

Meeting the Challenges

Quarterly

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24 hours a day—EVERYDAY
Information and Resources**

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION TO HELP US MEET OUR DAILY CHALLENGES AND LIVE MORE SUCCESSFULLY.....

Be Alert to Threats to a Senior's Financial Independence

By Roberta L. Wertenberg, Coordinator, Fifth District C.A.R.E. Program

***By the end of
the year 2002,
an estimated
47 per cent
of the population
will be caring for
an elderly parent.***

An inability to balance a check book, or make simple change may signal the onset of Alzheimer's type dementia. Persons with dementia are unusually susceptible to all types of financial fraud. A senior with Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, may fail to remember whether they paid a contractor yesterday, or the day before. They may pay for a service rendered with a \$100 bill, instead of \$10. A common characteristic of Alzheimer's type dementia is the loss of executive functioning, which includes bill paying. And, often lonely and isolated, they may become easy prey for an unscrupulous telemarketer or sales agent.

An elder parent may be living independently, cooking, bathing, or even driving by himself so that involved family members may actually be unaware that financial assistance and medical evaluation are required. But, becoming alert to changes in a person's ability to manage their financial affairs can permit steps to be taken to insure the continued financial independence of the senior.

A family member or concerned friend of long standing may be appropriate to assist the senior with financial decision making while the senior remains able to communicate their wishes. Such assistance should involve the execution of a Dura-

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CORRECTION

We, of course, make every effort to check and double-check the information we publish, but occasionally we make a mistake.

We appreciate our readers pointing out the error in the *Energy Expense* story in the summer issue! The correct information is that an "Electric clothes dryer" does use a lot of electricity and costs 30 cents per load if your energy rate is \$.10/kWh, 36 cents @ \$.12/kWh, or 42 cents @ \$.14/kWh. You may want to update the table in your issue with this corrected information. Thank you.

Meeting the Challenges

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EDITOR: Richard Smith

Telephone: 909.697.4697 / Fax: 909.697.4698

E-Mail: rsmith@vitalco.net

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(Continued from page 1)

ble Power of Attorney for Health Care, and may include Powers of Attorney, Living Trusts, or joint savings or checking accounts. If there is no one person in the senior's life who is able or willing to assume these duties, bill paying services, county adult protective service agencies, or public and private conservatorships are available.

It is necessary to focus on reducing the opportunities that the senior may have to be exposed to scams and fraud. One such step is to reduce the amount of junk mailings they receive. You can contact several trade associations on behalf of the senior. Direct Marketing Association, Inc. is one such group that has been responding to consumer's desire for reduced mailings. You may contact either Telephone Preference Service or Mail Preference Service at P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008. Simply request that your name or the name of the senior, be removed from telephone or mailing advertising. In cases where the senior suffers from a dementia, you can file a change of address with the postal department, and have the senior's mail delivered to a postal service or box.

Family members may also wish to re-evaluate

whether their loved one really needs that credit card.

Encourage the senior to carry only as much cash as is necessary, and have their paycheck direct deposited.

Advise your loved one never to withdraw money from their bank account for anyone except themselves. And never give out social security, bank account or phone card numbers over the telephone, unless you have placed the call.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW

(Taken directly from Penal Code Section 368)...

"The legislature finds and declares that crimes against the elderly and dependent adults are deserving of special consideration and protection, not unlike the special protections provided for minor children, because elders and dependent adults may be confused, on various medications, mentally or physically impaired, or incompetent, and therefore less able to protect themselves, to understand or report criminal conduct, or to testify in court proceedings on their own behalf."

Under Penal Code Section 368, any person who

"Things that matter most
must never be
at the mercy of things
which matter least."

--Goethe

To find out about **Caregiver Services... In-home assistance... Transportation...** Or just to talk with someone about your individual challenges...**Call the Riverside County Office on Aging Senior Help-**

causes or permits conditions likely to produce great bodily harm or death, threatens or imprisons, or permits a situation where victim's health may be endangered, or who engages in theft or embezzlement may be subject to special penalties under the law. These penalties include provision for prosecution of caretakers of the elderly or dependent, as well as non-caretakers. (i.e., contractors, investment agents, telemarketers, repair and sales agents).

If you are a senior or disabled individual who believes themselves a victim or fraud or abuse, please contact Riverside County Adult Protective Services at 1-800-491-7123 or the C.A.R.E. Program at (909) 486-6828. ■

If you appreciate *Meeting the Challenges* and would like to contribute to help support the publication, please send your donation to the non-profit: Partnership to Preserve Independent Living, *Meeting the Challenges Together*, 6292 Rivercrest Drive, Suite K, Riverside, CA 92507. Contributions to our organization are tax deductible under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. Thanks for your help!!

ARE You Missing Anything?

BenefitsCheckUp is a free, online service from the National Council on the Aging that helps seniors identify state and federal assistance programs that can help improve their quality of life. This confidential service contains a simple, straightforward questionnaire that takes no longer than 15 minutes to complete. It does not require your name, address, phone number, Social Security number, or other information that could be used to identify you. You enter simple information, such as your age, income, and ZIP code. Within minutes you get a report detailing programs and services for which you qualify and how to apply for them.

The BenefitsCheckUp report provides a carefully edited list of government programs older Americans most likely qualify for, including those that provide educational opportunities, employment programs, financial assistance and legal services, health care, prescription drug, home energy and housing assistance, in-home services, or volunteer opportunities.

Family and friends can also obtain facts about benefits that their loved ones may qualify for. So if you don't have Internet access, you might want to ask someone to help you find out if there are any benefits you might be missing! Chances are, you will be surprised to learn what benefits are available to you, regardless of your income.

You can access the website directly at www.benefitscheckup.org OR, as always, through your information resource: Vital Connections. Just search for Vital Connections in any search engine and then go to the Government Resources section for access to this and many other valuable resources. The direct address for Vital Connections is www.vitalco.net. ■

Are those Calls for Money to Support Your Police and Firemen on the Up and Up?

Maybe, but be careful! Our first reaction is probably a generous one. Most of us respect the work that law enforcement and fire protection do. We know they put their lives on the line and we may think that a donation will even help get us better service if we should need it.

BUT WAIT. According to Give.org, "there are a lot of hype merchants out there, fast talking hucksters only too happy to take your dollars without giving you all the facts needed to make an informed giving decision."

They continue, "If you donate to groups like these, your hardworking local police or firefighters might not be helped much, if at all. And you'll have poured your hard-earned money down the drain."

Here are the "Giving Basics" from www.give.org:

- ◆ Don't give cash. Make a check out to the organization.
- ◆ Don't give-in to pressure to give on the spot.
- ◆ Don't believe promises or suggestions that your

donation will give you "special treatment" from your police or firefighters.

- ◆ Ask about the organization's tax exempt status.
- ◆ Ask for written materials describing the group's programs and finances.
- ◆ Ask how much of each dollar you give will actually go to police or firefighter programs?
- ◆ Ask who the caller is and who they work for? If they work for a company that is "helping" raise the money, how much of your money will go to the fund-raising company.

If you are told that "all of the money" is going to the police or fire department, be careful because that is very unlikely.

Some fund-raisers for local police and fire departments are legitimate, so you may want to give when they call, but Give.org suggests that you ask the right questions before you decide.

And definitely, do not agree to let anyone come to your house to pick up your donation. ■

New 911
SENIOR EMERGENCY
CELLULAR PHONE PROGRAM
.....from Riverside County
Office on Aging *Senior HelpLink*

At risk Riverside County seniors, 60 years of age or older, who live alone, and may have difficulty reaching a stationary phone, and caregivers *who live with an "at risk"* Riverside County senior 60 years of age or older and may have difficulty reaching a stationary phone in case of emergency, may request a cellular phone that enables them to make 911 calls. These phones will be distributed subject to their availability. If you are interested in receiving a cellular phone (for 911 calls only), please call Valerie Wheat for more details at: 1-800-510-2020 or (909) 697-4697, Ext. 279.

If you would like to donate new or used phones to help provide at risk seniors with security and peace of mind, call Valerie Wheat from anywhere at (909) 697-4697, Ext. 279 (1-800-510-2020 in Riverside County only). Your donation must include the phone's charger unit. Phones that were mounted in a vehicle can not be accepted. ■

Retiring From Driving

Reprinted with Permission from “Senior Drivers on the Alert”
by the Beverly Foundation

For most of us, driving is an essential aspect of our independence—our ability to go where we want, when we want. The prospect of not driving—of having to depend on others for transportation—can be unsettling. And if we have to stop driving suddenly, because of a health problem or revocation of our license, the loss can seem overwhelming.

Like most life changes, giving up driving can be a lot easier if we plan for it well ahead of time:

- ◆ Get familiar with public transportation services in the areas you regularly visit by car. Instead of driving to the market, take the bus or a taxi for a change. (You might ask a family member to go with you the first couple of times.) See how long it takes, what the advantages and disadvantages are, and how you might compensate for any disadvantages. If you're 60 or older, consider joining Dial-A-Ride.
- ◆ Make up a systematic transportation plan for how and when you would

get to important locations if you didn't drive. Think about how you might have to do some things differently—for example, planning menus ahead several days or a week at a time if you can no longer pop over to the market every day or two.

- ◆ Calculate what driving really costs you—including gas, insurance, maintenance and repairs. Weigh the convenience against the costs. The savings could be substantial.
- ◆ Have some serious discussions with family members, friends, and neighbors about your transportation needs. Explore how they might help by doing some of the driving. ■

Most of us, who haven't used public transportation, don't know what services are available in our area. We may think there aren't any, when there are many! To find out what transportation is available in your area, call Riverside County's **Senior Help-Link** at 1-800-510-2020

Excerpts from the video -
**“How to Avoid Harmful
Medicine Interactions”**

Did you know that “everything we eat or drink is a mixture of chemical compounds”- food, beverages, vitamins, herbal supplements - and they can all interact with medicines to make them less effective or result in very serious, sometimes life threatening, reactions?

We encourage you to view this video at your senior center or public library, but here are some *Safe Medicine Use Guidelines* to begin with:

- Be sure to tell your doctor ALL of the medications and over-the-counter medicines you are taking, including vitamins and herbal supplements
- Carefully read and follow the instructions on each prescription label and all directions and warnings on packages, inserts and information pages
- Never take medications with alcohol
- Only take medications that were prescribed for you
- Keep an up-to-date record of all the medications you are taking and carry it with you in your wallet or purse
- Don't take more or less than the prescribed amount of any drug. ■

Diabetes IS GUILTY of Racial Discrimination

by Charlotte Hodge RN, NP, CDE

16 million Americans have Diabetes and Hispanics are diagnosed more frequently. 1 in 4 Hispanics over age 45 has diabetes and Latinos account for 41% of people with diabetes in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Obesity is a major risk factor in the development of Type 2 diabetes and obesity has increased by 30% over the last ten years. There is an epidemic of obesity in our culture and our children are more frequently found to have (adult onset) diabetes.

Traditions are hard to break and fond memories of the family table are dearest to our hearts. But, if our grandmothers had believed they were preparing food that promoted obesity and contributed to heart disease and diabetes, I think there is little chance that they would have continued to cook in the "old ways".

When we lived in an agricultural society, our forefathers got plenty of exercise farming and performing physical chores. Obesity was rare as the calories they consumed were necessary to

provide the energy needed to handle daily tasks.

The concept of feeling guilty about not going to the gym did not exist. Today, however, most of us do feel a sense of guilt since we don't get enough exercise to burn the calories we eat. Excess calories are stored as fat and we quickly become overweight.

Fortunately, we now have helpful information available and can learn to improve our health while continuing to honor our culture. So without attempting to discard one of the most important pleasures in our culture—eating traditional foods, our efforts should focus on maintaining high flavor while reducing calories and fat, factors which have been shown to lead to the chronic diseases associated with obesity. Can't be done, you say?You will be surprised.

Even if you believe you are eating healthy, give these recipes a chance. Your willingness to try something new, for the sake of your family's health, will be an important step toward improving dietary habits and creating new traditions for your children and

grandchildren for years to come.

Nina's Lowfat Beans

[NINA GRANJA WAS BORN IN SPAIN AND ADAPTED HER GRANDMOTHER'S RECIPES TO ACCOMMODATE A LOW FAT VEGETARIAN DIET.]

1 lb. Pinto beans
1 bell pepper
1 chicken bouillon cube
1½ cups diced tomato
1 onion
1 clove of garlic
1 bunch cilantro, chopped
1 tsp. salt
2 celery stalks
jalapenos to taste

Pour water and bouillon into a large pot, boil. Quarter vegetables, put in boiling water. Cook on High for 15 minutes. Rinse beans & add to pot. Cook on high for 15 min. Cover. Let simmer for 2 ½ hours, or until beans are very soft. Add cilantro for last 5 minutes of cooking time. Stir every 20 minutes. Serves 10.

*91 calories instead of 127
0 grams fat instead of 8
274 mg sodium versus 468
16 grams carbohydrate
0 mg saturated fat
0 mg cholesterol*

Diabetic exchange:

1 starch serving.
Nina's Healthy Rice

- 1 tsp. Mrs. Dash seasoning
- 1 jalapeno
- 1 tbsp canola or olive oil
- 2 cups white rice
(uncooked)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 cups of water
(If using brown rice,
use 2½ c. water)
- ½ green bell pepper
- 1 tomato
- ½ red bell pepper
- 1 bunch of green onions

In a large deep skillet, heat oil and salt. Sauté diced vegetables. Put rice in skillet and sauté until it is golden brown. Add water, bring to a boil, lower heat and cover until the rice is flaky and all water is absorbed, (about 35 minutes). Serves 8.

197 calories instead of 276
3 grams fat instead of 5
331 mg sodium versus 980
38g carbohydrate
0 mg saturated fat
0 mg cholesterol

Diabetic exchange:
2 starch, 1 fat.

We think you will agree that these traditional foods are high in flavor, though low in fat. Try them out the next time you cook. ■

Become a *Consejeras*.....

You can join one of the first *Consejeras* Programs to be conducted in California by the American Diabetes Association! *Consejeras* are Latinas who:

- ◆ Agree to promote Diabetes awareness in the community
- ◆ Encourage other Hispanics to get involved with activities to promote health awareness
- ◆ Receive comprehensive Diabetes education and training designed for lay counselors
- ◆ Conduct (over a 12-month period of time) two informal, enjoyable, culturally appropriate Home Health Parties for neighborhood friends and family
- ◆ With assistance from a Program Coordinator, choose and prepare a healthy menu to serve guests. Receive a hostess gift and reimbursement for the cost of easy to prepare healthy foods.

Diabetes home health parties may be held in neighborhood centers as well as homes. ...Get Involved ...Volunteer to be a *Consejeras*.... Here's How. Call the American Diabetes Association *Consejera* Program Chairman, Charlotte Hodge at 909-276-6243 and volunteer today. ■

Cat Nip May Ward Off Mosquitoes

It was recently reported on National Public Radio, that preliminary studies indicate Cat Nip may be 10 times more powerful than anything now commercially available to repel mosquitoes.

So, next time you are going to be somewhere that mosquitoes may be a problem, why not conduct an experiment yourself? Crush some fresh Cat Nip leaves (easy to grow!) and rub the oil on your exposed skin.

If scientists are right, you shouldn't have any problem with mosquitoes, but the neighborhood cats could be a different story! ■

UNDERSTANDING UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR

By Jeanne Klingenberger, Program Director
at Care Connexus, Inc. (Formerly known as Cooper - Burkhardt House, Inc).

Often it is hard to understand why someone you have known for many years has begun to behave in ways that are unusual and sometimes difficult. It could be your mother, father, spouse, or a friend. The person may have already been given a diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's disease, but the disease process and symptoms are frequently misunderstood.

Someone with dementia does not always respond in the way that they did in the past. In the early stages they may try to hide or cover up their inability to remember people and events. In response, a family member or friend may personalize feelings of frustration with the individual. As a result, they may try to avoid being around a person with dementia because they don't know how to handle their own feelings or discomfort.

Also, the person with dementia may have diminished reasoning and language skills so the methods of communication, which have been used all of one's life, to convey, or to convince this per-

son, are no longer applicable. Explaining, giving and simplifying directions, repeating, and consoling will not always bring the desired results. Believing that the forgetful person can control their thought patterns if they try harder is not wise and may only result in further frustration for the family member or friend.

It is important to remember that not everyone with dementia will experience the same behaviors, or at the same degree of intensity. Some of the problems that are associated with dementia are: agitation, wandering, repetitive behaviors, needing constant reassurance, suspiciousness, restlessness, incontinence, sleep disturbances, lack of hygiene, and refusing help from others.

Knowing when to graciously accept the behaviors associated with dementia can often assist one in staying involved in the person's life. Ask yourself, is the behavior really a problem? If the person is safe in his or her environment, it may not be. Arguing or trying to change the behavior may

cause more stress for both the person with dementia and the family member. Try not to be as rigid with social norms. Also recognize that some family members may be in a state of denial about the person's abilities and state of being. Denial prevents acceptance of the person's limitations.

If you are a caregiver, getting acquainted with other individuals who are experiencing the same challenges can help with the feelings of frustration and isolation that you may be experiencing. Also, look for caregiver support groups, reading material, or check Web Sites for information on dementia. The more educated a person becomes about the behaviors associated with dementia, the better he or she is able to deal with the day-to-day experiences associated with this disease.

Also, try to keep a sense of humor. When a person with dementia is acting difficult, it is not always done deliberately. More than ever, persons with dementia need companionship, acceptance, attention and support. This holds true for their caregivers as well. So stay involved as much as

possible and try to remain objective. The person you knew and cared about is still there underneath the symptoms. Take time to enjoy them.

Care Connexus, Inc. is an Adult Day Care, Adult Day Health Care and an Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, located in Riverside and Sun City. For information on caregiver support services, you may call 909-509-2500 ■

Don't Ignore the Warning Signs of a Medical Emergency

The following list from *the American College of Emergency Physicians* spells out potentially life-threatening symptoms:

- Chest pain lasting for more than two minutes
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Sudden dizziness, weakness or change in vision
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- A change in mental status, such as confusion or extreme lethargy.

Immediately call 911 or your local emergency number whenever these symptoms are present! ■

Animal Assisted Therapy

by Richard Waxman, Director, "Paws&Hearts" in Palm Springs

Health care professionals around the country are inviting "therapy dogs" into their facilities. The benefits of Animal Assisted Therapy have been shown to reduce depression and anxiety, lower blood pressure, calm Alzheimer's patients, and the lift the spirits of anyone in a hospital or institutionalized healthcare setting. As noted in a recent article in Time magazine, "...therapy dog visits are becoming an important and fast-growing component of modern patient care." For those residents who are no longer able to care for a dog on their own, having a dog come for weekly visits can make all the difference in the world.

"Paws & Hearts" is a non-profit, serving the Coachella Valley, which is made up of dedicated volunteers, both 2 legged and 4 legged, who provide "therapy" visits to local hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, adult day care centers, Alzheimer's facilities and children's facilities.

Our Canine Ambassadors provide a little (actually a lot!) of one-on-one love and companionship to those folks

that need it the most! Volunteers visit their assigned facility on a weekly basis and usually spend part of the visit entertaining residents in the community room. For those residents unable to attend, the volunteers visit room to room.

For some residents, missing a visit is an upsetting experience. Recently, Lucky and I were making our usual visits, but one of the residents was nowhere to be found. As we were leaving we met the woman and her daughter returning from a doctor's appointment. The daughter was delighted to meet the dog, as her mother so insisted they rush back so she wouldn't miss her morning visit with Lucky!

Volunteers, both 2 legged and 4 legged, are always welcome. For more information about how you and your dog can become involved, or to find out how visits to your facility can be scheduled, contact Richard Waxman at: (760) 778-5306, E:Mail us: pawsanhearts@aol.com or visit our website <<http://www.pawsandhearts.org>> ■

DO YOU NEED A LAWYER TO WRITE YOUR WILL?

by George F. Dickerman, Attorney and Counselor At Law

The quick answer is no, but you probably should. An attorney will explore numerous issues which you might not have thought about, including the consequences to your heirs of having to “probate” your will, and the usefulness of creating a trust to carry out your wishes without the need for court intervention.

However, you can write your own will, and it will be valid if you comply with the Probate Code requirements. Specifically, Probate Code Section 6111 authorizes what is called a “holographic” will. This is a will that is written in your own handwriting, dated and signed. It need not be witnessed.

The main requirements are that the “material provisions” of the will (i.e., specific persons and property) and your signature are entirely written in your own handwriting. Particular problems may arise if the will is not dated, as it may conflict with another will you may have previously prepared which contains inconsistent provisions.

There are commercial-

ly printed will forms, which can also be used. These forms may contain the language that identifies the document as a will, and that it is your desire to use the document to state your testamentary intent. If you use the pre-printed form, the date, material provisions and your signature must still be in your own handwriting.

If you do not have a will or any other “estate plan”, then your property will be distributed upon your death according to the State’s laws of intestate succession (to your closest living relatives). Your property will not be automatically given to the State. However, without a will your personal choices will not be known and you will have no control over which relatives receive your possessions.

If you cannot afford to have a lawyer prepare your will or advise you regarding an estate plan, then by all means prepare a “holographic” will for yourself.

If you have questions, you may call Mr. Dickerman’s office at 909.788.2156 ■

Where on the Internet....***Will You Find Easy and Quick Links to ALL of This?***

...ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, PBS, Reuters, Time Magazine, Press-Enterprise, San Bernardino Sun, The Desert Sun & and newspapers from AROUND THE WORLD?

...the Weather Channel, the National Weather Service, and even the earthquake information?

...Sports? ...How about ESPN, the NBA, the NFL, College Football, Major League Baseball, the NHL, golf...and nearly everything in between?

...what about dictionaries, including translating dictionaries? ...the Farmer’s Almanac, encyclopedias, access to the Library of Congress, on-line journals and magazines of all sorts?

...what about information on alternative medicine, the AMA, Harvard Medical OnLine, Health Finder from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Mayo Clinic’s health site, the Medical Board of the State of California, sites listing medications and their side effects, the U.S. National Library of Medicine, and more? ...Children’s health, sites dealing with special women’s health issues,all in one convenient place?

...what about easy links to home and garden sites, nutrition sites and recipes for just about anything, government agencies—county, state and federal?information on pet care, postage rates and zip code look-up, what’s on television or at the movies....not to mention hundreds of ways to search the Internet?

...Not Yahoo, AOL, or MSN!

.....MAKE the smart move...

Make Vital Connections
YOUR HOMEPAGE too !

THE ANSWER IS...ROUTE 66and You Are Invited to a 75th Anniversary Party! November 9-11, 2001

The three day event will be hosted by the non-profit East Mojave Route 66 Association in the heart of the last remaining stretch of original Route 66 between Seligman, AZ and Victorville, CA at Needles.

In California, poker runs will begin at the *California Route 66 Museum* in Victorville, on both Friday the 9th and Saturday the 10th, and follow Route 66 to the

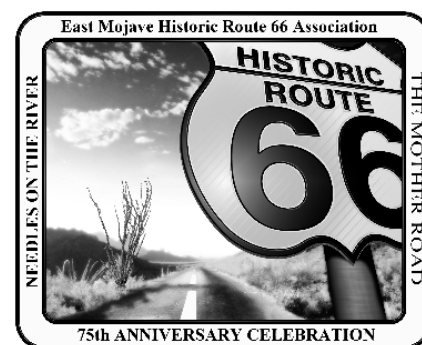


Mother Road Museum at the newly restored *Harvey House* in Barstow, the *Bagdad Cafe* at Newberry Springs, *Roy's Cafe* in Amboy, and the newly restored *School House* in Goffs. The East Mojave Route 66 Association says, "Getting there is half the fun!"

A car and motorcycle "show-n-shine" will be held in Needles from 5pm on the 9th and then all day Saturday.

Saturday will feature a golf tournament, a walking tour of historic locations in downtown Needles and a street dance with lots of great, live music from the 40's, 50's and 60's

Sunday, Veteran's Day, will conclude the celebration



with a parade and "show-n-shine" awards.

For more information, and to get registration forms for the various events, contact the East Mojave Historic Route 66 Association (760) 326-2050 or by E-mail at emhr66a@yahoo.com

Registration forms are also available at the website: www.wemweb.com/emhr66/flyer.html ■

New Name for Medicare Agency

The new name for what used to be called the Health Care Financing Administration is "Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services" (CMS). This agency administers the Medicare and Medicaid (MediCal in California) programs and also administers the new Children's Health Insurance Program. Accompanying the new name is a promise of better service for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries.

We have provided an **easy Internet link to ALL the Health and Human Services agencies in Vital Connections, under Government Services.....** Don't know how to get to Vital Connections? That's easy too.... **Just type Vital Connections in the search field of any Internet search engine ...then click on SEARCH** and you will find Vital Connections listed as one of the first three responses to your inquiry. Why not visit the new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website today? Or, you can call toll-free, 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-6227). ■

Get answers to questions about raising grandchildren, call WarmLine at 1-800-303-0001 !

Wandering Behavior and SAFE RETURN....

by Kathleen Hairston, Director of Programs/Services, Riverside/San Bernardino Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association

One of the behaviors associated with Alzheimer's disease is wandering, causing individuals to become disoriented and lost.

Nearly 60 % of people with Alzheimer's disease living at home will wander during the course of the disease and sometimes frequently. Up to 25% of those residing in residential care facilities will wander. Once an individual wanders they have a 40% chance of wandering again.

Wandering cannot be predicted—it can occur anytime, anyplace. If not located within 24 hours, 46 percent of wandering individuals may die.

Tips To Prevent Wandering...

- Check to see if the person is hungry, needs to go to the bathroom, or feels uncomfortable
- Encourage movement and exercise to reduce anxiety and restlessness
- Involve the person in daily activities such as folding laundry or preparing a meal
- Remind the person that you know how to find them and that they are in the right place

- Reduce noise levels and confusion
- Reassure the person who may feel lost, abandoned, or disoriented
- Alert police ahead of time that you care for a person with dementia
- Make a plan of what to do if the person becomes lost

Be Prepared For A Wandering Incident...

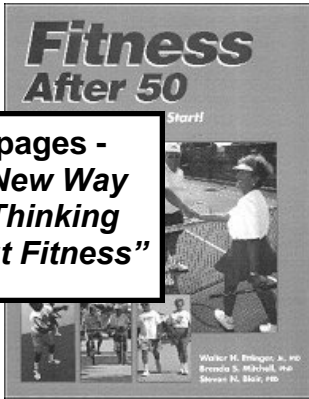
- Keep a list of the person's age, height, weight, hair color, blood type, eye color, identifying marks, medical condition, medication, dental work, jewelry, allergies and complexion
- Make multiple copies of a recent close-up photograph
- Make a list of places the person might go, such as familiar walking routes, former neighborhoods, places of worship, workplaces, or favorite places.
- Keep scented clothing on hand to give to police. Wearing plastic gloves, store a piece of the person's unwashed clothing in a sealed bag. Replace it monthly to retain scent

- Make a list of possible dangerous areas you have identified in the neighborhood.
- The Alzheimer's Association provides a Safe Return program, the only nationwide system that helps identify, locate and return individual's with Alzheimer's and related disorders who wander and become lost.

To find out the location of the Safe Return registration site closest to you or to request a Safe Return registration brochure, call the Riverside/San Bernardino Counties Chapter at 1-800-660-1993. You can also visit www.alz.org and register online. Or, call 1-800-272-3900 to register by phone.

The Alzheimer's Association is encouraging everyone to register their loved ones who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. Registration is only a one-time charge of \$40.

Registration in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program would make a thoughtful and potentially life-saving gift. ■

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ALL ABOUT THE EXOTIC SPICE: SAFFRON

Inside of every flower you will find thread-like filaments, which are called stigma. Stigma are important to the reproductive process of the plants. Saffron is made up of the stigmas of the crocus flower. It takes an acre of land, and a lot of picking, to harvest about 5 pounds of saffron.

That's why saffron is the most expensive spice by weight but, because a little saffron goes a long way, it isn't very expensive to use. A single gram (there are about 31 grams in 1 ounce!) of saffron will add golden color and fragrant flavor to about 10 recipes of saffron rice for four, several loaves of bread or a couple of big pots of classic or chicken paella. ■

What Is.....

"Compulsive Gambling?"

For most people, gambling is a recreational activity. However, for some it is a progressive disease that can end in financial ruin, a decline in health, depression, and even suicide.

Some of the signs and symptoms of gambling addiction are:

- Use of gambling as a relief from emotional pain
- Need for the excitement to make themselves feel good
- Wagering of higher amounts to win back losses
- Belief that they can get out of debt with a big win
- Hiding gambling from family and friends and lying about money.

Some people have gambled all of their lives, but find that it accelerates after retirement. Others have never or seldom gambled before retirement, but begin to try to win to improve their limited income situation. Others may be bored or just looking for social activity.

Problem gamblers deny their addiction and hide it until they begin to exclude all other activities.

Please call the California Council on Problem Gambling for more information at (760) 320-0234 ■

High Blood Pressure and Cholesterol NOW Suspect in Alzheimer's

by Michael S. Goryan, MA, Director of Education, Resources for Continuing Education

High blood pressure and elevated cholesterol are key ingredients in the recipe for heart attack or stroke. New evidence suggests these two factors may also increase the risk for Alzheimer's disease. Finnish researchers have found that individuals with high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol in middle age were more than twice as likely to have Alzheimer's now.

"There are so many people who have higher blood pressure and cholesterol values than they should. That's important not only for the heart, but possibly also for the brain," says Miia Kivipelto, MD, a research fellow in the department of neuroscience and neurology at the University of Kuopio. "The message is to treat hypertension and hypercholesterolemia early."

In the study, published in the *British Medical Journal*, individuals at least 73 years old with high systolic blood pressure or high cholesterol values had a significantly higher risk, nearly double, of developing Alzheimer's disease. In those individuals with both conditions,

the risk was three-and-half-times the norm. How high a blood pressure was a risk factor? Researchers found that a systolic blood pressure of 140 or higher was a risk. For cholesterol a level of over 251 was considered too high and a risk factor that could lead to Alzheimer's. If an individual is found to have BP or cholesterol at these levels or higher should immediately work toward lowering their blood pressure and/or cholesterol to avoid possible risks of developing Alzheimer's disease.

High blood pressure and high cholesterol levels are controllable. Diet, exercise, perhaps medication can help control these two factors. Just losing weight may diminish the risk of Alzheimer's disease. It is believed that when one part of an individual's health is at risk, the whole person is at risk for a myriad of other possible diseases.

In a study, published in the June 13 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Emmanuel Mignot, MD, PhD, associate professor of psychiatry at

Stanford University School of Medicine, found that a genetic variant, ApoE4, which is associated with Alzheimer's, is also associated with sleep apnea—the condition where breathing becomes extremely shallow or stops completely during sleep. Sufferers jolt awake many times a night and feel exhausted during the day. There is a hypothesis that sleep apnea may result from subtle injuries to vessels in the area of the brain that regulates breathing.

Sleep apnea has been linked to both cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's, and ApoE4 to high cholesterol. What's more, he says, "there's evidence suggesting that taking drugs to reduce cholesterol might also reduce the risk of Alzheimer's."

Mignot further stated, "These three things -- sleep-disordered breathing, vascular abnormalities, and Alzheimer's -- are somehow connected." Exactly how they relate is still unclear. It could be that "when we detect sleep apnea, it's an early sign of brain injury that might later lead to Alzheimer's." ■

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Need a number for senior services? ...Office on Aging Senior HELPLINK ...1-800-510-2020

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