

Smelter City SENIORS

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DRIVING FOR THE DAY



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The ANACONDA
Leader

Hearing from the Voices of the Pintlers

NIKKI JOHNSON
REPORTER

Descending the staircase at the high school, “la, la, la, la, laaaa” echo through the dark hall as the Voices of the Pintlers adult education choir slide up and down the scales. The singers blend harmonies while the piano hits the notes and a metronome keeps everyone in line.

One of those “Voices,” Mary Rose Nielsen, said it’s the people who have kept her coming back all these years. “It’s fun and I learned a lot,” she said.

Nielsen left and came back several times over the years when life intervened – to have kids, primarily – but she’s been back on the scene for around 15 years now.

When questioned why the adult education classes, and the Voices of the Pintlers in particular, are good for seniors she answered without hesitation.

“It gets them out of the house,” she explained. “They’re a nice group.



Voices of the Pintlers members practice for their upcoming Christmas concert. Leader photo: Nikki Johnson

Spencer [Fehr] is fantastic with teaching. He has a different method that’s so easy for everyone to learn. You don’t feel like an idiot. He’s just really, really good. And you do learn something every time you come – you find out something easier and you go, wow, I didn’t know it went that high, breathing, all this different activity so ... it does help a lot.”

While the group only has a couple performances each year, it’s what takes place behind the scenes that keeps people coming back.

“We have a wonderful concert twice a year. We have a great one at Christmas and a very nice spring concert. And a lot of people come. They enjoy it. You know, it’s good for them to get out, too,” said Nielsen.

Frances Robbins falls into another unique category. She started singing in junior high and continued through high school. However, like many young aspiring vocalists she stopped when the opportunities to sing slowed down – until she was introduced to the Voices of the Pintlers. She’s been part of the group for five years now.

“The first year it was so refreshing. I hadn’t been singing, other than in church. I used to sing in a choir in Deer Lodge, but other than that it was way back in the ‘70s and ‘80s in elementary school and high school.

And so to have a feeling to finally get to do something for myself and get out in the evening and learn where I dropped off after high school – I never accomplished sight reading – and so, to have a group of people that are so welcoming to all levels of singing and to be able to jump right back in and feel like I’m learning, like I’m in a high school class is really exciting after being a mom,” Robbins explained.

Aside from the learning opportunities, and at an unbelievable price of \$15 for the entire season, you’re unlikely to find less expensive voice coaching. But let’s be honest, it’s truly about the camaraderie.

“Number one, a sense of community. Because unlike singing on stage, when you get a solo this is all about blending and feeling unified with other people,” Robbins said.

In her opinion, which every member of the choir would concur,

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Driving with the DAV: Volunteers speak on the rewards of driving disabled vets

JAMES S. ROSIEN
EDITOR

Anaconda has always had a large population of veterans through the years, going back all the way to the Civil War in fact – there was a Grand Army of the Republic chapter in Anaconda's early days for veterans of the Union Army – but as veterans age and as they deal with service-attached disabilities, getting in to see a Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) physician to treat them can be a challenge, particularly for elderly veterans who may not be able to drive themselves or have families members drive them to their appointments.

That's where the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) come in, with the van transportation program offering veterans a lifeline to see their VA doctors – which with the relocation of the VA clinic from Anaconda to Butte makes driving a necessity – and gives their fellow veterans, as well as non-veterans who are passionate about veterans' causes, the opportunity to give back.

Yet times have been tough on the DAV in Anaconda, with the local chapter closing and merging with Butte's a few years ago, and not only that but a decline in the number of volunteer drivers as they age out of being able to drive the van – which itself is aging, as it's the very same one that one of the drivers, Grant Ellison, was pictured with when the DAV acquired it more than a decade ago. There were many drivers then, and many more since then have come and gone (including this reporter's father, who is no longer able to drive at all). Now, they're down to three active drivers in Anaconda who make runs multiple times a week, mostly to Butte or Ft. Harrison but sometimes to Bozeman, Missoula, Great Falls and even as far as Kalispell or Billings.

"We're hoping to get more

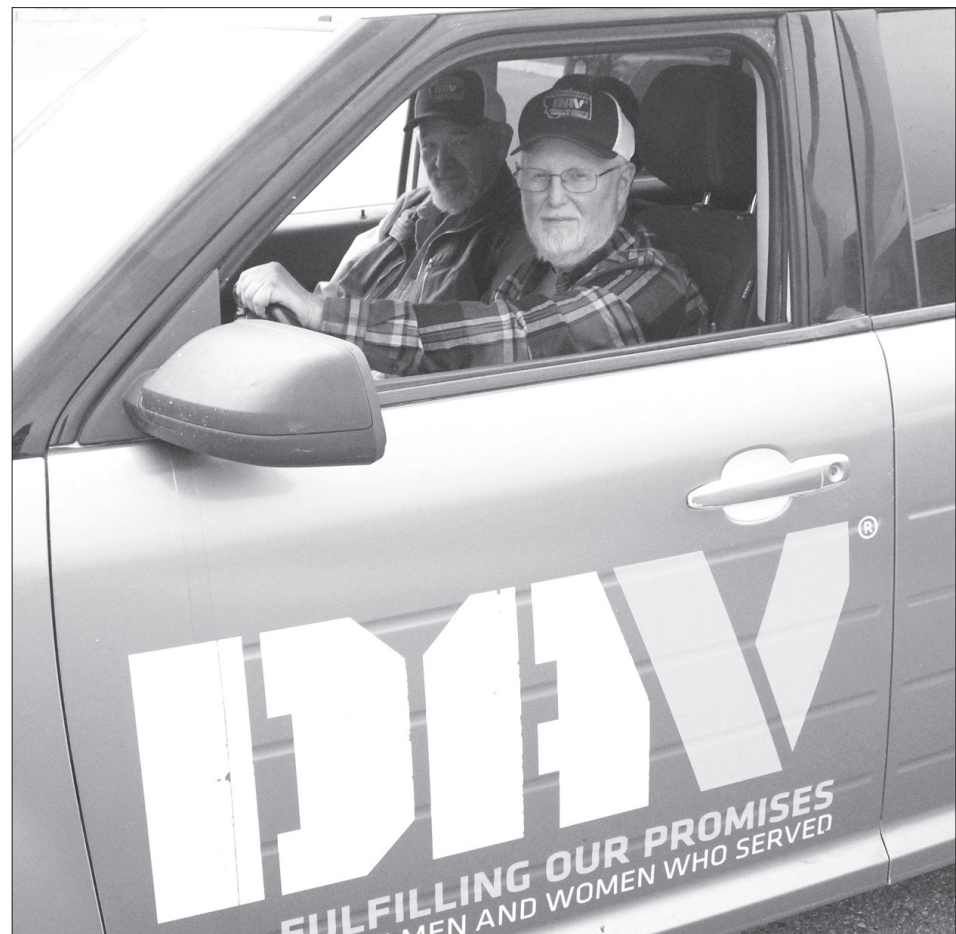


drivers," said Mike Lawson, the DAV van program's coordinator in Butte, who oversees drivers for Anaconda, Butte and Dillon. "We'd like to have people who just retired, who are in their early 60s. They have the time to do it. The big problem is with the number of drivers we have, and the age of people we have going out, we really need people to come in."

It's strictly on a volunteer basis, with the only compensation being a free meal if they drive to Ft. Harrison. Except that isn't the only compensation, as the experience of giving back is a reward all its own.

"We don't do it for money. We do it because we're helping veterans. That's our pay," Lawson said. "These guys are so grateful and they'll tell us, 'if it wasn't for you guys I don't know what I'd do to get to my appointment.'"

Being a DAV driver does come with its own share of challenges, the first of which being



Top: Grant Ellison, left, is one of the drivers for the Disabled American Veterans van in Anaconda, and Mike Lawson is the van program's coordinator for Butte, Anaconda and Dillon. **Above:** Ellison gets behind the wheel of the van, ready to make another run. Leader photos: James S. Rosien

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there's something for everyone regardless of age or experience.

"[For] young people who have finished school, learning music is a lifelong endeavor and get back into it as soon as you can," she said. And her message to seniors is equally as encouraging.

"Singing and finding joy is, I think, the best thing to fight depression and loneliness," she said, adding that she has personally experienced music as a therapeutic approach. And for her, the relief was music to her ears, but she's seen the benefits from a professional perspective as well.

"For a cure for personal depression and as an adult caregiver, seeing so many people at home, either homebound or in various stages as a Hospice nurse, having time to sing is a way to really wake up the brain and drive it away," she said.

As for newcomers like Stan Blaz, who is no stranger to music and plays various instruments for church and Croatian Hall events, this has been a wonderful learning

experience.

"Well I do a little music in church and I enjoy music and every time I come I learn something new here. I thought I had a pretty good background in music. I play guitar and other Croatian instruments. I play by the notes instead of the chords," he said. "But every time I come here, Spencer does a great job. And I leave here and I learned something that I didn't know, so it's refreshing. And it's your night out. I really enjoy just getting together and the harmony stuff is what's fun with us guys that we get to do, because I sing in church, but we're kind of low key. We have to count measures and you have to watch," he laughed, "so it's fun. I really enjoy it."

Blaz humbly said that he has been watching the youngest member of the choir, Will Griffis, who graduated high school a few years ago, keeping time on percussion, which has proven to be incredibly helpful.

"We got this younger kid, he was in band a couple years ago, but he counts and I watch his hands because I'm trying to figure out when we're supposed to come in

and count the measures and I watch him. But everyone has just a little different technique and you learn off of them," he said. "Even beginners. If somebody's got any kind of background in music and you want to expand on it, we take anybody here. We've got five of us on bass. Last year we had three. We got a couple more."

Another member, John Lombardi, moved to Anaconda in 2016 and has been a member of the group for about six years.

"I joined because I enjoy singing," Lombardi said. "I sing in the bass section. I always have. I've been singing since 1979 in church choirs. It's just an outlet. Of course, it takes a little bit of guts to get out and sing, plus when you're going to sing in front of an audience, but I'd say, if you've got just a little bit of gumption that you ought to come out. Try it out. You learn how to sing, which is good. You may have actually honed your talents in the shower, who knows, but nonetheless you should get enjoyment from it."

Lombardi looked around the room and said that what makes it fun is working with the group, particularly the men, and watching their progress.

Regardless of how great a choir might be, you can't operate without a conductor, and if you ask any of the members of the Voices of the Pintlers they'd unanimously agree that they have the best with Spencer Fehr. Fehr is also the Anaconda Junior/Senior High School band teacher, but he's

been conducting the adult choir since 2015.

"There's a social aspect, you know, we meet and we have fun," Fehr explained. "And then some of them have never been in a group like this before so it truly is that adult education aspect where they're learning something that they didn't learn when they were younger."

When asked what the Voices of the Pintlers brings to Anaconda, Fehr stated that it's something for participants to do in the evenings.

"Also, we don't perform a lot, but the two performances a year that we do bring people out to watch the concert. And those people may not get out to see something else so they get to do that," he said.

While there aren't any new performances on the agenda at the moment, he's not against the idea of integrating additional shows in the future. For now, however, he'll continue to have fun and keep teaching.

"If they progress through the semester and do the full year, they see their own fulfillment and progression as they grow," he said.

If the idea of joining the Voices of the Pintlers struck a chord with you, they are still taking participants. The group meets in the band room at the Anaconda Junior/Senior High School, 515 Main St., on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 for the season and ages are 18 and over. For more information or to register contact Spencer Fehr at sfehr@anacondaschools.org.



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DAV from page 3

the application process – the application itself is quite thick – but Lawson said they will help anyone who wants to drive to complete it. And between the two of them they have quite a bit of experience.

“I’ve been doing this for over 20 years,” Lawson said. “To keep it going I volunteered as the coordinator, that was five or six months ago.”

Shortly after that, Ellison got back on board after having stopped driving for a time.

“I drove for about nine years,” he said. “I came back in June because they needed drivers. And there’s a lot of reward in doing it. We hear all the time, ‘I got nobody to take me, I got no family, I can’t drive.’”

“A vet is a vet is a vet, and we take care of our vets – and we want to take care of our vets,” Lawson said. “A lot of people out here have no clue what situation vets are in. We become very good friends with them. That’s common. You get to be friends with them, you care

for them. Part of being a driver is having that empathy and caring about that veteran.”

As for the DAV itself, while Anaconda’s Chapter 13 no longer exists, Butte’s Chapter 6 continues to operate and has members from Anaconda. Lawson said the chapter is discussing having its monthly meetings alternate between Butte and Anaconda in fact.

Also, Lawson said the chapter intends to replace Anaconda’s DAV van with a new one as the current one is, like many past drivers, aging out. Lawson explained that Ford has a grant program that will pay for half of the cost of purchasing a new van, and the sale of the old one helps contribute to that cost as well, though there will be a local fundraising effort to pick up the rest of the cost. More information on both of those developments will be reported as it becomes available.

Interested in being a DAV driver? Contact Mike Lawson at (406) 560-3591 to learn more.

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Community Nursing Home of Anaconda	563-8417
Court House Information	563-4000
Metcalf Memorial Senior Citizens Center	563-3504
MSU Extension Agent	563-4035
Hearst Free Library	563-6932
Anaconda Veterans’ Clinic	563-6090
Veterans’ representative	406-533-0910
Do Not Call registry	1-888-382-1222
Commodity supplemental food program	563-3504
Adult Protective Services in Anaconda	563-3448
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How a love story led to a life in prevention

NIKKI JOHNSON
REPORTER

Dan Haffey is a rugged fellow, resembling Chuck Norris with a red beard and chiseled, weathered face – so much so that he was once followed in a grocery store for 10 minutes before he was approached to take a selfie with an unsuspecting fan. Like Norris, Dan's life and legacy is something to write about and it all started with a love story that's generally reserved for the movies.

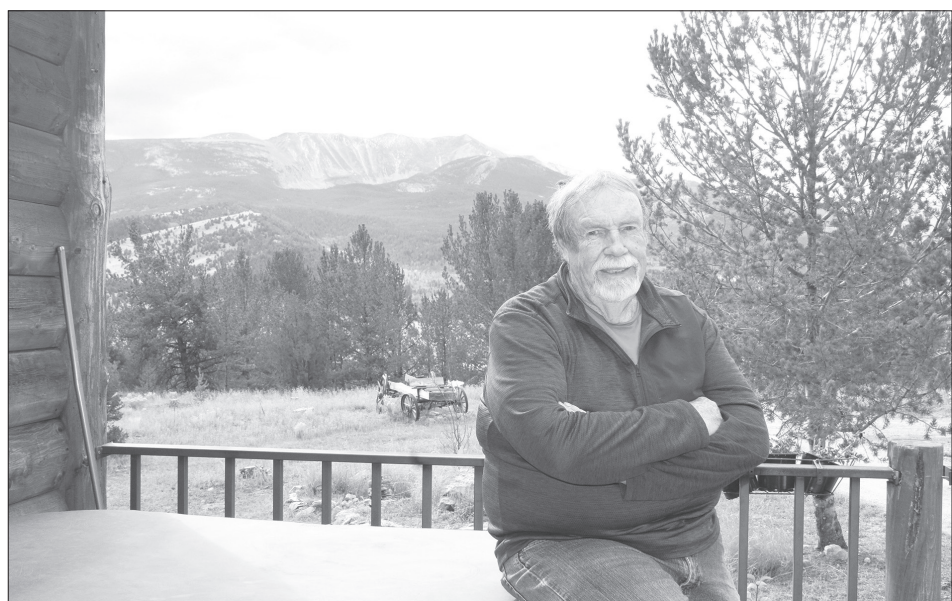
Dan's grandfather came over from Ardara, Donegal, Ireland in 1910 where he earned his way as a bareknuckle boxer. Coincidentally, Dan's daughter Angie is a professional and well-renowned local boxer here in the Smelter City. After arriving in Montana he went to work for the railroad, a common tale for men at the turn of the 20th century when much of the employment revolved around the mining industry. "He was in Clancy after moving

in 1910 and he met my grandmother who was from the opposite end of Ireland, Cork, and so they get together and fall in love and get married at the Helena cathedral and move to Anaconda and have ten kids," Dan said.

After they moved to Anaconda, his grandfather worked at the foundry until he retired. Sadly, he died of brain cancer shortly thereafter, likely due to exposure to toxic chemicals over the years.

Dan's father, Joe, was in the service in England during World War II. He loved to sing and was apparently quite good at it. In fact, it has been said that he once even sang with Bing Crosby at the Davenport Hotel when he was in the Air Force in Spokane, Washington.

On this fateful day, however, many years prior, Joe was singing in a pub in London when he ran across a man who worked for a London newspaper fresh off a long day of work, playing the piano. The two got



Dan Haffey sits with Mt. Haggin behind him. Leader photo: Nikki Johnson

to talking well into the early morning when Joe realized that he was going to be late getting back to the base and would, most certainly, be in trouble. The man took pity on the boy and offered him a room for the night at his home, after getting approval from his wife of course.

"The next morning he wakes up

and he's having tea and toast talking about the military and here comes this cute girl through the kitchen and my dad goes all google eyes. And she sits down and they start talking and stuff and they just hit it off," he said, recalling that his grandfather

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said that she was 19 and wouldn't get married until she was 21. The two parted ways and the girl went off to school while Joe returned to the U.S.

"My dad went back to Montana and he couldn't live without her, so he re-enlists and goes back and my mom and dad got married when she was 21," he said. The couple moved to Montana and started a family of their own, including Dan and his siblings, one sister and five brothers.

He recalled his childhood as being idyllic, almost Norman Rockwellian,

considering they lived in the house where Bartoletti's Dentistry now stands across the street from Kennedy Common one block from the movie theater and two blocks from both high schools, Anaconda High and Anaconda Central.

It was in high school that Dan met his future wife, Vera. Sadly, during his senior year his father passed away from cirrhosis of the liver – a tragedy that would impact Dan's life in ways he couldn't have imagined.

After he graduated he went to college at Western in Dillon while simultaneously working for the

Forest Service. He was one of the last people to work on the Lookout before it was torn down. It was then that he went to work for the Department of State Lands in Forestry where he spent 12 years. He eventually graduated with a degree in Social Science and found himself in education. During this time the couple started growing a family of their own with the birth of their first daughter, Haley. Angie and Danny would come later.

While his life was expanding, he decided to put his education degree to good use and started working at Butte Central High School. He was all lined up for teaching and coaching jobs in Anaconda, but this was in 1980 and the closing of the smelter threw a wrench in those plans. Instead, he went to work for Job Corps, a decision that would send his life in another trajectory.

"I worked there for several years, and then from there I went to work for the Anaconda Drug and Alcohol program because that was day shift and I'd have more time with my kids because I was working nights and weekends at the Job Corps and it wasn't conducive to seeing my kids,"

he said, explaining that he stayed there for five years then transferred up to teach at a school in Polson where he stayed for two years.

Next, the couple and their children decided it was time to come home. He went to work running a drug and alcohol prevention program in Butte.

"I did that for years and had lots of federal grants and started a lot of big federal grants in Butte and Anaconda. In fact, Anaconda Community Intervention is now part of my old grants, which were drug-free community grants," he said.

It was serendipitous, some might say fate, that he was implementing change and making a difference in the field of addiction, an ailment that undeniably contributed to his father's death so many years prior. He was on the Board of Directors for Mariah's Challenge in Butte and did a lot of work in Washington, D.C. trying to change the legislature in regard to minor in possession and DUI laws.

Admittedly, his father's struggles with alcoholism had an impact on his decision to go into recovery, but that wasn't the only influence.

STORY concludes on page 9



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"I think I had a lot of empathy, especially with kids working at the Job Corps. I saw a lot of kids come in and they were from backgrounds where there was a lot of substance abuse and stuff, and I always looked at those kids and thought they had all this talent but maybe didn't get the guidance," he said. "My dad, was great but he did have an alcohol problem like many of the service men that dealt with the war - drinking."

After years of dedicated and impactful work in the area of drug addiction and prevention, he retired. Well, for the first time anyway.

"I retired five times," he laughed. "I retired from Butte-Silver Bow County and I worked for the county over there for like 25 years. I taught DUI and Minor in Possession classes. I did a lot of counseling. I have a great deal of respect for people that are going through treatment and going through substance abuse issues because I always saw that people have a chance to change. Never give up on them."

He gave as an example a young

man from the Job Corps program that he brought out to Jackson, who was severely bullied and pulled out a gun to scare his attackers.

"I asked the judge - they wanted to charge him with a felony - and I said this kids wouldn't hurt a fly, so I took him out to this ranch in Jackson and the kid's still there," he chuckled. "In 1988 I took him and he's still there. He worked on the same ranch until probably four or five years ago. He's retired, he had children, he was the happiest kid in the world. I still get Christmas cards from him."

When asked how that makes him feel, Dan replied that while it makes him feel good, the kid did all the actual work.

"He was a nice kid and people loved him and there's sober people today because of him. I never counted success stories because I always figure, I'm just the guy that shows you the path. You're the one that has to walk it and do the work. There's a couple of success stories, and like I said, I could count them on both hands," he explained.

Let's just hope that while Dan is counting success stories he doesn't forget to count himself.

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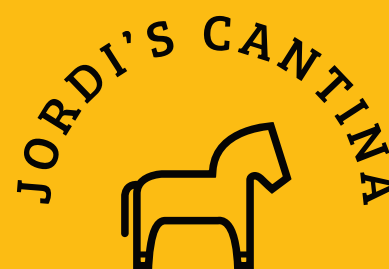
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Talking education with retired teacher, trustee

JAMES S. ROSIEN
EDITOR

After 24 years working as a teacher, one might expect a retired educator would want to step away from the school system completely, but not Gayle Venturelli. Soon after retiring, rather than step

away she stepped up and put her name in to run as a candidate for the Anaconda Public School Board of Trustees – and she won.

That was in 2015. She did it again in 2018, and again in 2021, making it three full terms on the board before deciding that nine

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Gayle Venturelli having tea at the Coffee Corral. Leader photo: James S. Rosien

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years was enough and opting not to run for a fourth term this past spring.

"I knew it was time to go," Venturelli said over tea at the Coffee Corral. "I think that I represented the schools, the students and the staff in the district. In order to do the best for our students, the board has to

understand how it all works."

And that's exactly what she wanted to do when she retired from teaching.

"When I knew I was going to retire, I said I'm going to run for the school board because I don't understand how you can have a board of education without

TRUSTEE concludes on page 12

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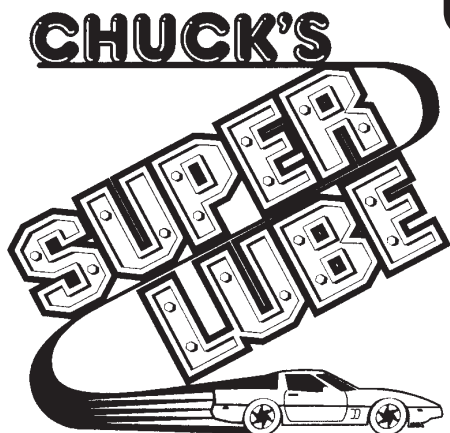
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Senior shopping: Every Thursday afternoon. You must call the Metcalf Senior Center at 563-3504 by noon to be picked up.

Free counseling on Medicare health plans: Call 563-3504 to make an appointment.

Pinochle (Racehorse): Every Tuesday and Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the Metcalf Center.

Bingo: The first and third Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Metcalf Center.

Billiards, puzzles, etc: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch is served Monday through Friday at noon at the Metcalf Center. Menus are available monthly from the center; menus are subject to change. For more information, call 563-3504.

Meals on Wheels services also are available, as is the van transportation service. Call 563-3504 if you're interested in receiving Meals on Wheels or to arrange transportation to and from the center for lunch.

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TRUSTEE from page 11

someone with an education background on the board," she said. "I was quite amazed at not so much by winning, but so many people in this community supported me. It required a lot of time management, not just the meetings but emails every day, trainings, publications, and you have to do your best – you have to give your best for the students."

"I think we're still positive through everything that's happened. We're supportive. We're one of the largest employers in the county. I see people teaching for a long time who still have the enthusiasm and belief that they can make a difference. They're good mentors for new people. And the young teachers we have now are terrific. They're open to suggestions, and a lot of them are Anaconda kids so they know the community," she said. "I hope students all have an adult in the district they can relate to. It's through those individual attachments that you can identify

what's needed, and it gives support to kids who just need a little more."

One thing though about being on the school board is it's an educational experience in and of itself.

"We have federal mandates, we have state mandates. Funding, staffing – that's a tough one. Every year I was on the board they said we're going to have layoffs," she said. "[But] I think it's coming, with the expiring of the covid funds. And I don't think anyone on the board wouldn't say the entire staff haven't earned a huge raise."

During her time on the board, Venturelli introduced the legislative liaison role on the board so as to keep tabs on developments in Helena with regard to school funding and other issues. And speaking of school funding, she also knows what it's like to teach when money is tight.

"One year I was told we didn't have money for books," she said.

The solution? Use the internet to print out reading assignments for the students. Anything it took for

the students.

"Our students go through a lot – educationally, socially," she said. "And we have a limited amount of job areas. I would like every student who graduates from Anaconda High School to have a marketable skill. Even if you plan to go to tech school or whatever, life gets in the way sometimes and I want everyone to have a skill you can support yourself on."

For Venturelli, teaching has been her calling – you could even say it's in the blood.

"I have three sisters and two are teachers," she said.

The year she started teaching was the year Anaconda schools introduced Apple computers into the district. "Initially they were going to be staggered in the elementary and high school, but it turned out all of the schools were able to get them," she said.

And that became her role, teaching library science and computers, which she did starting at Lincoln School.

"The Lincoln staff was the best staff I ever worked with,"

she said. "Then my second year I moved to teaching eighth grade history, and I loved it. I would go back to teaching eighth grade in a heartbeat. They're still eager to learn."

Venturelli encouraged board members to have that same eagerness to learn as well.

"When you have new members, you have to start all over again so there's a learning curve. There are policies boards have to adhere to, but I can't think of anything more important than producing competent adults, which is endpoint of public education to me," she said. "You think about seven people [on the board], and the public, and the dynamic of that and policies – it's unfortunate that it's so tough. They have jobs, they have families, their kids are involved in after-school activities. Like anything, you have to put a lot of time into it, and I'm thankful for them. We ask a lot of them. And I'm thankful for all the people in Anaconda who vote, and all the people who voted for me and put their trust and faith in me."



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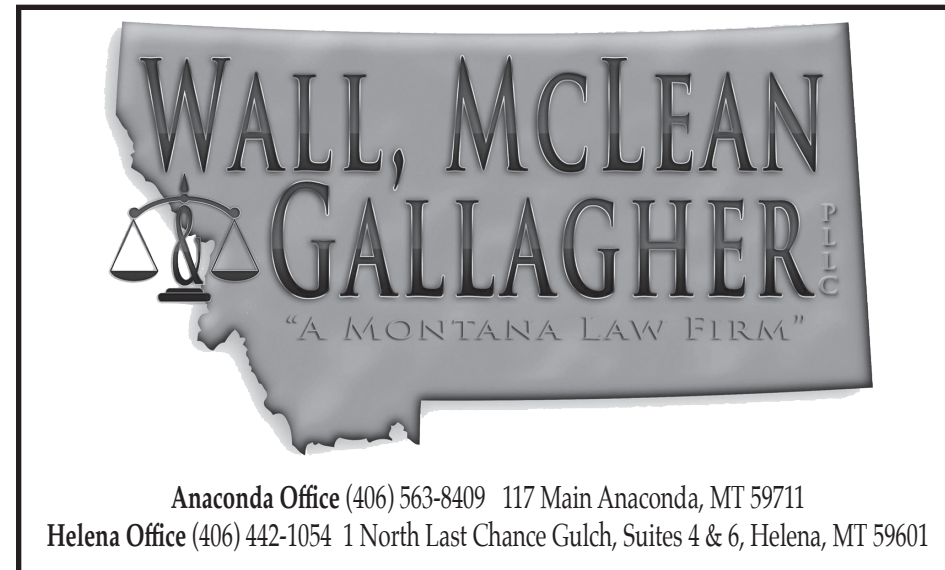


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Embracing an active lifestyle to improve sedentary habits

DANIEL J. KOLTZ, PH.D.,
AND QUINN ALBERDA, M.S.
MSU EXTENSION

Sedentary habits (sitting too long) are linked in many studies with an increased risk of heart disease, obesity, cancer, diabetes, poor mental health and an increase in fall risk for older adults. A recent National Institutes of Health-funded study revealed that adults who sat for more than 10 hours a day are at a greater risk of developing dementia. Moreover, Johns Hopkins University addresses how the “sitting disease” affects people of all ages because of new norms — working at home and spending hours on computers or smartphones — leading to sedentary lifestyles. Sedentary behavior is defined as too much sitting and a void of physical activity; often, people are not as physically active as they estimate. Long Montana winters may not help, unless you’re a winter activity enthusiast. Many of us don’t participate enough in necessary movement and exercise to be healthy.

Research shows that Americans

are engaging in sedentary lifestyle habits at an increased rate. This reality is attributed to higher healthcare costs, decreased physical, mental, and cognitive health, and ultimately, mortality.

Creating an active lifestyle plan to reduce daily time spent sitting, especially at one time, may alleviate adverse health outcomes. Below are suggestions to get out of the chair and start moving.

A Roadmap for Increasing Physical Activity

1. Incorporate short breaks from the chair. Get up and walk, stretch, or do quick exercises (research points to at least once per hour providing health benefits). Whether at home or the office, moving around the room creates opportunities to stretch joints and muscles to decrease the effects of sitting too long. Increase activity by going up and down stairs when you get comfortable moving more. Often, people report increased joint pain with age. Regular, active movement reduces joint pain (inflammation). “Move it or lose it” is a common phrase to explain this phenomenon. The sooner you engage muscles and joints

in regular, sustained movement, joint and muscle pain may begin to decrease.

2. Create an environment that encourages the movement of “getting up.” Going outside is a separate movement component and is different from walking around the room. Choose locations that provide some up and down to increase light cardiovascular movement. Use steps instead of elevators to increase your activity level. Consider riding a bicycle or walking instead of driving to the mailbox. Every step increases your step count for the day. A healthy goal would be to walk 5–10,000 steps a day, whether inside or out.

3. Physical activity should be incorporated into your schedule. Engaging in at least 150 minutes

of moderate to intense aerobic exercise per week and a muscle-strengthening activity two times per week is recommended. Given a sedentary lifestyle, it may take a while to make a habit; even moderate exercise is better than none. Walking briskly and going up and down stairs increases physical activity. Holding a weight of some kind also builds strength. Using a canned food item from the pantry is adequate, or you can purchase a 1- to 10-pound weight.

4. Social support should be considered when looking to increase activity and decrease a sedentary lifestyle. Engaging in social activity with friends, family, and others may increase

See HABITS on page 14



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HABITS from page 13

the enjoyment of movement and physical exercise. Motivation is the most challenging barrier to reducing a sedentary lifestyle. Having people that are encouraging can help support a new daily routine. In addition, it can be very motivating to have someone hold us accountable for a sustainable exercise routine.

5. Joining fitness classes, sports clubs, or community events removes you from your chair, and fosters a sense of belonging and a positive attitude toward an active lifestyle. Exercise classes can be found locally or online to schedule more easily and make movement a habit.

6. Mindfulness and stress management are crucial to break free from sedentary habits. Engage in controlled breathing exercises, even for a couple of minutes a day. Mindful breathing can assist in reducing stress and provide oxygen to the far reaches of our bodies — helping to reduce inflammation and pain from movement and improve balance to create a more

health-conscious lifestyle.

7. Adequate sleep is essential to establishing a healthy lifestyle, providing the energy to move away from a more sedentary lifestyle. Napping during the day can inhibit our ability to focus and engage in physical activity. Begin by relaxing before bedtime, turning off electronics an hour before, and reducing caffeine intake during the day and reducing liquids before bedtime. Create a consistent sleep routine and schedule to stay on track for optimal sleep/wake cycles and energy during the day. Our bodies are like clocks, and the rhythm of time is essential to a good night's rest.

8. Consider speaking to a physician when beginning an exercise routine. This is important if you have a condition where exercise could affect symptoms. Speak to your doctor if you have sleep apnea or medications that could inhibit a good night's sleep.

The first step toward improving sedentary habits is acknowledging a lack of movement and physical activity. Please do not feel ashamed

or guilty of neglecting yourself and the time spent "sitting." It happens. After acknowledging you may have a sedentary lifestyle, begin changing it slowly. Start by simply getting up from your chair and moving around the room. Go outside, even for short intervals, and gradually increase the amount of physical activity you engage in. Take longer walks, use the stairs at home or in the office. Climbing stairs increases cardiovascular activity, and you can gradually add carrying weight while walking and exercising. Engage in mindful breathing and connect socially to enhance an active lifestyle. Get plenty of rest and quality sleep. Enjoy the process, and slowly, you will feel less pain in your body and begin to feel like a healthier person physically and emotionally, leading to a happier, more fulfilling life.

The research for this article is from a project related to the Montana State University Extension Healthy Aging Initiative. Find more information about the program here: www.montana.edu/extension/health/healthy_aging/

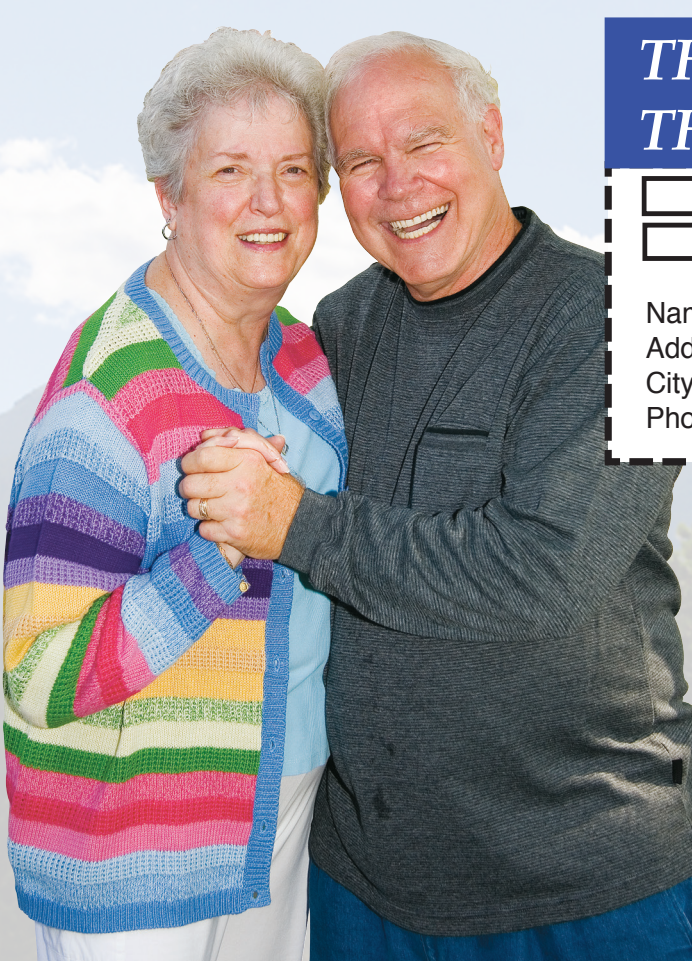
index.html.

MSU Extension offers two MontGuides with more information: Physical Activity: Different Types, How Much is Needed and Health Benefits: <https://apps.msuextension.org/montguide/guide.html?sku=MT202207HR>. Sleep: Its Health Benefits, How Much You Need, and Strategies to Get More: <https://apps.msuextension.org/montguide/guide.html?sku=MT202105HR>

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The 'Happy Art' of Joan Sanders Borneman

JAMES S. ROSIEN
EDITOR

After retiring from her role as Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Attorney about 12 years ago, Joan Sanders Borneman put down the law books and picked up a paintbrush and color palette and went to work making what would become "Happy Art" – her art business that included not just the artwork itself but classes and paint parties and just immersion in the language of color and of nature.

"I really got into art therapy and I started looking at color vibrations. I never wanted to stop articulating the language of color," said Borneman in an interview at Copper Village Museum and Art Center, where she's holding her final solo art show this month. "There's a spark of divinity in everything creative – there's something about the process of seeing and translating for people to see – and it doesn't have to be what we see."

It immediately becomes evident that Borneman's art is filtered through her own philosophy – namely that "the world is a magical place full of light." That's how she saw it as a child, when despite growing up in a chaotic and deprived environment, "the soft and gentle world I created is what I saw." That was before she was diagnosed with severe myopia in third grade, and so she got glasses to "fix" that.

"And when I put my glasses on, I was shocked by all the flaws I saw," she said. "I was super challenged – and I still am. It's no big secret that I can't find my way from point A to point B. 'I've always depended upon the kindness of strangers,'" she added, quoting "A Streetcar Named Desire."

Strangers, and her husband Randy, who she credits for "shlepping" all her art around to various gallery shows over the years, including this final one.

"I rely so much on him," she said.

All the more so within the past four years, when a medical procedure that had gone awry when she was 30 came back to nearly send her to the great beyond.

"My body was poisoning me," she said. "I passed, and when you come back after you pass over – I saw my mom – when you come back after having an after-death experience, the things I love in nature ... they have a language of their own, and they do talk to us. Art translates that language and brings all our senses and all our experiences into the now."

Three surgeries and a hip replacement later, it was time for her to slow down and pull back from the art scene – though that didn't preclude her from creating. Far from it. During their last trip back to the Oregon coast, she picked up a new style that

See ART on page 16



Joan Sanders Borneman's art at Copper Village. Leader photo: James S. Rosien



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ART from page 15

she's eager to show to her hometown – one that captures and enhances her “Happy Art” philosophy on art and on life.

“It’s the importance of finding those beautiful things,” she said. “I do have my dark nights of the soul, I really do, but every day I choose to be happy, and that’s healing, too. I had to stay alive.”

But while she’s wrapping up her art shows, Borneman has plans to keep getting her work out there.

“I’m really thinking about doing a 501c3 [nonprofit] to give art away as a gesture for people who really need it,” she said. “I have so much art and it’s not doing anything except hanging in my basement.”

And she’s going to keep on creating as long as she’s able to pick up that brush and color palette.

“I’ve always had a propensity for art, but only in the last 11 years have I been able to do that,” she said. “Retirement was a whole new beginning for me.”

Borneman’s show at Copper Village Museum and Art Center, 401 E. Commercial Ave., runs through the end of October.



Joan Sanders Borneman and some of her new work at Copper Village. Leader photo: James S. Rosien

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