ACCESS

Your Link To Community Resources

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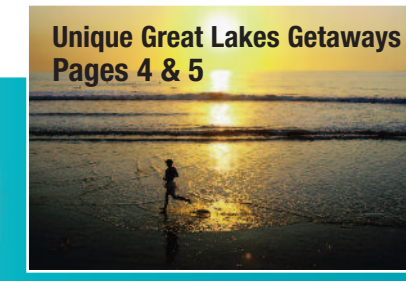
Serving the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St.Clair and Washtenaw



AAA 1-B programs help caregivers find assistance

Knowing where to turn when you need help and accepting help when it is available can be life changing. Alvin Fouche of Southfield cares for his 94-year old mother, Julia Fouche, in his home because he does not want her living in a nursing home. It has not been easy but he does it because he wants the best for her. Julia is in the advanced stages of dementia and most days does not know who her son is. Early on, Al contacted the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, and was connected to supportive services and programs to help him manage some of the responsibilities associated with caring for his mother.

Julia and Alvin Fouche

"The support I have received has been a life saver," said Fouche. "I don't know what I would do without it."

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, Al takes his mother to Sheltering Arms Adult Day Service, a program of Catholic Social Services of Oakland County, by 9 a.m. There, Julia participates in social activities, such as games, current events, exercise and music. She also has a good lunch and enjoys a snack. A SMART bus comes to get Julia to take her back home at about 3 p.m. On this day, as Julia is getting ready to leave and Marsha Moran Sackett, Adult Day Service Program Coordinator at Sheltering Arms, is helping Julia with her coat, Julia whispers, "I love you all."

Julia's visit to Sheltering Arms makes it possible for Al to work about five hours each day. A former environmental engineer and business owner, Al now manages a flexible work schedule by doing carpentry and home modifications for various clients. This allows Al to care for his mother.

"It's not easy," says Fouche. "I need to make a living but right now Mom is my priority."

Al's day typically begins at 5 a.m., when he gets up, gets dressed, eats

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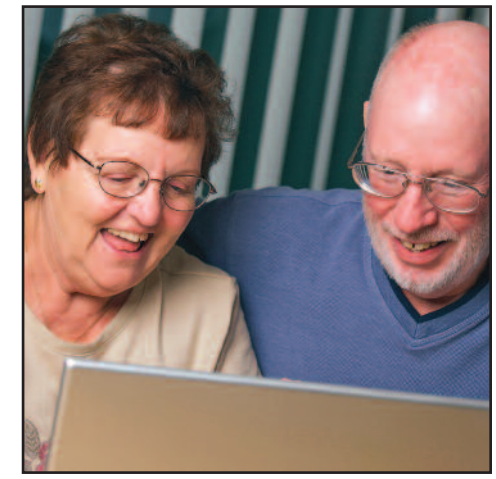
Online social networks help seniors stay connected

There are more older adults joining online social networks than ever before. They are becoming members of websites like Facebook, Eons or Twitter as a way to connect with family and friends on a regular basis.

Some have found social networking to be a great way to reconnect with those they've lost touch with through the years. Others find it's an easy way to rebuild social connections after experiencing loss through death, divorce or illness. Still others like it because it's an easy way to post and share photos and videos online, especially with friends and family who might live out of state. Members can view pictures or artwork, online just moments after they're created.

How does it work?

Most social networking sites work in much the same way. You start by creating a profile, which is typically your photo, your name, and few tidbits of info. You then search the site for people you know and invite them to join your network. You can share photos, videos or status updates, which are short, typed messages that let people know what you're doing, feeling or thinking. Your friends are able to see your messages and respond–starting a continuous online dialogue. It's a great way to connect, socialize and share info, with most folks checking into the site once or twice a day to catch up with their online friends. Some sites also have groups based on common interests that you can join (quilting, scrapbooking and pets are some examples).



Staying safe online

Selina Babcock, 68, decided to join last October. An art teacher with Wayne Westland schools for the past 43 years, Babcock said, "A colleague who was on Facebook kept telling me that former students wanted to get back in touch to let me know what they had accomplished. So I decided to take the plunge into this virtual world of social networking."

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AAA 1-B programs help caregivers *continued from page 1*

and prepares for the two to two-and–a-half hours it will take him to get Julia ready. In the midst of the morning routine of bathing, dressing and feeding Julia, Al is often mopping floors and washing sheets, a result of Julia's incontinence. Dementia has had a devastating impact on the Fouche family. Julia's relationship with Al's wife of 30 years, Jacqueline, has changed dramatically because of the illness.

"They used to be very close and now Mom won't have anything to do with Jackie," explained Al. "She is jealous of my wife and has alienated her, so the responsibility of her care falls on me."

Unfortunately, Al rarely gets a good night sleep between dealing with the challenges of Julia's incontinence and finding her wandering through the house at one, two, three and four in the morning. "She gets into everything, drinks products, and puts things like toothpaste in her hair," explained Al. "I've given her a private bathroom that contains only necessary items to help keep her safe and I've installed gates around the house to help contain her from being able to get around the whole house."

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA-1-B) can help caregivers like Fouche find information and connect with the community and in-home resources and services that are available to assist them. The AAA 1-B Information and Assistance line is staffed by certified Resource Specialists with access to information on thousands of in-home and community services. It can be reached by dialing 800-852-7795 and is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. through 5 p.m.

"Calling the AAA 1-B and finding Sheltering Arms was one of the best things I did," explains Fouche. "It helped me get the assistance I need to continue caring for my mom, while still making a living and taking care of the other things I need to do."

"Caregivers don't have to struggle alone," says Jennifer Houghton, Area Agency on Aging 1-B Benefits and Access Manager. "Calling and talking to one of our Resource Specialists can help you hone in on the resources that are available for you locally and will work best in your situation."

The AAA 1-B Resource Specialists can also help in determining whether federal or state benefits may be available to help pay for some of these services.

"Caregivers often find themselves facing enormous responsibilities and are not aware of the services available to assist them or where to turn for help," said Tina Abbate Marzolf, Chief Executive Officer, AAA 1-B. "We can help them sort that out and point them in the right direction."

For more information about the services and resources available in your area, please call 800-852-7795, or visit www.aaa1b.com.

Online social networks *continued from page 1*

Being fresh to the idea, Babcock had to figure out how to get started and how to make sure her privacy was protected online.

There's a delicate balance between what information is safe to be public and what should remain private. "I'm very cautious as to what I put on the net and who I select to be a part of my online community." Babcock acknowledged that she only accepts those into her network she knows or has taught in the past.

In the book, "Using the Internet Safely for Seniors for Dummies®" by Linda Criddle and Nancy C. Muir, you'll find very helpful information to protect yourself and others while online. Here are a few simple rules:

1. Review each site's privacy policies so you know who they might share your information with and who can see your information online. Adjust all privacy settings prior to posting.
2. Photos, commentary, and your user name should never convey your socio-economic status, your home, your car, or other aspects of your life.
3. Be careful what you post. Remember, you have little control over what happens to the content once it's posted.

Getting started

There are several ways to go about joining a social network, but first, you need to know what's out there. Here are a few social networking sites. Unless noted, there is no fee for basic use.

www.facebook.com Communicate with friends and family on the network by inviting and accepting them into your online community.

www.eons.com Similar to Facebook, but geared towards the baby boomer generation. You will find lots of groups to join here.

www.mywayvillage.com Targeted to seniors and their families, this user-friendly site with senior-focused technology, provides ongoing live support to keep families connected in a safe, secure online community. The monthly fee starts at $14.99 and covers usage for the senior's unlimited number of family and friends. Call 800-223-5080 for more information.

www.twitter.com This website details activities, moment by moment, within the life of celebrities or everyday people. Users sign up to follow the "tweets" or instant messages of other users.

www.flickr.com A photo sharing site that lets you load photos online and share them with friends and family.

After doing a little research to find a network, one of the best ways to learn the ropes is through a professional. Start by contacting your local library, community center, or senior center to see if a social networking class is offered.

If you prefer to learn from the comfort of your own home, visit www.thirdage.com, a site developed to deliver valuable content, online classes and products for adults age 45+. Among a wide variety of learning opportunities is "Navigating the Internet," a six-week online course ($99) that will bring you up to speed on everything having to do with the Internet, including social networking.

facebook

Become a fan of the Area Agency on Aging 1-B on Facebook. Our page is updated frequently with events, media stories and other items of interest for caregivers, older adults and adults with disabilities.

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ASK the expert

Jim Schuster
Certified Elder Law Attorney

Legal basics for seniors and caregivers

What basic legal documents should I have to "get my affairs in order?"

At a minimum everybody should have a Will, and durable and health-care powers of attorney.

What is a Power of Attorney and why should I have one?

A power of attorney lets you appoint someone to act on your behalf. If you fall ill, even for a brief time, you may need someone to help you manage your financial or healthcare matters. In addition, you should have an advance directive that addresses end-of-life medical treatment. Otherwise, your last illness could include "Terry Schiavo" like court battles.

What is a living trust and do I need one?

A living trust is a comprehensive estate planning and organizing document. The trust controls all assets (e.g. accounts and property, transferred to it.) It makes for uniform management of all your property during your life and after death. It avoids probate. Whether you need one or not depends on your preference, net worth, the complexity of your property, the complexity of your inheritance plans and so on. A trust can cost more than probate for smaller and simple estates.

Can a joint account be used to avoid probate?

Joint accounts are not a safe way to avoid probate. If a joint owner gets sued, divorced or goes through bankruptcy, his bad luck becomes yours. Your account could be lost or tied up in court. Any one of multiple owners on an account can take money out of the account. This remains true after your death. The first person to the bank can empty the account. The bank will not limit them to a fraction. In joint property such as investments or real estate, a co-owner has veto power over sale or mortgage.

Should I take more than the required annual minimum out of my IRA?

IRAs were designed as retirement accounts so that a person could pay a lower tax rate in retirement. Taking only the minimum can cause you to pay higher taxes on large withdrawals in cases of financial emergency. Children who inherit an IRA may also end up paying high taxes on withdrawals while they are still working. Talk to your tax and financial advisor to see what's best for you.

Do I have to worry about "Death Taxes?"

Inheritance taxes are a worry for millionaires, not the average person. However, income taxes may be a concern for your heirs. IRAs, annuities and savings bonds may hold a large amount of untaxed income. Your heirs will pay the tax.

Is it a good idea to have an unrecorded quit claim deed transferring my home to my children so it will avoid probate when I die?

A deed transfers ownership of property. A deed that transfers your home to others, even though it is not recorded, will cause the taxes to be reassessed from the date of signing to the date it is recorded. This can cause substantial back taxes owed with interest and penalties.

Medicare terminated my therapy, what can I do?

All Medicare benefits are subject to the "medically reasonable and necessary" standard. If your doctor agrees with you that continued therapy is beneficial, then you should appeal. The decision will likely be changed. Instructions for beginning the appeal process are found on the back of the Monthly Summary Notice you receive from Medicare.

Do I have to spend all my money on nursing home bills?

No. Medicaid, the program that pays for long-term nursing home care, allows credits and exemptions as does the income tax. By taking advantage of these, you can save a significant amount of your money. See your elder law attorney for help with your specific situation.

Do caregivers have special legal needs?

A child serving as a full-time caregiver needs authority to do the job, which means powers of attorney. In addition, the question of compensation must be addressed. Will the caregiver be compensated if the parent goes to the nursing home? Should the caregiver be given extra recognition in the Will? Failure to address these matters by legal contract can result in expensive probate court involvement in family affairs.

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Don't Miss the Area Agency on Aging 1-B's Living Well Radio Series!

"**Living Well**" is a radio series that can be heard on our five radio partners. This informational feature provides tips, resources and important information to family caregivers, who are often struggling to balance caregiving with work, family and other obligations. "**Living Well**" sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Bill Hayes at 248-644-1990.

*Many thanks to our recent sponsors who have helped bring you "**Living Well**."*

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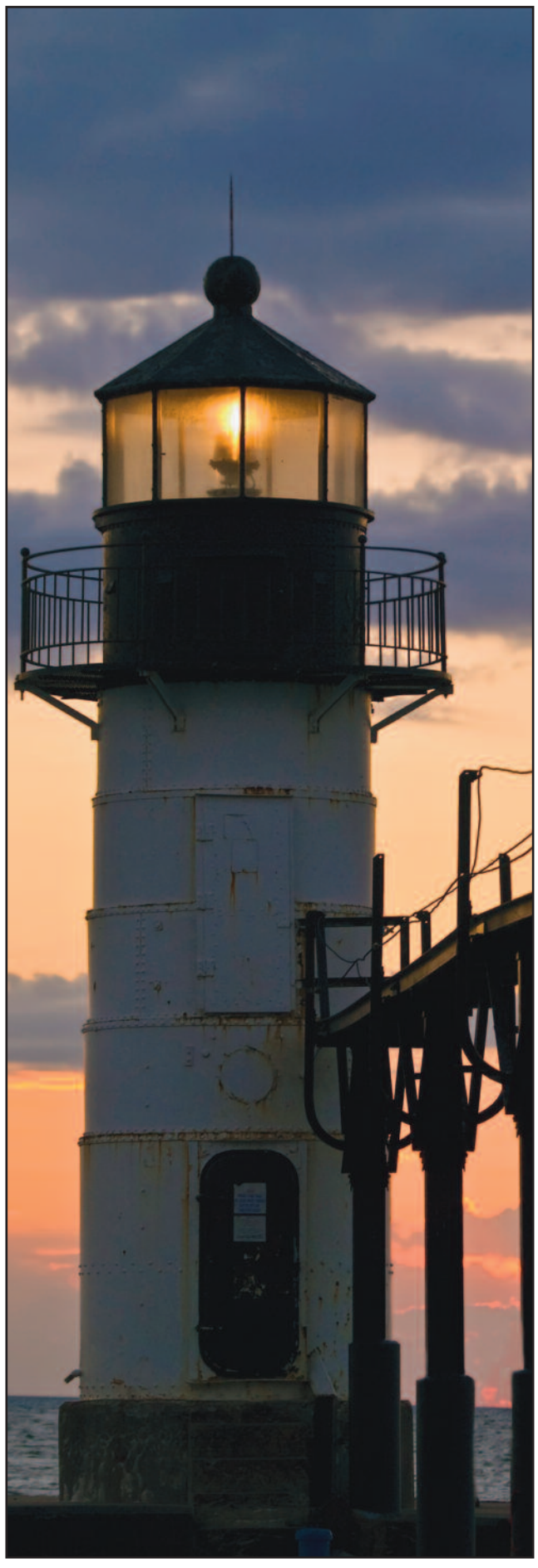
Unique Great Lakes Getaways

Michigan's natural beauty, miles of sandy shoreline and rich history make it a perfect spot for a unique and inexpensive close-to-home getaway. With planning and a little research, you can create a vacation that's memorable, works with your wallet, and keeps your travel dollars right here in Michigan. Here is just a taste of some of the more interesting travel options the Great Lakes State has to offer. For more Michigan travel ideas, visit www.michigan.org.



Tour historical lighthouses peppered along Michigan's shoreline

Expect to find over a hundred lighthouses that all have their own stories to tell. Authors Laurie, Bill, and Ruth Penrose give you the background on each in their book, "A Traveler's Guide to 116 Michigan Lighthouses." The information is well organized, with a detailed map to each location, so you can easily plan a road trip. It's possible to lodge at some of the lighthouses for a fee. Check out the phone numbers listed for these locations to make reservations. The book is available at your local library or purchase a gently used copy for under $5 by visiting www.amazon.com. Michigan.org also has a detailed listing of the state's lighthouses.

Economizing tip: Lodge for free during a one to two week working vacation for the Volunteer Lighthouse Keepers program; centered on preserving, protecting and restoring three lighthouses located on the Lake Michigan shoreline. Receive housing in exchange for volunteer work that may include conducting tours, operating an onsite gift shop, and keeping things in general working order.

Volunteers for the Big Point Sable Lighthouse stay on the upper floor of the former keeper's house adjacent to the lighthouse, while volunteers for Little Point Sable and Ludington North Breakwater Lighthouses located in Mears and Ludington respectfully, stay off-site at private, state park residences.

Applicants are selected in October for the following year. It's recommended that those interested in the program visit the lighthouses over the summer and speak with current volunteers to learn of their experiences. Those who participate in the program must be 21 and older; in good physical condition to manage stairs and lots of walking; and must be a current member of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association (SPLKA). The annual fee is $50/individual or $75/couple or family.

Once you become an SPLKA member, the next step is to submit a written application, resume and two letters of reference. Those who advance beyond the interview stage attend an orientation/training day in April.

"Most of our volunteers are retired," said SPLKA Interim Executive Director Chris VanAntwerp. "It's pretty incredible to see the friendships volunteers develop with people from all over the Midwest." Call 231-845-7343 or visit www.splka.org for more information.

Experience the flavor of the old west

Nestled just 45 minutes away from Traverse City in Bear Lake, you'll find the Rockin' R Stable that will have you hollering, "Yahoo!" Established in the late '80's, this western style ranch on 150 acres provides plenty of country fun for both young and old; from fishing at the local hole, canoeing, horseback riding, swimming, and sing-along hayrides; to horse-drawn carriage rides at sunset and all-day trail rides with meals cooked over the open fire. Lodging options include cabins that rent from $30 through $140/night to $160 through $780/week. Campsites are also available. Call 231-864-3539 or visit www.therockinr.com for more information.

Economizing tip: Save on gas and lodging by staying closer to home. Located just outside of Metro Detroit in Pinckney, you'll find the TMZ Farm Buffalo Ranch. Travel back in time and ride among herds of buffalo in a comfortable custom wagon for a 30-60 minute tour followed by a chuck wagon-style cook-out served up by cowboys. Cost is $30 for seniors or children 8 and under (tour only is $5) and $35 per everybody else (tour only is $7). Reservations are required.

While there, you may want to extend your stay and take part in a myriad of other activities in the area including fishing, hiking, horseback riding, biking, camping, boating, swimming, and shopping in Hell, Michigan that is. Contact TMZ Farm Buffalo Ranch for more information, 734-878-6425, or visit online at www.tmzfarm.com.

Commune with nature

Explore the eastern Upper Peninsula on a Woods & Water Ecotour designed to help vacationers develop a deeper appreciation for the environment. Some excursions are infused with authentic cultural experiences while others are enriched with educational presentations by experts in the field.

Tour activities can include everything from biking, hiking and kayaking on islands, in caves, through forests, and along cliffs and shorelines. There are trips geared to every fitness and ability level, with many themed experiences including full moon kayak outings; a canine leadership and nature retreat for you and your dog; as well as custom tours created with your interests in mind.

"Brunch with the Birds," is a popular favorite held on the Les Cheneaux Islands on the northern Lake Huron shoreline (about 45 minutes northeast of Mackinaw City). It's a half-day trip offered May through June and then again in September. Guests arrive at sunrise with binoculars in hand for a gentle hike through nature preserves and a carpool on over to the nature conservatory to learn more about area raptors, migratory sound and shoreline birds from wildlife specialists. The morning culminates with brunch served over an open fire. The cost is $35 per person.

A percentage of the fee for each trip is donated towards conservation efforts here in Michigan and around the globe. To learn more about this package or other adventures, call 906-484-4157 or visit online at www.WoodsWaterEcotours.com.

Economizing tip: If you enjoy camping, consider becoming a volunteer campground host. In exchange, you'll receive four weeks or more of free camping at one of Michigan's state parks or recreation areas. Hosts provide their own tent or RV and equipment. Responsibilities include greeting new campers; hosting a weekly "Camper Coffee Hour" (supplies provided); touring the grounds daily via hike or bike; distributing interpretive information; arranging activities (campfires, kids' fishing derbies, etc.); loaning equipment; maintaining camp bulletin board; creating and/or updating a local attractions directory; and completing, then posting a weekly work schedule.

Program participants must be age 18 or older to fill out an application. Applicants must be available for an interview. Candidates are selected by the unit supervisor of the park they wish to serve. Those selected must submit to a background check and attend a training session prior to serving. While there are hundreds of camping locations to choose from, assignments are granted, following the interview process, on a first come, first served basis. Check out the website to view the vacancy report for 2010 to see what's available.

If you have questions or would like an application, contact Pam Ames at 517-467-7401. You can also download an application at www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers. Click on "Campground host applications are being accepted" and as you read the article, choose either the state park system (click on "State park campground host applications available right here") or the state forest system (click on "Fill out the state forest campground host application"). Another option is to contact the state park, recreation area, or forest campground directly.

Ride the rails through the wilderness

About an hour northwest of the Mackinac Bridge, you'll find a breathtaking train and riverboat journey to Tahquamenon Falls, the second largest voluminous waterfall in the United States. Owned and operated by the Stewart family since 1927, the excursion is the only access through this virgin wilderness and water terrain.

The journey begins at the Soo Junction station, where up to 250 passengers board the Toonerville Trolley train for a 5.5 mile ride on an authentic narrow gauge railway through the dense forests of the U.P. This is where bear, deer, moose, gray wolves, and a over 300 species of migratory birds roam freely and can often be observed along the way.

Thirty-five minutes into the adventure, guests disembark and board the Hiawatha Riverboat for a relaxing 21 mile cruise down the Tahquamenon River. Enjoy delicious homemade burgers or other offerings from the lunch counter and drinks from the beverage bar as the captain presents an entertaining commentary on the river's history, Native American lore, animals, fauna, and flora. Restrooms are on board.

Passengers exit the boat a half mile from the falls and take a guided nature trail tour through the forest to capture a pristine view of the falls.

Total trip time is 6.5 hours and the cost is $42.50 for seniors 62 and older; $45 for adults; $29 for ages 15-9; $20 for ages 8-4; free for ages 3 and under; and 10% off discount for those in the military. Tours run Jun 16th through October 9th. Call 888-778-7246 or visit online at www.trainandboattours.com for more information on this or other adventure offerings.

Economizing tip: Honor our nation's veterans with some good old-fashioned fun at the Coopersville & Marne Railway in Coopersville (just outside of Grand Rapids) for their sixth annual Memorial Day train tour. Veterans travel free and are encouraged to wear whatever part of their uniform still fits.

Passengers board a 1950's era diesel locomotive for a trip through colorful countryside and picturesque farm lands. While en route, area boy scouts are on hand to deliver free snacks and beverages in the dining car. Keep your eyes peeled for possible sightings of wild turkey, deer, hawks, and eagles. According to General Manager Jerry Ricard, "That half hour train ride is pretty lively when the guys get together and tell stories about their time in the service." He noted that past guests have worn uniforms from every era dating back to the Revolutionary War.

The train switches tracks at the quaint village of Marne and then heads back to Coopersville where passengers are greeted by the mayor and patriotic music performed by the hometown brass band. Check out the military equipment on display. Total trip time is one hour and fifteen minutes and costs $7.50 per ticket; veterans and children two and under ride free. The train departs at 11 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. Seating is limited to 150 passengers per tour. Tickets may be purchased in advance or at the station when it opens at 9:30 a.m., up until 20 minutes prior to departure. For more information, visit online at www.coopersvilleandmarne.org, or call 616-997-7000.

Plan your next road trip around these Michigan festivals

There's plenty to do in the Great Lakes state. Before you travel, visit www.michigan.org, to check out everything that's Pure Michigan. Plan your next trip around these spring celebrations:

May 1–8

Holland Tulip Time Festival 800-822-2770

Surround yourself with the colors of spring among lanes of tulips that stretch for six miles. Enjoy entertainment that includes Dutch dancers, concerts, three parades, art and craft displays and fireworks. Visit www.Tuliptime.com for more information.

May 13-16

Boyne City's Morel Mushroom Festival 231-582-6222

This 50th annual celebration centers on everything morel; with cooking demonstrations by expert chefs, wine tasting, live music, a morel mushroom hunt, and displays of arts and crafts. Visit www.morelfest.com for more information.

May 29-31

Mackinaw City's Fort Michilimackinac Historical Pageant 231-436-5574

Be there to witness a reenactment of the historic battle of 1763 from each camp's vantage point. Experience live demonstrations and competitions throughout the weekend and view the state's largest Memorial Day parade. Visit www.fmpcfestival.org.

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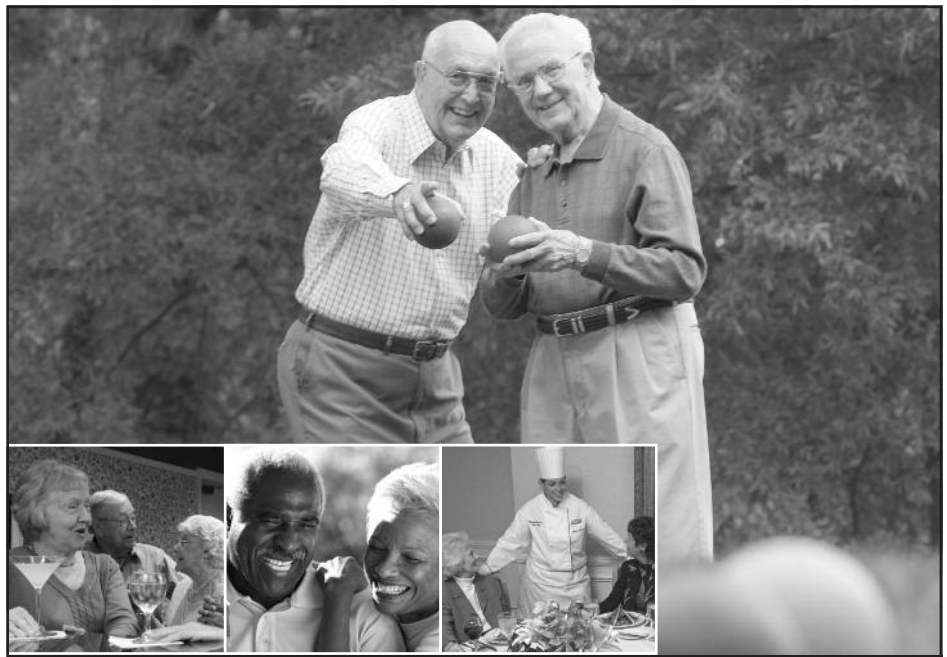

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Navigating Medicare

MMAP, Inc.

Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program

Help available to reduce some Medicare costs

Out-of-pocket costs for Medicare plans can add up quickly. Many older adults struggle to keep up with monthly premiums, deductibles and other incidental costs. Two programs are available to help reduce these costs and make Medicare Part B and Part D plans more affordable. The two programs are designed to assist lower income Medicare recipients, and the Area Agency on Aging 1-B's Medicare and Medicaid Program (MMAP) has set up a free service to help people determine if they are eligible and assist them with the application process.

"Many people may not be aware of these programs, or, for some reason, haven't applied." explained Jennifer Houghton, Access and Benefits Manager for the Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B). Houghton noted that a quick phone call to the AAA 1-B MMAP program can help people determine if they are eligible. "The process is pretty painless," said Houghton. "Our Benefits Specialists can ask you a few questions and can usually determine if you're eligible right there on the phone. It typically takes less than 10 minutes."

The Extra Help Program helps with Part D costs

The Extra Help Program can greatly reduce your prescription drug costs. It's available to people who are enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan who have limited income and resources. It can help reduce both monthly premiums and annual deductibles, and in some cases, may eliminate the coverage gap or "doughnut hole."

The amount of help you receive will depend on the Part D plan you are enrolled in and your exact income and assets.

The Medicare Savings Program helps with Part B costs

Another program, the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), helps beneficiaries pay for their Medicare Part B premiums, co-pays and deductibles. Just as with the Extra Help Program, your assets and income will determine the exact level of assistance you qualify for, but you could receive:

- Help paying some or all of your monthly Medicare premium
- Help paying some or all of your annual Medicare Part B deductible
- Up to 20% of the approved costs that you would usually have to pay out of pocket after reaching your Part B deductible

Houghton noted that it might be worth looking into these programs again if you have not qualified in the past. "Income and asset requirements for the program change periodically, and changes have been proposed that may soon increase income and asset levels and make these programs available to more people," she said.

For more information and help with completing the required applications, call the AAA 1-B's Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) at 800-803-7174. A "Benefits Eligibility" calculator is also available on the AAA 1-B website to help determine your eligibility. It only takes a few minutes and you don't have to give any personal information. It's located under the Medicare and Medicaid tab at www.aaa1b.com

Save the date for the Art of Aging Successfully Conference

The 11th Annual Art of Aging Successfully Conference, sponsored by Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology, will be held March 25 at Greater Grace Temple in Detroit. The theme of this year's event is, "Engaged, Energized, Enlightened." It will feature artwork by local senior artists and include breakout sessions on Powersit exercise, Zumba Gold exercise, genealogy, protecting yourself from senior scams, letting the music move you, and Pure Michigan travel. The keynote speaker will be TV personality Bill Bonds. Admission to the conference, which runs from 9 a.m. through 2 p.m., is $18 and includes both breakfast and lunch. For more information or a registration form, contact Donna MacDonald, Director of Outreach at Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology, at 313-577-2297.

Custom home builder helps local seniors and caregivers

Ken Peterson overseeing the garage door repairs.

Ken Peterson and his business partner, Brett Boes, owners of Wellington Chase Homes in Bloomfield Hills, have a history of giving back to the community. In December, after reading an article about the Area Agency on Aging 1-B's (AAA 1-B) Holiday Meals on Wheels program for homebound older adults and persons with disabilities, Peterson contacted the AAA 1-B to see how he could help.

"I was struck by the fact that the volunteer featured in the article delivered meals to a woman in Oakland County who lived without a hot water heater for three years," said Peterson. "Immediately I thought... we can help."

Peterson worked with the AAA 1-B to identify a few of the agency's clients that were in need of some home repairs. Just before the New Year, Peterson and his team installed a new front door for an older woman in Pontiac who is wheelchair bound and cares for her adult son who has a closed-head injury. The old door on her home would lock from the outside, making it difficult for her to exit through the door and placing her family and anyone one who came to the home in great danger. The new front door provides her and her son with a new sense of security and peace of mind.

In January, Peterson hired a garage door company to replace a broken garage door motor for a caregiver in Rochester Hills who has been caring for her husband for 16 years after he suffered a brain aneurism that left him mentally impaired. Her husband was only 42 years old at the time, leaving her to raise their four daughters on her own. She has been living without a garage door for a few years because she couldn't afford to repair it.

"My client can't express enough how grateful she is to Mr. Peterson for his thoughtfulness and generosity," said Patricia Tauber, Care Manager at the AAA 1-B. "The new garage door will help her get her husband in and out of the car easily when they go to the doctor and she will be able to take the garbage out with ease as well. These types of improvements make a tremendous difference for caregivers who are often overwhelmed with their daily responsibilities."

Peterson plans to continue to help provide home repairs for more older adults in need while the custom home business is slow.

For more information about the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, home delivered meals and services for older adults and family caregivers, contact the AAA 1-B's toll free number at 800-852-7795, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or visit us on the web at www.aaa1b.com.

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Creating lasting memories with your grandchildren

It can be as simple as always having a favorite gum or candy on hand, or as complex as vacationing together, but either way, you're forming a lasting memory. Think back to your own grandparents. What did you most remember about them? How do you want to be remembered by your grandchildren? Creating moments they'll treasure forever comes down to sharing your love, time, and effort. Here are a few inexpensive and fun ideas for strengthening the bond between you:

Lights, camera, action fairy tales

Gather up the costumes, set up the video camera or tape recorder for "Once upon a time…" dramas that you re-enact with your grandchildren. Read the story beforehand to reinforce the details in everyone's mind. Before the cameras roll, get some objects together to create sound effects, music to set the mood, and a simple stage with props to add to the drama. Then have everyone take on a role or two. You can act as one of the characters, the narrator, or the director as the grandchildren take on the character roles, complete with costume and vocal dialects. Pause the production whenever necessary. It doesn't have to be a steady stream of action. The main thing is to keep everything on a light, fun note. The resulting video or audio adaptation will be one they'll love to replay, time and time again.

Plan a mystery trip

Kids love the element of surprise. Take them on a "This is my life" tour and audio or video tape as you recount your history on a road trip to the places where you grew up… from your old house to your favorite ice-cream parlor. It's a docudrama which can be passed on to future generations.

Take older grandchildren on a geocaching adventure, a high tech-treasure hunt! To get started you'll need a Global Positioning System (GPS), a navigational system where you enter your location and destination and the device maps it out for you. Some cell phones have a GPS feature. The device could also be purchased separately ($25 and up).

Visit www.geocaching.com to select your journey, rated from easy to difficult. All the details on how to get started are provided. The goal is to find caches, water-proof containers, which are set up in specific locations. They hold anything from a written log to a trinket for trading and also give you the coordinates to your next cache. When you reach the end of the hunt, record and rate your journey together online.

A favorite tale can become the theme of their stay

Build the day around a book your grandkids enjoy. "The Gingerbread Man," for example, can provide hours of entertainment. The day before their arrival, make gingerbread cookie dough and refrigerate it overnight. You'll need a gingerbread man cookie cutter, as well as licorice roping, frosting in tubes, and raisins for decorating.

Before the kids arrive, sprinkle a little flour on your hair and face, so it looks like you've been busy baking. Then, you can either retell the story as though it happened to you; read the story aloud; or view it online. (Speakaboos.com is a website with online versions of many favorite children's stories.) Discuss the moral while working together to create yummy gingerbread men for a tasty "just dessert!"

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NURSING HOME

If a loved one is going into a nursing home, you need to read the FREE Special Report written by a Mount Clemens Elder Law Attorney called, "The 9 Questions You Must Ask If You or a Loved One Is Going Into a Nursing Home."

For a free copy call toll-free **1.866.828.3111**, and ask for "Report D2." Call today for the information some nursing homes hope you never learn!

Calendar of Events

Troy Community Center Senior Expo
Tuesday, March 16
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Troy Community Center
3179 Livernois
Troy, MI 48083

The event will feature over 90 vendors, healthcare screenings, chair massages, door and raffle prizes. Admission is free and lunch is available for a $2.75 suggested donation (seniors 60 and older). For more information, call Elaine Torvinen at the Troy Parks and Recreation Department at 248-524-3484.

Area Agency on Aging 1-B

Advocacy • Action • Answers on Aging

Mission

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B enhances the lives of older adults and adults with disabilities in the communities we serve.

Vision

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B will be the agency of first choice for advocacy, action, and answers and drive community engagement to ensure that older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers reach their full potential and highest quality of life.

Services

Home Care Services
Personal care (bathing, dressing, etc.), homemaking, home-delivered meals, respite care, chore assistance, home injury control.

Community-Based Services
Adult day services, transportation, congregate meal sites, home delivered meals, out-of-home respite, legal assistance, employment for older workers, elder abuse prevention, services for vision and hearing impaired, long-term care ombudsman, resource advocacy, counseling, and volunteer caregivers.

Information and Assistance Service
Resource specialists can quickly answer questions and access information for callers using a computerized database listing over 5,000 senior services and 2,000 providers in southeast Michigan. Call toll-free, **800-852-7795.** Hours are 8 a.m.- 5 p.m., weekdays. You can also visit **www.aaa1b.com**

AAA 1-B Access Centers

Livingston/Washtenaw County	734-213-6704
Macomb County	586-226-0309
Monroe County	734-241-2012
Oakland County	248-357-2255
St. Clair County	810-388-0096

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