're both big readers, and we have a bunch of books for sale since now we have the owner's inventory at our coffee shop," said Van Dorn.

The other unique factor about Stella Coffee & Tea is the business' commitment to being sustainable. Customers can bring in their own coffee mug and pay a discounted price for

the coffee, and the to-go cups are all recycled or recyclable. Even the coffee grounds are recycled into briquets that can be used for barbecue grills.

"The napkins are cloth, and the cups and plates are made from wheat straw," said Van Dorn. "I'll end up doing a lot of dishes, but we won't be throwing things away. We're trying very hard to be sustainable."

Stella Coffee & Tea is currently open Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., although Van Dorn said the business hours may be adjusted based on customer demand. The building is also available for evening rentals, and Van Dorn said she already has a couple of monthly commitments.

"One guy has a garage band, but he doesn't have a garage. He rents it out so he and his friends can go jam," she said.

### **Daisy Jane's grows into more space**

Downtown gift shop Daisy Jane's recently relocated to a significantly larger space at 9 W. Old State Capitol Plaza.

Owner Julie Johnson started the business six years ago as a second career following her retirement from the medical technology field. "I had sold things at Studio on 6<sup>th</sup> and Wild Rose downtown, and my husband suggested I open a place for myself," she said.

Johnson opened the business in December 2016 in 1,000 square feet of space at 424 E. Monroe. The business has grown over the past few years and Johnson has continued to add new product lines, such as baby and children's items. "We had accumulated quite a lot in our itty-bitty space on Monroe," she said. "We got to the point we were just too crowded for our space, but I didn't want to scale back."

Instead, Johnson decided to expand, and will now occupy 3,000 square feet on the Old State Capitol Plaza. The space, which housed Marley's Pub at one time, has been vacant for more than five years, and Johnson said her landlord purchased the property last year and began making improvements.

Truth Lounge recently moved into

the building at the corner of Fifth and Adams streets and The Wakery, a dry bar and late-night coffee shop, is scheduled to open next door to Daisy Jane's in the first part of 2023.

"It will be nice to have another woman-owned business next door," said Johnson, who is encouraged by the various types of new businesses moving into the downtown area.

Johnson said she's also looking forward to being able to expand her

existing product lines and add new ones now that she has more space for the business. "I'm always finding new small businesses making unique items I want to try out," she said. □

*These articles originally appeared in Biz Bites, the digital newsletter for Springfield Business Journal. To sign up for a free weekly digest of what's happening in the Springfield-area business community, visit [springfieldbusinessjournal.com](http://springfieldbusinessjournal.com).*



Julie Johnson opened Daisy Jane's gift shop as a second career after retiring from the medical technology field. She has recently expanded into a 3,000-square-foot downtown space at 9 W. Old State Capitol Plaza. PHOTO BY STACIE LEWIS





# A steady diet of **encouragement**

**TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly – celebrates success**

By DiAnne Crown

A little less food, a little more exercise, pounds come off. Right? It's science. But even for people who commit to that simple formula, sometimes it just doesn't work. Or doesn't last. For many, the missing ingredient is encouragement. That's the TOPS recipe for success.

TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly, not-for-profit support group – has been teaching basic food sense, presenting simple anywhere-anytime-exercises, and celebrating successes every step of the way since 1948. Members who lose even a quarter of a pound one week enjoy cheers, and possibly prizes. And the entire group exclaims together “We’re glad you’re here!” for members who

didn’t lose any weight that week. Julia Davis is the area advocate for 15 chapters, including Springfield, and a group leader in Decatur.

The all-volunteer program is about support, celebration and consistently using the tools of success, Davis says. TOPS leaders provide literature about healthful food choices, shopping lists, names of helpful food-tracking apps, food diary charts, cards/exchanges for people who want them, and endless encouragement, all for \$49 per year.

“Weight loss is a marathon, not a sprint,” says Davis. “We teach how to balance carbs, fats and proteins; and the importance of exercise, water and writing

down everything. Measure, measure, measure, and log exactly what you eat. Even one day. Even one meal. Members think, ‘Maybe I can do that today. Then, maybe I can do that again tomorrow. And then again the next day.’”

Meetings offer discussions about how to maintain enthusiasm and not become bored or lazy, and members share their successes and struggles alongside people with similar stories. “We are all there to lose weight,” says Davis. “We care about each other and want to see each other succeed.”

Greta Schnapp leads the Springfield chapter Thursday evenings. Illinois’ 2021 State Queen Runner-Up Jean



Lebel attends the weekly meetings. The title isn't awarded for most pounds lost in a year, but most pounds lost overall regardless how long it took.

Lebel is five-foot-two-inches tall, 80 years old, and has lost 72.75 pounds. She joined TOPS in January 2008, when the scale said 225 pounds. Since reaching her goal weight, Lebel says, "My first joy was when I could stand up, reach over, and tie my shoes without falling over. ... My back isn't hurting as much, I am feeling and looking better. I like looking in the mirror now, and I love the friendship and rapport. ... Being able to talk with somebody about what you ate or didn't eat, how you exercised or didn't exercise, you don't feel alone."

Now Lebel attends meetings as a KOPS member – Keep Off Pounds Sensibly. She has a specific maintenance goal, is enthusiastic, determined, even competitive about keeping off the pounds, and continues to enjoy the group support. "I still get cards in the mail every so often."

"We're like one big happy family," says Schnapp, who has been a member for more than 30 years. She has lost and kept

off more than 75 pounds for many years, and is one of the people who sends those encouraging cards. She also plans for the certificates, incentives, programs and prizes. "Some do quit, then come back for the weekly support and facing that scale."

Nancy Groesch has attended the Springfield chapter since 2010. "[Meetings] keep me grounded. It's accountability."

Meetings begin with an optional, private weigh-in, and include roll call, announcements, a short program, and a pledge. It's all about focusing on improvement, not perfection, and "making small, steady lifestyle changes that provide lasting weight loss and better health," according to the international TOPS Philosophy statement. If it's a recipe for success, it's a slow, steady simmer that supports its members one week at a time.

Visit [www.tops.org](http://www.tops.org) for more information and to find a meeting for one free visit. □

*DiAnne Crown of Springfield is a longtime loyal freelance writer for Illinois Times and ReGeneration.*



(left) TOPS 2021 Illinois State Queen Runner-Up Jean Lebel and (right) TOPS Springfield Chapter Leader Greta Schnapp





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Amy Stevens, owner of Underbrink's Bakery in Quincy, continues a long tradition of offering sweet treats to customers.  
Photo by Randy von Liski

# The famous old bakeries of Illinois

Tradition and family passion keep these businesses sweet

By Mary Bohlen

When my family lived on South Lincoln Street in Springfield, we could turn the corner onto Governor and satisfy our sweet teeth with gooey butter cake from the Community Bakery. Once it closed, we followed the crowds to B & Z Bakery, a downtown institution for many years.

While those and other old-style bakeries are no more, such sweet spots as Incredibly Delicious, Three Twigs Bakery and the newly opened Hae's Bakery are

local treasures. If you find yourself on a nearby road trip, however, you can indulge in nostalgia too. Head almost any direction from Springfield, and you can pick up some treats to go with your mug of coffee or hot chocolate this winter.

## Tretzgers in Peoria Heights

Opened in 1861, Tretzgers claims to be the oldest continuing bakery in Illinois. After several moves, it settled in 2016 in a

restored brick building, where customers can swoop up signature thumbprint cookies, macaroons, orange chiffon cakes and decorated white cakes.

Jeff and Martha Huebner bought the bakery from the Tretzger family in 1993 and continue the tradition of making almost everything from scratch. That includes breakfast pastries, cookies, cream pies, cakes and some gluten-free goodies.

Keeping the same name and recipes



was important, Jeff says, because longtime customers like the traditions. “The bakeries that stay in business are ones where the families running them have a passion for it.”

Tretzgers navigated the COVID crisis by stepping up its shipping business. That continues with hundreds of boxes of cookies shipped every week. Also available for shipping are chocolate and butterscotch coffee cakes and coconut macaroons.

The winter holidays are a particularly busy time as the bakers make more than 1,000 cookies daily in the weeks before Christmas, and triple-braided sweetbreads twisted into pretzel shapes for New Year’s Eve.

### **Underbrink’s in Quincy**

Named the top bakery in Illinois by *Taste of Home* in 2019, Underbrink’s began in 1929 and displays the third oldest Hobart mixer in the United States. Owner Amy Stevens agrees with Tretzgers’ Huebner that customers often long for nostalgia along with Underbrink’s signature iced angel food cupcakes.

Generations of customers line up for the cupcakes, Danish pastries or drop cookies, the bakery’s most popular items. “Our made-from-scratch tradition puts the extra deliciousness in the baked goods,” Stevens says.

Those who have moved away from Quincy often make a stop at the bakery or order shipments, especially around the holidays. “The bakery brings back that feeling of being home for the holidays,” she explains.

In addition to the usual assortment of cakes, pies, pastries and cookies, Underbrink’s features such holiday specialties as fruitcake, chocolate walnut cookies and springerle, a type of German molded cookies usually with an anise flavor.

### **Jubelt’s in Litchfield**

Jubelt’s, a staple in Litchfield that once had a store in Springfield, is marking its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this year with ownership still in the family. Jean Jubelt attributes the bakery’s longevity to customers’ ability to depend on it for homemade goodness.

“They associate it with their childhoods and we stick to high quality,” she says. “A

lot of customers have been with us a long time.”

The bakery also has adapted to changing times and tastes by adding a restaurant offering such favorites as breakfast sandwiches, homemade chicken salad and soups made 100 percent from scratch, Jubelt says. During the COVID pandemic, she found that “sugar has been a big comfort the past few years.”

Tea cookies, cream horns and gooey butter cakes remain popular, and pies brimming with homemade fillings are a

hit. For the winter holidays, the bakery adds pumpkin and pecan pies, cookies with Christmas colors and flavors and gingerbread cutouts.

### **Kruta’s in Collinsville**

Paul Kruta is the fourth-generation baker to work in his family’s shop in Collinsville. It started in East St. Louis in 1919 after Paul’s great grandfather arrived from Russia after learning the trade in Germany. Those roots remain strong, with German specialties such as stollens



Paul Kruta, the fourth-generation baker in his family, displays a tray of cream horns at Kruta’s Bakery in Collinsville. Cream horns are among the bakery’s most popular items. Photo courtesy of Kruta’s Bakery





Roeser's Bakery in Chicago offers gingerbread people for the winter holidays. Photo courtesy of Roeser's Bakery



Decorated Santa cupcakes are popular sellers at Roeser's Bakery in Chicago around Christmas. Photo courtesy of Roeser's Bakery

offered especially for the winter holidays and a "holiday bread" (a two-pound loaf with heavy yellow dough and raisins) sold around Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

Kruta says the regular top sellers are cream horns (a French pastry with buttery filling), "fudgy" chocolate cakes with chocolate fudge icing and a rich caramelized brown sugar spread, gooey butter cakes and donuts. The bakery tries to stay with its original recipes because "sometimes you just want tradition," he adds.

"Just like we are the fourth generation, we have fourth- and fifth-generation customers," Kruta says. "I think the groundwork laid by the early generations sowing the seeds of goodwill in the community" have led to its success and the success of other long-running bakeries.

"The small-town bakery was a cornerstone of the town. Everyone needs bread."

### Roeser's in Chicago

Residents of big cities also need baked goods, if the history of Roeser's is any indication. The bakery touts itself as the oldest family-owned bakery still in the same location in Chicago, near Humbolt Park.

John Roeser, also the fourth generation of his family to run the business, says he believes it has lasted because of consistency with many of the same ingredients in the baked goods. "Everybody wants to have that kind of nostalgia."

His most popular items are pumpkin and apple pies, cakes and a large variety of butter cookies. He says the hot milk sponge cake and the "Marianne" sponge cake with fresh strawberries are customers' favorite flavors. The most popular coffee cake is a streusel butter loaf.

Around the winter holidays, Roeser's sells lots of stollens, Parker House rolls, Yule logs and gingerbread men and women.

For more information, go to [www.trefzgersbakery.com](http://www.trefzgersbakery.com), [www.underbrinks.com](http://www.underbrinks.com), [www.jubelts.com](http://www.jubelts.com), <http://krutabakery.com>, <http://roeserscakes.com>. □

*Mary Bohlen, a Springfield travel writer, finds it hard to resist sweet treats when she encounters family-owned bakeries during her travels.*



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# Healing art

## The empowerment of a tattoo

By Nicole Florence   Photos by Maria Ansley



Jason Lee consults with a breast cancer client and marks the outline for the restorative final tattoo.

I didn't get my first tattoo until my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. In my younger years the perception was that a tattoo was a sign of rebellion or roughness. And of course, as my mom would say, "How are you going to get a job with that?" But then I met Jason Lee. His statuesque 6-foot-4-inch frame is covered with tattoos, and from afar he may appear to be somewhat physically intimidating. To look at him you would never know that he is a humble artist and a healer of souls.

At 9 years old, Jason was the son of a teenage mom who was caught in a chaotic situation. He was sent to live with his grandmother, and art became an escape. He found that his ability to perceive, deconstruct and then recreate was not only therapeutic, but also that he was incredibly good at it. "I look at things in their basic shape and form. And I start seeing highlights and I see lowlights and midtones and I rebuild everything from such a raw perspective." Jason's talent continued to flourish and he has turned his incredible skill into a passionate career. He is one of the most well-known tattoo artists in our area and owner of New Age Tattoos and Body Piercings. New Age was accurately named years ago, as it was his dream to create a space for clean and innovative space known for its artistry.

New Age is one the longest-standing tattoo studios in the area at 27 years old. Jason is humble and evolving as an artist and as a person. His tattooing has become part of the holistic healing approach with women with breast cancer reconstruction, who have significant scarring, disfigurement, and absence of their areola and nipple. Many of these women see their reflections as reminders



of their cancer journey and what was lost as a result. In collaboration with the Institute of Plastic Surgery at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, he began using his artistry and donating his time to help women look and feel more complete. This charitable work has been a great tool for plastic surgeons performing breast reconstruction, and Jason has even been published in a prominent medical journal as a result. However, it's the accolades of the women he serves that keeps him in this work. Their response after sessions with Jason can vary. Jason recalls that "some of my favorite ones are just the hysterical laughter, like the joy taking over" and "of course, there's always a lot of tears, you just see somebody become complete again."

He admits that his physical presence and body art can be intimidating, especially to these women who are in a vulnerable and emotional state. He has learned to talk with them and break down the walls. Being exposed and in an intimate space can be daunting for these women. He explains, "I start showing them I've made different choices, but I'm still human and still compassionate. I still care for you and want good things for you." His work speaks for itself, as many from around the region seek out his expertise now for any surgical scars after a traumatic procedure.

Jason understands the journey of women with breast cancer now more than just his role in using his gift of art to heal. His mother, Teresa Lee, is also a breast cancer survivor, having been diagnosed after his involvement with these patients. Jason felt he was able to better navigate his mother's breast cancer care after working with familiar health care providers and within the system. Yet at the same time he had also witnessed the suffering as part of their journey, which was a heavy load for him to bear as her son. He and his mother are very close in that they seemed to grow up together. Jason proclaims it was her honesty and work ethic that has made him the man he is today. Jason is married to his best friend, Jessica Lee, a nurse practitioner. He has raised an adult



A woman shows appreciation to Lee for allowing her to complete her journey of healing.

son and he and his wife continue to raise a son and daughter together.

He is proud of the artists he has mentored and works with on a daily basis. Winning *Illinois Times* Best Tattoo Studio was better than any individual award that might have come to him. As he states, "I get to share that with all my people." He plans to continue to explore diverse mediums of art and continue to mature as an artist for himself. His goal is to release his "selfish nature," which he hadn't before realized he needed to do. "(I) started spending some very intimate time with people and becoming a part of a different community of healers."

Spending time with Jason is a

reminder that no matter where we begin, we are constantly evolving, striving to better ourselves and the world around us no matter what one may think of us at first glance or introduction. I see now how spending time in Jason's tattoo chair leaves an indelible impression upon those who seek him. These impressions aren't only visible on the surface; often they are deeper, within one's heart and soul. □

*Maria Ansley and Nicole Florence are longtime friends and owners of LongShot Productions. Their hope is to allow a space for people to tell their unique story and its impact within our community.*



# Ageism is not OK

## Looking at aging in a new light

By Cinda Ackerman Klickna

*This Chair Rocks – A Manifesto Against Ageism* by Ashton Applewhite. \$17.99, Celadon Books

The recent headline, “Age Issue Dogs Biden as He Turns 80,” may be one the author of *This Chair Rocks – A Manifesto Against Ageism* would probably call out as unfair. “Chronological age is an increasingly unreliable benchmark of pretty much everything about a person,” writes Ashton Applewhite. In her manifesto, she explores ageism as equal to sexism and racism. She calls upon all to examine how they look at aging in general – and in themselves. She tells about people doing amazing things in their lives at all ages, points out the myths associated with age and aging, and provides ways to accept age but not ageism.

“Ageism” is the term first coined in 1969 by geriatrician Robert Butler as “prejudicial attitudes toward older people, old age and aging itself.” “Ageism is about what people in power want

our appearance to mean,” Applewhite writes. “It occurs when a group, whether politicians or marketers or employment agencies, uses that power to oppress or exploit or silence or simply ignore people who are much younger or older.”

She points to examples – the realtor who recommends removing grab bars in showers before selling a home instead of pointing out how the home is ready for needs in the future. Or the writer who includes a person’s age after their name when age should only be pertinent in an obituary. Or the doctor who passes off the symptoms of a patient by calling it “just getting old.” Just go to the racks of birthday cards – notice how many reference getting older.

Although the book focuses mainly on older people, Applewhite stresses that young people face ageism also. How often is it said a younger person doesn’t have enough experience for a certain position or “these young people just

don’t know.”

Applewhite distinguishes between aging and ageism. Everyone gets older; the aging process does affect physical issues such as hearing, sight, balance and quickness. Sometimes, these issues lead to a new approach. For example, Grandma Moses had to give up embroidery due to arthritis so turned to painting and became famous. Aging is going to happen so accept it.

But, ageism doesn’t have to be a part of the equation. It is a mindset that many have about others – and themselves. One example is that many think dementia will set in when one gets older. Thinking that way is a sign of ageism. Remember, it is not just the elderly who forget things. Think of the teen who forgets to take his homework to school or the youngster who forgets her soccer shoes. “Forgetting where your keys are shouldn’t be cause for alarm nor forgetting So and So’s name (as opposed to not remembering



what keys are used for or forgetting who So and So is.)” the author writes.

The book includes quotes from experts in geriatrics and studies by organizations on topics of aging, deafness, elder abuse, poverty levels of the elderly, and the aging impact on health care needs.

Myths abound: that if an older person continues working a younger person won't find a job; that old people are a burden on society; that Social Security will be bankrupt. Facts and statistics in the book show these are examples of ageism.

Applewhite gives tips – stay active; it is well-researched that activity increases bone strength, improves balance, etc. Tip two: “keep your organ recital short” – by this she refers to our body organs – don't be telling everyone about the organs that aren't working and all your aches and pains. She tells of a woman who lived overseas and came once a year to see friends; the woman would “remind her friends she was coming to hear what was happening in their lives, not in their innards.”

Another tip is to accept that life is finite so enjoy each day. But also make a will and make plans. If a doctor ever says, “What do you expect at your age?” find a new doctor.

Keep working – paid or volunteer. If you're able, then age doesn't matter. Jim Lizzio was the go-to guy in his neighborhood running errands for many when he was 93.

One area Applewhite pushes is to ask for help and accept it. Too many live in denial that they need help, need hearing aids, need to use a cane etc., and end up missing out on what is possible with a little help. Acknowledge that there are things one might not be able to do the same as in the past. Don't deny it.

*This Chair Rocks* tells us to look at aging in a new light and with new possibilities. Reading this book, it becomes obvious how much ageism is around us. □

*Cinda may never again buy a birthday card with a message about getting old.*

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# Little deaths

Learn from failures, mistakes and losses.

**They can open our hearts.**

By Tim Hahn

Life is in a constant cycle of regeneration, with both a flowing of abundance and a vast emptiness. It is an ongoing dance of creation where the fullness secretly contains the emptiness, and the void of emptiness contains the elements of abundance. Older ways of seeing considered all aspects of creation to have purpose and to be intertwined with each other. Whatever existed did so for a reason and there were no mistakes. Life had its own intelligence and way of balancing things out.

Being born, we inherit both sides of the dance, the gift of life and the final breath. Death and loss must have a place in life, or creation would not be able to continue – they both exist because of the other. Life is like the music and death like the

silent backdrop for it to be heard. Beyond both of the polarities lies a possibility of transformation, just like deep heartfelt music and true silence can be a remedy for connecting to deeper places within.

“Death is the middle of a long life,” an old Celtic proverb states, reminding us that putting death at the center of life instead of putting it out of sight allows us to live more fully. A healthy awareness of death can make the breath of life feel more of a miracle and bring us more clarity about what’s important. Death used to be called the great teacher of life because knowing something about death allowed people to value life more. It is not morbid to consider the role of death in life. It is what shines a light on that which is most alive in our lives, and points us towards our greatest

purpose.

When death is simply considered a failure and enemy of life in a medical occasion, life itself becomes reduced. Death’s teachings have been separated and lost in the fast-paced modern life that worships youth and beauty. We are trying to outrun the inevitable and have diminished the dark wisdom and instruction that it can provide us. The saying “you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone” shows us how both must exist. Contemplation of death can teach us how to cherish the present moment. Life is a permanent today.

Life in all levels has the ability to renew itself again and again. I can attest to this from my personal experience of losing one of my older brothers a few years back.



It was and is one of the greatest teachings in my life. As one door shuts, another revelation opens. Death can be both sorrow and a boon if we have the endurance to grieve in a healthy way and allow ourselves to endear the moments given to us.

Along with actual death, there are little deaths that are always occurring. Our encounters with sorrow and loss are inevitable and if suffered honestly they can become the darker wisdom from which a greater life can grow. The little death represents the death of the ego, and allows for a deeper part of life to reveal itself. The breaking open of our hearts, as painful as it is, can also be the medicine for that which ails us in life. Many things can help us open the heart and suffering and loss are strong medicines. An open heart is a heart fully alive, not rejecting or judging but living life as it is. Typically the energetic heart opens right after something powerful. In most cases that is some form of suffering or little death.

Little deaths can be profound, as is the case in the story of the Buddha, know originally as Prince Siddhartha. Born into riches and a powerfully rich material lifestyle, Siddhartha changed his fate upon experiencing the sight of old age, death and suffering. It wasn't until these experiences that he began to open to who he truly was. The little-death created a great awakening. As he awakened further, he both understood the common fate of humanity and recognized the unique nature of his destiny. Something has to die so another element can be born.

Little deaths are the necessary ingredient for big change in our lives. Knowing more about the nature of it can lead to knowing more about the nature of living. The failures, mistakes and losses are the little deaths from which the great lessons can be received and learned. When the ego suffers, the greater self within can grow. Those who accept the presence of a little-death in life are transformed the most. □

*Tim Hahn is a lifelong resident of central Illinois. He and his wife Molly run CrossFit Instinct where they specialize in health and wellness from a holistic approach. He is a father of two and a life coach and yoga teacher.*



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# Hear better here

## Over-the-counter hearing aids now available

By Elissa Welle

Soon, millions of Americans will hear better, for less money and at greater convenience.

Beginning in October, over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids were sold at local stores and online for the first time, making it possible for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss to buy the devices without a prescription.

Major retailers, including Best Buy, Walmart, Walgreens and CVS, were set to begin selling OTC hearing aids immediately, and smaller pharmacies were likely to follow.

This new category of hearing aids was approved by the FDA in August, five years after Congress passed legislation requiring federal regulators to do so. Since then, tech companies have rushed to design cheaper devices for the new market. An estimated 30 million American adults have some hearing loss — but fewer than one-third use hearing aids.

The over-the-counter models were expected to be cheaper than most prescription devices. Hearing aids at Walgreens, for example, will cost \$800, while most prescription hearing aids cost thousands of dollars. Medicare and most insurance policies do not cover hearing exams or aids, and a device costing hundreds of dollars may still be out of reach for many consumers.

Yet, less costly hearing aids are welcome news to those who have advocated for lower health care costs. At a news conference earlier this year, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra called the final FDA ruling a “standout.”

“Get ready, folks,” Becerra said. “You’re going to save a lot of money and we are all going to benefit from that.”

But audiologists and some members of the hard-of-hearing community are



skeptical of the ruling, saying consumers may lose money on ill-suited or poorly fitting hearing aids if they do not work with a specialist.

Even worse, consumers may not regain the hearing they expected from an OTC hearing aid, said Leslie Soiles, chief audiologist at the hearing clinic HearingLife. Soiles pointed out the many factors that play into hearing loss, including medical conditions not easily detected with a simple hearing exam.

“We’re asking a consumer to self-diagnose, without any ... understanding of the degree of challenge they may have, or may not have, with their hearing,” Soiles said.

Similar to getting eyeglasses, the ideal situation may be a combination of professional assessment and OTC hearing aids, said Lynne Kinsey, local chapter president of Hearing Loss Association of America, a nonprofit patient support association.

“Some people buy glasses that are too strong, or that aren’t strong enough, and

they wear them for a long time,” Kinsey said. “And I imagine this is going to happen with hearing aids.”

First-time hearing aid users should get their hearing checked first, Kinsey said, preferably by an audiologist. The results of a hearing exam, called an audiogram, will show what frequencies are heard and which are missed. Consumers can then see if an OTC hearing aid fits their needs.

Kinsey, who used hearing aids for many years after abrupt hearing loss at the age of 40 and now has two cochlear implants, cautions customers to do their research beforehand and be prepared to try a few before picking one that fits.

“Hearing aids are often hard to get used to,” Kinsey said. Those with profound hearing loss will not be helped by OTC hearing aids.

Still, Kinsey said she believes OTC hearing aids have the power to change many people’s lives. “It’s going to help a lot of people.” □

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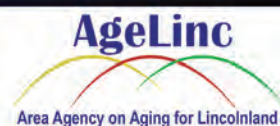
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# EXPLORE YOUR Community

By Stacie Lewis

## See what's happening near you

As events may be canceled or rescheduled at the last moment, please first check with the host or venue when making plans to attend an event.

### Ongoing

#### Winter Holiday Floral Show

Mon.-Fri. 12-4pm. Sat.-Sun. 12-5pm. Through Dec. 21. Enjoy over 500 poinsettias nestled among the decorated fresh evergreens and lush tropical foliage. Free. Washington Park Botanical Garden, 1740 W. Fayette Ave., 217-546-4116.

#### Winter Nights at the ALPLM

Wednesday and Saturdays, 5-7 pm. Through Dec. 21. Extended hours and free admission so everyone can enjoy the exhibits and performances. Enjoy a free performance (ticket required) by the Copper Coin Ballet Company at 5:30pm. Free. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, 212 N. Sixth St., 217-558-8844.

#### Old Capitol Holiday Walks

Saturdays 10am-7pm and Wednesdays 4-7pm. Through Dec. 21. Revel in the holiday spirit with visits with Santa Claus, Midwest sleigh rides, ice skating, shopping at locally owned businesses, kids' crafts, live entertainment and even a hot cocoa bar. Free. Downtown Springfield. 217-544-1723.



Old Capitol Holiday Walks continue Saturdays and Wednesdays through Dec. 21.

#### Holidays at the SAA Collective

Wednesdays-Saturdays, 11am-5pm. Through Dec. 23. The juried artists of the SAA Collective present their ever-popular annual holiday art show. In addition to fine art, patrons can shop for holiday décor, jewelry, one-of-a-kind gifts, greeting cards and more. Free. SAA Collective Gallery, 105 N. Fifth St., 217-544-2787.

#### Light up the Park

Fridays-Sundays, 6-9pm. Through Dec. 25. A local holiday tradition. Get ready to be wowed by the nearly 1-mile drive through hundreds

of thousands of lights and beautiful displays. A \$5 per-vehicle donation is requested. Sponsored by the Chatham Friends of the Parks. Enter on Park Ave. Chatham Community Park, Chatham, 731 S. Main St.

#### "J. Capps & Sons, Ltd. A History of Nice Threads!"

Through Dec. 30. Featuring the history of Jacksonville's first manufacturer, the exhibit traces the story of the company from 1839 through its closing in 1975. See original fabrics, tools, company records and photographs and read the reminiscences of

Capps' employees. Jacksonville Area Museum, Jacksonville, 301 E. State St., 217-408-1197.

#### **Alzheimer's caregiver support group**

Second Tuesday of every month, 1-2:30pm. The best thing you can do for the person for whom you are caring is to stay physically and emotionally strong. Support groups offer comfort and reassurance, and can be good sources of practical advice and even humor. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-528-4035.

#### **Legal Aid**

First Wednesday of every month, 9am-3pm. Land of Lincoln Legal Aid provides free civil legal help for eligible seniors. Call 217-503-4643 to make an appointment. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-528-4035.

#### **Springfield Poets and Writers open mic**

Third Wednesday of every month, 6-8pm. Read some poetry, prose or nonfiction, whether your original work or the work of a favorite author. You can also just relax and listen. Get the Zoom link at [springfieldpoetsandwriters.com](http://springfieldpoetsandwriters.com). Free. 217-725-9058.

#### **Glucose and blood pressure screens**

Fourth Wednesday of every month, 9:30-11:30am. Provided by SIU School of Medicine. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-528-4035.

#### **Fasters meeting**

Fourth Tuesday of every month, 6-7pm. A group discussion and support for a healthy lifestyle through intermittent fasting and eating real food. CrossFit Instinct, 301 South Grand Ave., 217-725-6715.

#### **Second Saturday Open Studio**

Second Saturday of every month. Watch pharmacy member artists at work and talk with them to learn about their creative process. Free. The Pharmacy Gallery and Art Space, 623 E. Adams St., 801-810-9278.

## **December**

#### **Dual Piano Christmas**

Dec. 16-17, 7pm. Dec. 18, 2pm. The ghosts of past entertainers such as Victor Borge and Liberace can be felt rampaging through the halls when Mark and Damien are at the ivories. \$20. Hoogland Center for the Arts LRS Theatre 1, 420 S. Sixth St., 217-523-2787.



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The Copper Coin Ballet Company and area dancers bring Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* to the stage Dec. 17.



Capital City Men's Chorus Christmas Concert is Dec. 18 at Laurel United Methodist Church.

#### **Holiday Pops in the Heartland**

Dec. 16, 7:30pm. A popular traditional performance by the Illinois Symphony Orchestra with the UIS Orchestra and Illinois Symphony Orchestra Youth Ensembles. Conducted by Jacobsen Woollen. \$5-\$63. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### **A Royal Christmas**

Dec. 16, 11:30am. Wear your favorite velvet, plush or sparkling attire. Enjoy music, sweet treats, punch and a visit from Santa who will be bringing gifts for all. Free. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-528-4035.

#### **The Jacksonville Symphony Chorale**

Dec. 17, 3pm. The Symphony Chorale and the Jacksonville High School Concert Choir join the orchestra with joyous sounds of the Christmas season in this always-popular concert. Bring the entire family to this afternoon holiday celebration. Santa promises to be in attendance. \$20. Illinois College Rammelkamp Chapel, Jacksonville, 1101 W. College Ave., 217-370-2472.

#### **The Knight Family Christmas Show**

Dec. 17, 7pm. Join Springfield's first family

of drag for a holiday evening of cheer, laughter, treats and holiday glitz and glamour. \$25-\$35. Hoogland Center for the Arts Peggy Ryder Theatre, 420 S. Sixth St.

#### ***The Nutcracker***

Dec. 17, 5:30pm. The Copper Coin Ballet Company and area dancers will bring Pyotr Tchaikovsky's classic music to life during Downtown Springfield, Inc.'s Old Capitol Holiday Walks. Performances are free, but a ticket is required for admittance. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, 212 N. Sixth St., 217-558-8844.

#### **Winter Old Capitol Farmers Market**

Dec. 17, 8am-12pm. Union Station, 500 E. Madison, 217-544-1723.

#### **Candle-Lighting Service**

Dec. 18, 6:30-7:30pm. Recognize the spiritual awakening of the Christ light that comes from within. Join a celebration with live music and singing of traditional Christmas carols. A gathering for fellowship will follow. Love offering. Unity of Springfield, 417 Cordelia, 217-523-5897.

#### **Capital City Men's Chorus Christmas Concert**

Dec. 18, 4pm. \$10. Laurel United Methodist

Church, 631 S. Grand Ave. W., 217-473-2045.

#### **Backgammon Club**

Dec. 21, 6-9pm. Live backgammon. Lessons are available for beginners and first-time entry is free. Harvest Market, 3001 Veterans Pkwy., 217-622-9447.

#### **Brown Bag Concert**

Dec. 21, 12:15-12:45pm. Featuring Sangamon Brass. Brown Bag lunch available for \$5 or bring your own lunch to enjoy. Free. First Presbyterian Church, 321 S. Seventh St., 217-528-4311.

#### **Life After Loss Grief Support Group**

Dec. 21, 1pm. Learn more about hospice and bereavement support with Robert Armidon, chaplain and bereavement coordinator with Kindred Hospice. Call to register. Free. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-503-4643.

#### **Nutty Nutcracker**

Dec. 22, 7pm. Holiday surprises abound when this magical tale turns upside down. \$5 general admission or \$42 reserved. Performance by Copper Coin Ballet. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.



### **Tidings of Comfort & Joy**

Dec. 24, 5:30pm. A service of song and scripture. First Church of the Brethren, 2115 Yale Blvd., 217-523-5212.

### **New Year's Countdown**

Dec. 30, 11:45am. Bring a list of items and wishes for your family, friends and yourself to share. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-528-4035.

### **First Night**

Dec. 31. On this night, Springfield's art, music and theater worlds meet in a spectacle of dazzling sights and sounds to celebrate the New Year. Bring the family to enjoy talented local and regional artists and performers at multiple venues. Hosted downtown by the Springfield Area Arts Council. 217-753-3519.

### **Burning Bowl Releasing Ceremony**

Jan. 1, 10-11am. Make a fresh start in the New Year with a symbolic Unity practice. The ceremony allows each person to release past shortcomings, regrets or things that no longer serve them, and begin the New Year with a peaceful, positive feeling. Love offering. Unity of Springfield, 417 Cordelia, 217-523-5897.

### **Healing Crystal Bowls**

Jan. 1, 6-8pm. Crystalize your intentions for the New Year with an immersive sound bath of crystal bowl tones and vibrations, and learn how the intentions will receive healing vibrations each month through the year. \$20 love offering suggested. Unity of Springfield, 417 Cordelia, 217-523-5897.

### **New Year's Day Stone Soup Hike**

Jan. 1, 10am-12pm. Join an easy 2-mile walk before sitting down to a shared meal of hot soup. Bring a vegetable, grain or meat for the soup and your own bowl and utensils. Meat should be first cooked at home. Meatless soup will be available. Hosted by the Sierra Club Sangamon Valley Group. RSVP on the Facebook event page. No dogs allowed in the garden. Free. Lincoln Memorial Garden, 2301 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-414-6325.

### **January Senior Crafty Creations**

Jan. 4, 10:30-11:30pm. Create sock gnomes while you connect with others in a relaxed environment. All supplies will be provided, but consider a donation of \$5 to help with costs. Ball-Chatham Senior Center, Chatham, 111 W. Mulberry St., 217-483-2713.



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Winter Old Capitol Farmers Market, Jan. 7, moves to Union Station.



Scintillating Shakespeare, Feb. 10., with conductor Jacobsen Woollen.

#### Friends of Genealogy Meeting

Jan. 7, 2-3:30pm. Are you interested in your family history? Have questions about how to break down brick walls you have in your family history research? Get tips and tricks on how to break down the walls. Free. Chatham Area Public Library, Chatham, 600 E. Spruce, 217-483-2713.

#### Winter Old Capitol Farmers Market

Jan. 7, 8am-12pm. Union Station, 500 E. Madison, 217-544-1723.

#### Photo Organization

Jan. 12, 6-7pm. Learn how to create a photo legacy so that you can enjoy these memories now and share them with future generations to come. Free. Chatham Area Public Library, Chatham, 600 E. Spruce, 217-483-2713.

#### Mayoral forum

5:30-6:30pm. *Illinois Times*, *Springfield Business Journal* and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce will

host a debate for city of Springfield mayoral candidates James Langfelder and Misty Buscher. Moderated by Bernie Schoenburg. Hoogland Center for the Arts, 420 S. Sixth St., 217-726-6600.

#### "Growing Up X"

Jan. 28-May 13. Gen X is the often-overlooked forgotten generation between Boomers and Millennials. Learn about the cultural touchstones that shaped this generation's youth which was the last generation to have had an analog childhood. [illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org). Illinois State Museum, 502 S. Spring St., 217-782-7386.

#### February Senior Crafty Creations

Feb. 1, 10:30-11:30am. Create fabric marker totes while you connect with others in a relaxed environment. All supplies will be provided, but consider a donation of \$5 to help with costs. Ball-Chatham Senior Center, Chatham, 111 W. Mulberry St., 217-483-2713.

#### "Weird Al" Yankovic

Feb. 4, 7pm. "The Unfortunate Return of the Ridiculously Self-Indulgent, Ill-Advised Vanity Tour." Lower your expectations. Again. \$39-\$89. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### AARP Smart Driver Course

Feb. 7, 9am-5pm. The eight-hour AARP safe driving class, certified by the state of Illinois, could help you become eligible for a discount on your auto insurance. Members \$20, non-members \$25. Bring your driver's license, payment in check only and insurance card. Bring a lunch or request a meal by calling the Daily Bread program by Friday, Feb. 3. 217-528-4035. \$20-\$25. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St.

#### Experience Rockballet

Feb. 9, 6:30pm. A sensory-friendly performance intended for an inclusive audience of all ages with sensory or other

needs. Presented by the dancers of the Copper Coin Ballet Company performing choreography to the music of rock band Queen. uispac.com. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### **Scintillating Shakespeare**

Feb. 10, 7:30pm. Jacobsen Woollen, conductor, Madison King, soprano and Carl Rosenthal, tenor. uis.pac. \$5-\$63.

#### **Heathers the Musical**

Feb. 17-19 and Feb. 24-26. A hilarious, heartfelt and homicidal cult classic based on one of the greatest teen comedy movies of all time. \$20. Hoogland Center for the Arts LRS Theatre 1, 420 S. Sixth St., 217-523-2787.

#### **Jerry Seinfeld**

Feb. 17, 7-9pm. America's premier comedian. uispac.com. \$67.50-\$175. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### **Mardi Gras Masquerade Gala**

Feb. 23, 6pm. "Beads & Blings. It's a Mardi Gras Thing." Silent auction, Cajun dinner and music by deejay Troy Armstrong. Hosted by AgeLinc. agelinc.org. \$60 per person. Crowne Plaza Springfield, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., 217-529-7777.

#### **Art as Relaxation**

Feb. 24, 10am-12pm. Watercolor 101, presented by Amy High. Call for reservations as seating is limited. Senior Services of Central Illinois, 701 W. Mason St., 217-503-4643.

#### **Winter Old Capitol Farmers Market**

Mar. 4, 8am-12pm. Union Station, 500 E. Madison, 217-544-1723.

#### **Star Wars & Beyond, the Best of John Williams**

Mar. 10, 7:30pm. A performance by the Illinois Symphony Orchestra with conductor Vince Lee. uis.pac. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### **Million Dollar Time Machine**

Mar. 11, 7:30pm. Twenty-four of the greatest artists that have ever lived will emerge one by one from a time machine and share the same stage for a truly epic show. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

#### **Train Fair**

Mar. 12, 10am-4pm. Visit the largest train show in downstate Illinois. See operating layouts. Early bird shopping (\$10) starts at 9am. Hosted by the Springfield Model Railroad Society. \$5. Under age 11 is free. Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 Sangamon Ave., 217-725-8047.

#### **Jeff Dunham: Still Not Canceled**

Mar. 17, 7pm. \$5-\$49.50. This ventriloquist, stand-up comedian and actor has appeared on numerous television shows. BOS Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza, 800-745-3000.



# Healthy, Wealthy and Wise

This special issue of Illinois Times will have articles to help you focus on improving your physical, mental and financial well-being.

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