

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SLIDELL

Slidell magazine

WE SAY KEEP IT FRESH
KEEP IT POSITIVE

Vol. 163 May 2024



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Kylah Wichterich Odle



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The City of Slidell presents

All in the Family

Featuring the works of the Wichterich family

John P. Wichterich
Joshua B. Wichterich
Kylah Wichterich Odle

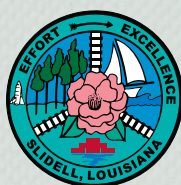
May 31 – June 5, 2024

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COVER: "RISE"

Collaborative art by John Wichterich,
Joshua Wichterich & Kylah Wichterich Odle



Joshua Wichterich is a professional, award-winning artist, illustrator of 60+ children's books, and author of the epic fantasy trilogy *Chronicles of The Last Legend*. He is also the founder of Blue Wing Press, which assists authors with illustrations, book design, and self-publishing.

This is his FOURTH *Slidell Magazine*

cover. He was recently the featured artist for Slidell's first chalk fest. He is an advocate for children and volunteers his time and art to the Children's Museum of St. Tammany, where he was also the featured artist of their annual Chalk Fest: Arts Festival. Joshua is thrilled to premiere his first big art show, All in the Family, which will consist of art from the House of Wichterich.

Kylah Wichterich Odle is a rising star artist and was born and raised in Slidell, now residing in Helena, AL. Growing up as a creative child of six siblings, Joshua's baby sister Kylah found a passion for art. She was a freelance makeup artist but didn't feel fulfilled. It wasn't until she put down the makeup brush and picked up a paint brush that it clicked for her. She pulls inspiration from Monet, Basquiat, Warhol, Henri Matisse, and Banksy. Merging what she loves, she created her own style "Contemporary Grunge Pop Art". Kylah is the founder of Pvinthouse and has been on a creative journey for three years now.

Photography Credit: Macie Odle

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Joshua Wichterich
All in the Family Art Show

Slidell magazine

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Editor's Letter

Kendra M. Davis, Editor / Publisher

I bought another microwave. Actually, I didn't - Bill did. I was willing to wait for the part for another 4 months. He said I'm stubborn. I said determined. Marriage is all about compromise...

Bill and I were married on March 30, 2024! It was a perfect day spent with our families. Our vows were said under a canopy of century-old oaks blanketing the beautiful bayou estate of our dear friends, Sharron & Bill Newton. Sharron was our officiant and made the ceremony fun and friendly and sentimental. (As hard as we tried not to, we still cried.) John Case gave me away. (He cried too.) It was everything that dreams are made of.

After a delicious meal made by John, and lots of drinks, we all boarded the Newton's party barge for a slow, winding ride on the black waters of Bayou Liberty. Bill's family from out of town was just mesmerized by the beauty of our community! The afternoon continued as we docked at the historic property shared by John & Brenda, and Tom & Charlotte Collins. We toasted champagne at the François Cousin home, the oldest structure in St. Tammany Parish, built in 1790 at the beginning of George Washington's presidency. Then we all piled onto the Case's back porch where the afternoon wound down as we shared drinks and tales with the Storyteller.

I sometimes take for granted how unique our community is. Bill's family was awed by the ethereal experiences and sensory spectacularism of the day, and we were sooo proud. Everything was absolutely perfect. We shared our love for each other through our love for our hometown - the people, the history, the culture, the bayous, and the beauty.



Extraordinary Slidell Neighbors

by Charlotte Collins

Patrycja Kornecka Black



“There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children – one is roots, and the other, wings.” ~ Hodding S. Carter

This article spans the history of three generations, which is likely similar to most of our family histories. Though we may remember stories about great or great-great grandparents and beyond, the memories are not our own, but rather passed down through generations. Last year, my family, including my sister and brother-in-law, flew to Scotland and Ireland to experience more of our ancestral heritage. It turned out that the great Scottish and Irish clan disputes were a big part of why I was born in the U.S. Wars, feuds, and religious persecution are why most of our ancestors made the long voyage across “the big pond.” They made the difficult decision to brave the unknown and endure the travel hardships to find a better life for future generations, like you and me. This act of immigration, of course, did not apply to those who were forced into servitude.

Patrycja’s story is not much different, except that hers originated in Poland. As I greeted the petite blonde with blue eyes, I saw a sweet innocence. But as her story unfolded, her countenance became solemn as she related her grandparents’ experiences during World War II in Poland.

Her paternal grandmother was 17 and her grandfather was in his early 20’s when World War II broke out. They lived in a little village, Przyłogi, near the Visla River. When the war broke out, they were abducted by German soldiers. Patrycja told the story just as she had been told so many

times by her grandparents. “They went into the villages and just abducted all the young, able workers. My grandparents were loaded onto a train and traveled for 24 hours. Then they were ordered off the train where they were stripped of their clothes and washed down in front of all the other men and women prisoners. Because the German farmers were forced to become Nazi soldiers, there was a great need for these enslaved farm workers. My grandparents were considered to be slaves and placed on these farms.”

I was somewhat relieved when Patrycja told me of the farms. I quickly surmised that Patrycja’s family was Roman Catholic, because their experiences were vastly different from those I had heard from the Holocaust Museum previously. She confirmed that they were Roman Catholic, and therefore, spared from the concentration camps.

“Yes it could have been worse,” nodded Patrycja. “Still, my grandma, Zofia, told me a lot of stories, and they weren’t treated nicely. After she met Wladyslaw, they courted after coming in from the fields. At some point, Zofia realized she was pregnant with my dad, but she managed to hide it for a very long time until she started showing. The captive farm workers weren’t allowed to get married, much less get pregnant. She and Wladyslaw loved each other and made promises to each other. But the end result was that my father would actually be born in a labor camp in Germany.

Once again, we were luckier than many. They tried to take her to the doctor and have her abort my dad. She was very far along and the doctor said that she would die from complications. She was a little person like you and me, Charlotte. Plus, the farmer respected that she was a very hard worker. So, once again, she was very fortunate, and they let my grandma give birth to my dad in a hospital in Germany. Of course, she was sent back to work in the fields within a couple of weeks and was only allowed to tend to him every four hours. She told me how she would hear her baby crying and how very heartbreaking it was for her to have to let him cry so long. She was a wonderful grandma, and just passed away a couple of years ago."



Patrycja's grandmother Zofia and grandfather Władysław Kornecki (right: with her dad, Tadeusz)

Zofia Kornecka (female spelling) named her son Tadeusz Kornecki (male spelling). I learned that the Americans came in and freed the farm workers, and the couple married immediately afterward.

They were given the choice to go to Canada, or to go back to Poland. The conditions in Poland after the war were very poor, as you can imagine. Both Władysław and Zofia were very patriotic, so they chose to go home to Poland. Their son, Tadeusz, didn't have shoes at times with which to walk to school. When it snowed, he borrowed his father's shoes to make the walk. He was a bright student and went to the Merchant Marine Academy after high school. After the academy, he went to Gdansk Polytechnic University, earning not one but two engineering degrees in Poland.

I was captivated by her father's family tales. As for her mother's family, she explained, "My maternal grandmother, Elwira Knap, was 16 years old when the war broke out in Gdansk, Poland. Her town was an open port city between Germany and Poland, so they learned both languages. She had gone to see her aunt, a coat tailor, and have a coat fitted. The town came under siege, and she found herself unable to return to her home across town. The city was bombed pretty heavily, plus there were Russian and German soldiers lurking about. When she came back to look for her family, she rode on top of a train in order to hide from the soldiers. She found her house no longer existed and began searching hospitals for her parents. She finally found them, but they couldn't recognize her at first because she was blackened from the soot of the train smoke."



She continued with an earnest look on her face, "I got to hear a lot of these stories as I was growing up, and I feel so fortunate to have them to pass down to my children. When it was time to rebuild, my mom would pick up bricks on her way home from school, being careful not to step on any land mines. Both of my parents had interesting histories."

I thought about how much the Ukraine war upset me and was glad her grandparents did not have to relive this point in time with so much suffering. Patrycja quickly agreed, adding, "I worry about my family who is in Poland,

so close to the Ukraine war. My fear is that Poland will be the next casualty of war. I call them often, and make sure they are still safe. But my family there is fortunate. War is worse for those who are poor or less fortunate in any way. They are the ones who carry the burdens."

She recalled food rations during Communism when everyone got little booklets with food stamps. Often, once you got to the store, there was very little on the shelves. There are a lot of wheat fields in Poland, so bread, flour and pasta were available, but meat was scarce. Patrycja explained this is why the dumplings and the pierogi and traditional Polish food revolved around what was available at that time.

Smiling nostalgically, she remembered, "On the rare occasion that my mom, Gabriela, would fry bacon, she would save the drippings and we would put that on the bread the next day for a meal. I thought that was wonderful. She would put sugar on bread with a little butter, and I loved it. I thought this was normal. Of course, we didn't have Western medicine, so we relied a lot on herbs. I still try to rely on tried-and-true herbs first, before taking pharmaceuticals whenever possible. But the one thing I did find to be a bother was the lack of real toilet paper. It was awful when we had to use newspaper, for instance. In fact, when I came to America, I remember being shocked to see pink and blue toilet paper, ones with flowers printed on them. Oh my goodness!" She looked up and her smile was contagious.

She also related that every May there was a parade to celebrate Communism, and everyone was expected to go to the parade and wave a red flag. She asked her mom why they were doing this. The answer was that you had to pretend, and have your face registered in the crowd. They actually had the right to register as a Communist or



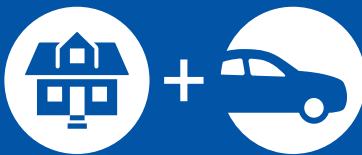
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not. But if you registered as communist and supported communism, you got better jobs, better housing, and so on. Neither of her parents ever registered as communists.

I learned that her earliest memories were during Soviet rule, and everyone had a curfew of 5pm. Patrycja's brow was furrowed as she remembered the tanks rolling through the streets. One of the things that upset her most was when the paramilitary-police that were called ZOMO would be cruel to helpless people. It was when she was relating memories of little old ladies taken off the bus and sprayed with high powered water that she became the most agitated.

As she explained, "They did nothing wrong. It devastated me as a child because my mom always taught me that the elderly are so important. They've lived a long life and gathered a lot of experience. I was taught to have a lot of respect for them. When we were on the bus, if you saw an elderly person come on, you were expected to get up and let them sit. These were very different days when respect was paramount to society. I wish there was more of that today."

"But most of these things are in my past. Now, my fear stems from the way the news is conveyed. In Poland, we only had two TV stations, and the only news we had access to was censored news, telling the viewers how they should feel about everything. It is scary to me because I see a parallel with what's happening right now in the U.S. I know I am more sensitive because I've lived it. But it is hard here to get unbiased news, no matter which way you lean."

Patrycja's words made me think a little longer about why listening to the news is so different now. It isn't because we only want to hear the same point of view as our own. I like to hear different points of view, in order to understand another stance or angle. But I am old enough to remember when the news presented facts, without pressing opinions on the listener. More often than not, both sides of a position were presented in an unbiased way and we were not only allowed, but expected, to draw our own conclusion. We accepted that each of us would form our own opinions, including somewhere in the middle area. Loud, over-speaking was considered rude back then. How many of you remember that anger meant that you had lost your self-control, and the ten second rule might help?

Thankfully, Patrycja's father wanted more for his family and for his country. I learned that her father was fighting for solidarity in Gdansk and left when Jaruzelski was the Prime Minister of Poland. During Communism, they were under martial law, and Tadeusz was a seaman working as an engineer on deep sea vessels in Poland at that time. He came to New Orleans with \$50 in his pocket. I

heard that he immediately loved New Orleans, because it reminded him so much of Europe. While the ship was in port at New Orleans, he received word that he was going to be arrested upon his return to Poland and be sent straight to Siberia. Tadeusz jumped ship in New Orleans, went to the police station, and claimed asylum. After being released, he got a job on the steamboats and worked his way up from oiler to Chief Officer. Finally, he was earning decent wages for his family and was able to send money to his family in Poland.

Patrycja described, "They held him for about a month, then released him after an extensive background check. When I was seven and a half years old, I emigrated to America with my mother, Gabriela. It took three and a half years of waiting to be approved. I can remember when the CIA would come to our house and go through our belongings. My first thought was wondering how they got into a communist country and were allowed to do all this without being caught. I still don't have answers for these things. I had to be checked out by doctors to make sure I was healthy and was required to get so many vaccines to order to come into the U.S."

Taking a breath, she continued, "Then, right before I came to America, the Chernobyl nuclear explosion happened. I did a research paper on it later when I was in college. I was shocked to find satellite images of the cloud when it sat over my city for three days. My mom ran out into the chaos and was given iodine to combat the radiation, which we both drank. I'm sure it helped, but it still affected my thyroid later on. I had to have a full thyroidectomy when I was 21. I still remember the huge rainbow that appeared, and everyone ran out to see it!" She smiled at the vision.

Laughing, Patrycja related, "As we were packing for America and saying goodbyes, my friends were telling me how wonderful America was. They explained that, in America, homes had this closet in the hallway full of money. And you could just take that money, go buy everything you wanted to buy, and then at night when you went to bed, it would fill back up." We both laughed at this view of life in the states.

Finally, they were approved to leave, and her mother opted to arrive by ship so she could bring some family belongings. Patrycja distinctly remembers the heat as she came off the boat. Her father brought the family to Slidell. Patrycja started school at Our Lady of Lourdes school, but spoke no English, so they started her back in first grade, even though she had completed first grade in Poland. Her teacher, Miss Purvis, taught both Patrycja and her mother to speak English. She recalled the transition as a difficult one, and that she often had headaches that first year in the U.S.

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1.) Patrycja's maternal grandparents, Elwira and Jerzy Knap. 2-3.) Dad, Tadeusz, during his time at the Merchant Marine Academy and while he served as an engineer on deep sea vessels in Poland. 4.) Mom Gabriela Knap in her early twenties.

I was curious if she missed her original homeland, and she assured me that she visited several times. Her first visit was when she was 12. Returning again at ages 15 and 17, she noticed that everything seemed more open, and that infrastructure had expanded. Her favorite memory was her visit to Czestochowa to pray to the famous sculpture of Mary, better known as the Black Madonna. These medieval or Byzantine-era icons had darkened through the centuries due to chemical changes, soot from candles, and other environmental degradations. There is also the legend that she went through a fire. Her religious significance was undiminished, and there are a lot of miracles attributed to her. People

leave all sorts of donations near her shrine as thanks.

Looking off, Patrycja related, "When I was 17, I put a prayer petition into her box hoping for a wonderful husband. That's literally all I wanted at that time, a good family of my own. And then I came back to America. I was at my job one day and I just started praying again for a man that would love me and treat me with respect and dignity. I prayed for a man who would be a good father, and that I could trust and treat the same way. And he walked into my life that same day. I was an accounting major at UNO and bartending after school to offset my expenses. He walked up in a button down shirt and a tie, and I was smitten

like never before in my life. He was there to watch a World Series game with a co-worker. We kept glancing at each other. From that day, he started coming in at happy hour, and after the third time, he asked me out!"

We have all heard of true love at first sight, and that was how it happened for both of them. His name was Grant Black, and he explained to her that he was intimidated by her, so it took him three trips to ask her out. I immediately made the connection to my friend, Sylvia Black. He was her son, and I then understood the fit to the type of man Patrycja prayed for.

"He was handsome, intelligent, and just a perfect gentleman. He opened



1.) A nineteen-year-old Patrycja enjoying the beach on the MS gulf coast. 2-3) 1999 was a busy year for Grant and Patrycja! Grant graduated from UNO, and the couple married on August 6, 1999 at Our Lady of Lourdes in Slidell.



1-2.) Patrycja with her parents, Gabriela and Tadeusz. 3.) Tadeusz leading a Solidarity movement meeting in Poland before seeking asylum in the US under the threat of arrest. 4.) A young Patrycja at home in Poland.

all the doors for me, pulled my chair out and seated me. We had a lovely meal at Assunta's, then hung out at the Mandeville lakefront. Then he left for a work trip, and when he came back, he brought me a T-shirt from Fenway Park. He loves baseball! I thought that was so touching that he missed me. I was almost afraid to go on a second date with him because he was too good to be true. On the second date, we went on a riverboat cruise on the Natchez. We were just inseparable from the beginning. We would stay up talking on the phone until three o'clock in the morning because neither of us wanted to say goodbye. We both knew it was true love and got engaged. Our wedding was at Our

Lady of Lourdes. After we married, we moved to Florida. Our oldest son, Bruce, was born there, but we moved back to be with family. After we moved back, I finished my accounting degree while I was pregnant with my second son, Andrew. John Paul is our third son, and he is now eight."

It has been 16 years since she went on a Catholic retreat to Cursillo, but Patrycja describes it as life changing. Now she practices her faith daily. She also keeps up with her family in Poland, and hopes to visit again soon. But Slidell is where they call home, and she seeks to help her community in Slidell and her Catholic community at every chance. She has led various women's prayer groups, volunteered

as a Sunday School teacher, taught confirmation, spoken at marriage retreats, and helped to prepare couples for marriage.

Looking back at her story, I realized that her father sacrificed to make certain his family's future would be safe. He could not have known about the impending wars that threaten democracy nearly eighty years later. For me, not having firsthand experience with such trauma, I feel grateful to see improvements made in the quality of life in even this one family over the course of three generations. Slidell has offered a beacon of hope to so many families throughout the centuries.



1.) A mother of one, and with one on the way, Patrycja graduated from UNO with her degree in accounting in 2004. 2.) With paternal grandmother Zofia. 3) The Black family: Grant and Patrycja with sons Andrew, JohnPaul, and Bruce.

Rapunzel

A Tangled Tale THE MUSICAL

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SATURDAY

APRIL

Lacombe Art Guild Show
Abita Springs Town Hall
Sat 4/27, Opening 5-8pm
Sun 4/28, 11am - 4pm

Pickleball for a Cause
Fritchie Park 9AM

LEGALLY BLONDE
Slidell Little Theatre > 2 PM

CINCO DE MAYO

LEGALLY BLONDE
Slidell Little Theatre > 2 PM

HAPPY Mother's Day

RAPUNZEL - A TANGLED TALE
Cutting Edge Theater > 2 PM

TRINITY SUNDAY

KREWE OF BILGE
POKER RUN • 11AM

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION SEASON STARTS!

Mixed Media Exhibit starts 5/13 > Slidell City Hall Gallery
Call for Appointment 985-646-4375 > M - Th / 10 AM - 4 PM

NATIONAL NURSES DAY

SLIDELL HIGH GRADUATION
SLU Hammond > 7 PM

KREWE OF DIONYSUS WEEKLY BINGO!
Mondays - 7:30 PM - KC Hall on West Hall

BINGO! Every Tues & Thurs - 3 PM
Slidell Lions Club - 356 Cleveland Ave.

MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR

PAWS FOR A CAUSE
Give Nola Day Event - Lacombe • 10 AM

RIBBON CUTTING
The Toasted Yolk Cafe
Covington > 11:30 AM

PIP II HIGH GRADUATION
Pope John Paul > 7 PM

FOOD FOR SENIORS DISTRIBUTION DAY
St Luke's • 1 - 3 PM

State of Economic Development Breakfast
Covington Country Club > 7:30 AM

"I don't like to gamble, but if there's one thing I'm willing to bet on, it's myself."
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— MAHATMA GANDHI

Slidell Council Meeting > 6:30 - 7:30 PM

PERFECTION IS NOT ATTAINABLE, BUT IF WE CHASE PERFECTION WE CAN CATCH EXCELLENCE.
— VINCE LOMBARDI

RIBBON CUTTING
Eye Wares
Covington > 11:30 AM

CINCO DE MAYO
Business After Hours
Silver Slipper Casino > 5 PM

NORTHSHORE HIGH GRADUATION
SLU Hammond > 7 PM

NOON NETWORKERS
Business Networking Every Thurs.
Fatty's Seafood in Slidell • 11:30 - 1 PM
NOONNETWORKERS.COM

Member Orientation
Covington Chamber
8:30 AM

POETRY & OPEN MIC
Roots Plants + Coffee • 6 PM

RIBBON CUTTING
Eye Wares
Covington > 11:30 AM

CINCO DE MAYO
Business After Hours
Silver Slipper Casino > 5 PM

NORTHSHORE HIGH GRADUATION
SLU Hammond > 7 PM

B2B Networking
Covington Chamber
8:30 - 9:30 AM

LOBBY LOUNGE
Jessie Bitter • 7 PM

NOON NETWORKERS
Business Networking Every Thurs.
Fatty's Seafood in Slidell • 11:30 - 1 PM
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Member Orientation
Covington Chamber
8:30 AM

POETRY & OPEN MIC
Roots Plants + Coffee • 6 PM

Live Music on the Porch
Middendorf's Slidell
4 - 8 PM

Generations Legacy
Once a Month Business Networking
40261 US Hwy 190 East • 11:45 AM

Faith on the Field
Pearl River High School • 5:30 PM

Smile

POETRY & OPEN MIC
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CHIEF UMPAH

I was *reared*, not raised, one mile north of Bogue Chitto, Mississippi and nine miles south of Brookhaven. I now know you rear children and raise cotton. We were not farmers, except for chickens, so there was little raising in my family.

In my early years, there were no similar aged children that lived nearby. This caused me to lack the social skills of interacting with others my age. We didn't even have a Sunday school, as the church was so small and the members were too old. There just weren't any children with whom I could associate.

I did go to something similar to a kindergarten for about three weeks; but Miss Margie, the teacher, got sick and it was disbanded. To say the least, my introduction to first grade and dozens of other children was quite dramatic. Looking back, it was very awkward for me.

It was decided that I would go to school in Brookhaven, even

though the Bogue Chitto school was only a mile from my house and the one in Brookhaven was nine miles away. In the South, people don't forget; and I now know that is the reason I went to school in Brookhaven.

Back in the late 1800's, my great-grandfather was on the Bogue Chitto School Board. I am not sure if it was the same organization that existed when I entered first grade in 1953. It could have been the predecessor that later became Bogue Chitto Consolidated School grades 1-12.

The story goes that my great-grandfather, Robert Sones Boone, had a nephew that attended the school. He was caught selling whiskey to a teacher. At a meeting of the school board, it was determined that he should be expelled. Grandfather Boone understood this, but insisted the teacher should be dismissed also. An argument arose that resulted in a fist fight between



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meets every Tuesday at 7:30AM
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Rotary Club of Slidell North Shore members remain active volunteers in the clean-up and rebuild efforts after the Slidell tornado.

Grandfather Boone and another member. In the scuffle, my grandfather's earlobe was bitten off. The family, or at least some of the family, held resentment for this act. I, being my grandmother's favorite grandson, would not attend a school where her father had been treated so roughly.

It was 1953 and Mother took me to the first day of my first grade in school. Miss Matie Williams would be my teacher and called all of us to line up to go to our classroom. I remember Mother releasing my hand and I noticed she was crying. It would be twenty-four years before I would understand what that day represented. It represented another chapter in her life; and in mine, another step toward adulthood.

I was shy. I had not been around other children and I was thrown into a group of kids that had played together since they were toddlers. I stayed on the outside of things, at least for a while.

I dreaded recess. I didn't fit into the games that the kids played. I had never seen those games before. Our first-grade playground was L-shaped, wrapping around two sides of the building and for first-grade boys only. There was another playground for girls of all ages and another one for the older boys.

In all social groupings there is a dominant personality; someone that takes command and becomes the leader, at least for a while. This social phenomenon is exactly what happened in early September 1953 at Brookhaven Elementary.

I will call him Kevin; it's not his real name, but Kevin will do. On the first day of school, he stood out mostly because of the way he was dressed. He wore blue jeans, we all did, but he also wore cowboy boots, while we wore Keds tennis shoes. His shirt was also different. It had a collar buttoned down by snaps with shiny surfaces. I hadn't seen much TV, I'll talk about that later, but I knew that was the type of shirt Roy Rogers wore. Kevin also wore a cowboy hat.

Did I tell you he brought his horse to school? Yes, it was a broomstick, and he was allowed to make a stable for it in his locker. He also wore a holster with a cap pistol.

Within a few days, he was organizing his favorite game, Cowboys and Indians. He chose his friends to be cowboys and appointed us less gregarious ones to be Indians. I knew nothing about Indians, but he did. His family had a TV, and it would be four years before we would get one.

He told me the game was easy. All I had to do was run around with my hand over my mouth, yelping until he shot me, and

I could fall dead. I wasn't sure if that was fun or not, but to be even remotely accepted I did as I was told and ran around yelling at what I did not know. I think it was a Friday.

That evening, when my dad asked me how school was, I told him I was an Indian. He asked me to explain, and I did the best I could. I told Dad that I had rather be a cowboy. That is when Dad gave me some of the best advice I have ever received, even to this day.

He said, "Son, whatever it is in life that you are, be the best you can be. If it's an Indian, be the best Indian at your school."

The next day, he drove me to town and gave me a quarter. He dropped me off at the Haven Theatre and told me to watch the

Indians in the movie. The ticket cost me a dime and I had fifteen cents for popcorn and a coke.

To write this story, I had to review the movie on the internet because, frankly, I remember nothing about it, except it had a lot of wild Indians. The name of the movie was *Broken Arrow* and it starred James Stewart and Jeff Chandler as Cochise. That day, Apache was added to my vocabulary, and I was determined that I would be the best Apache on the Brookhaven Elementary playground.

The game would generally start with us Apaches around the L of the building, out of site from the cowboys on the other side. Of course, Kevin scripted the battle, and

he would invade our side looking for renegades. He would pop his cap pistol and yell, "You're dead!" We were supposed to fall, and they would retreat to their side of the yard just to line up and run the same script over.

Following Dad's advice, I got a bandanna - my brother's Boy Scout neckerchief - and made a headband. Dad gave me some feathers from a hawk he had killed that was eating our chickens and I now had a headdress. I named myself Chief Umpah. I have no idea why, but that became my nickname throughout the entire school.

Sara was a sweet little girl that was very friendly, and she always had a treat called Lik-m-Aid. It was a Kool Aid type powder that you poured in your hand and licked it. It would stain your hands based on the flavor you had opened. I begged her to save me the strawberry and soon I had a handful of red war paint that I added to my ensemble.

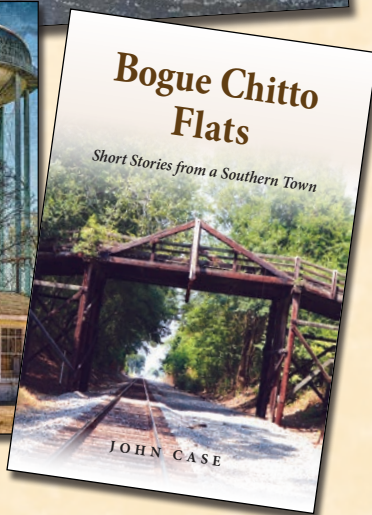
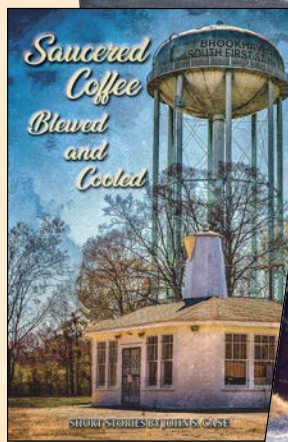
One Saturday, Dad happened to drive me by the school and there was a pile of small limbs the power company had cut



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from the oak trees but had not removed. On the school property, the Indian side, there was a culvert about three feet in diameter from some project that had not been completed.

I had an idea. I asked Dad to let me out of the car and I took the limbs and camouflaged the opening to the culvert. There was room for me and my tribe to hide in there. I couldn't wait for recess on Monday.

We were ordered by Kevin to go to our side and he and his cowboys would come looking for renegades in a few minutes. We hid in the culvert and, when they came hooping and hollering around the corner of the building, we ambushed them. Killed ever last one of those Pale Faces and warned the blue coats to stay away too. We knew the lingo now.

This didn't sit well with Kevin, so he became a little more physical with his attacks. One day, I decided to climb a pecan tree and jump down on him as I had seen in the movie. I climbed to a low limb and stationed myself, waiting for the surprise attack. I noticed there was a short piece of bamboo lodged in the tree. It was probably left there when someone tried to dislodge the pecans. "Spear," I thought.

In a couple of days, Kevin attacked us Apaches again. I was in the tree and had my spear. All Indians have spears. I leaped to the ground and Kevin drew his pistol. I whacked his hand with my spear, hitting it harder than I had intended. He fell to the ground, crying in pain.

Mrs. Larkin, the teacher on duty, came to the scene. Later, she would be my fifth-grade teacher and my favorite teacher of all grammar school. She was a big lady, not fat, just large boned and strong. She lifted Kevin with one arm. She looked at Kevin's hand and proclaimed no real harm done; but she said, from that day on, there would be no more cowboys and Indians played on that school yard. She said it was not respectful and we would understand someday. She mentioned something about too many TV shows and movies.

The next year, we were moved to the playground for older boys, second through sixth grade, and the games were more organized. They consisted of touch football, baseball and kickball, our forerunner of soccer. I had been a better Indian than I was a fullback, so my personality rolled back into being an "also-was."

The role of my being an Indian was not forgotten, however. In fifth grade, our class was to present the Thanksgiving play in the auditorium for the entire school and many parents would also attend. Mrs. Larkin asked if I would play the Indian that brought the turkey to the feast with the pilgrims. I could be Chief Umpah again.

I enhanced my costume with a dark-haired wig and more feathers. I was supposed to bring in a fake turkey, but I had a better idea. That morning before school, I killed a chicken and put it in a bag, hiding it behind the stage. When it came time for me to make my entrance, I came bearing a real, dead, headless, bleeding chicken. When I offered it to Miles Standish and Priscilla Mullins, Priscilla fainted when she saw the blood. The curtain had to be drawn while the cast regrouped.

That incident would follow me the rest of my school days. I was never asked or allowed to be in another school play. My senior year, I wanted badly to have a lead part in the senior play, but Ms. Ab, who ran the show, told me not to even read for the part. I would not be in the play.

I guess my early experience as Chief Umpah influenced me. I wanted to learn more about these early Americans. I learned that, in the 1870's, most of the local tribes, which were Choctaw, had been forced to relocate to Oklahoma and other parts west. Dad said he remembered several families that stayed behind but, to his knowledge, Sydney the peanut man was the only one around now.

I didn't know Sydney was Native American. He had no red skin at all, and I had always thought he was just a lighter colored black man. Now, I noticed his hair was long and shiny and this was before hair extensions or dreadlocks.

He sold roasted peanuts, we called them parched peanuts, on the corner near State Bank. He had a wood-fired roaster and he sold the best peanuts, roasted with firewood he stacked beside him.

I started watching him and noticed he stayed there all day, and he had no chair. When he didn't have a customer, he would squat as if he were in a chair but there was no chair. It was as if he was double jointed, and he could stay in that position for hours. Try it, you can't.

One time, I addressed him as Chief Sydney and he frowned with disapproval. For years, there was very little conversation between us. After I graduated from high school, the summer before I went to college, I stopped to buy some peanuts. He was old now, his hair was grey, and his face was wrinkled.

He asked me what my plans were, and I told him about college. He grunted and said, "Happy journey Chief Umpah," and laughed. How he knew I have no idea. That is the last time I ever saw him or any other Native American in town.



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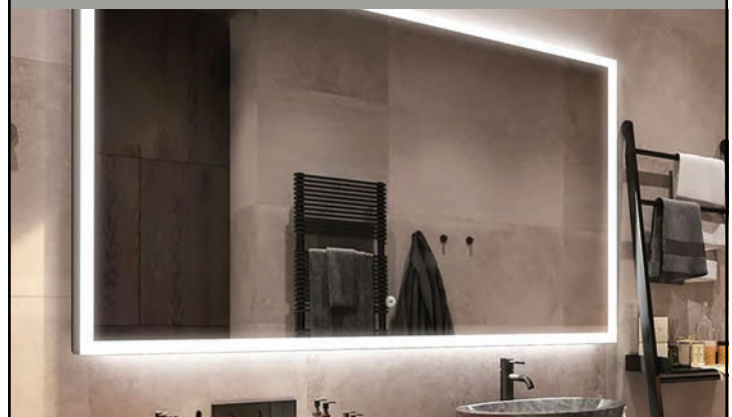


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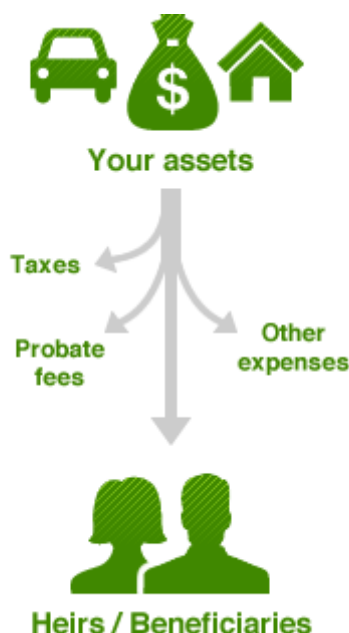


by: Mike Rich, CFP® | Pontchartrain Investment Management

EVERYONE HAS AN ESTATE, AND EVERYONE NEEDS AN ESTATE PLAN

Mary's mom, Joanne, passed away in 2020, but we still think about her a lot. Kindergarten teacher for 40 years, award-winning quilter, and outdoor adventurer, she was a great wife, mom, mother-in-law, and grandmother. She and Mary's dad had drafted a will during their marriage, but had not done much else in terms of financial planning. When I took over as Joanne's advisor years before she passed, we put things in better order. In fact, we planned so well that it took only a few weeks to settle her estate.

Whether it's large or small, everyone has an estate, and it will be distributed to your heirs when you pass. Therefore, everyone needs a will. If you don't



have one when you die, the state in which you live will have one for you. Unfortunately, the state's plan for your assets might not align with your wishes. Don't let your estate fall into that trap. Get a will (your spouse needs one, too).

Also, my experience has shown that most everyone needs a durable power of attorney, which gives another person (the attorney-in-fact) the ability to sign legal and financial documents, pay bills, and access bank accounts. People who are married typically give power of attorney to their spouse. In addition, a power of attorney document might also include a medical directive, which goes into effect if you become disabled



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and can't make decisions for yourself. Some attorneys will draft separate documents, one for your durable power of attorney and one for your medical directive.

You should also have a living will, which states how you want to be cared for at the end of your life, including the administration of means to keep you alive, such as nourishment, medication, or artificial life support. Don't put your family members in a situation where they might have to make difficult decisions about your care. Joanne had a living will, which was a huge relief as we cared for her at the end of her life.

Also, if you want your remains to be cremated, you might need a special document that states your wishes. Check with your attorney.

Many clients often ask me about trusts and whether they need one. Because there are many types of trusts and situations in which they might apply, I refer those clients to an estate planning attorney.

One more thing. Although it's not part of an estate plan, here's something for all of you grandparents out there. If

you care for your minor grandchildren on a regular basis, or take them on trips, or otherwise spend time with them when their parents are not around, it's a good idea to have a document that gives you the authority to seek emergency medical care for your little ones (my wife and I have these and keep copies of them in our cars). Again, check with your attorney.

A properly-designed estate plan can make life easier for you and your family, and is a key part of your financial plan. To discuss your own situation, call me for a free appointment.

► Mike Rich, CFP®
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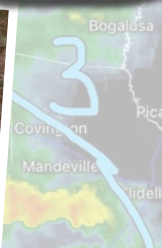
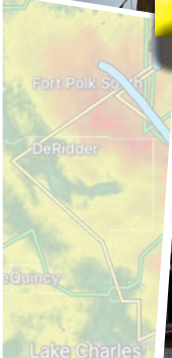
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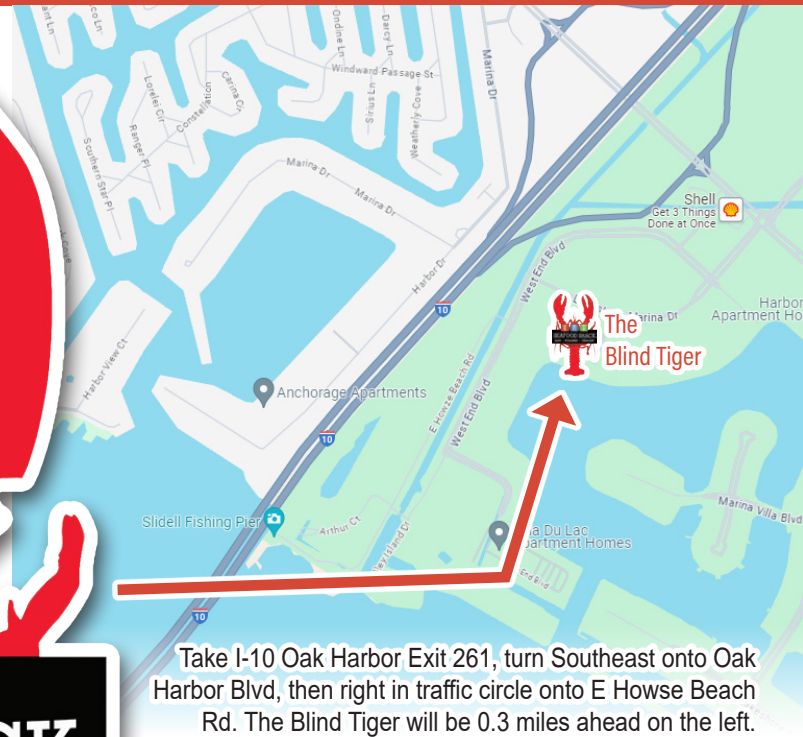
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"Your Estate Matters" Legal-ease

By Ronda M. Gabb, NP, JD, RFC



Leave a *Treasure Map* not a Treasure Hunt!

One of the most common questions I am asked when meeting with grieving loved ones after a death is: "How do we know where the assets are?" For many children, their parents were somewhat secretive about their assets. While we all know about their primary home and usually where they bank (we got birthday checks!), but other than that, who really knows? Sometimes the deceased spouse was the one who paid all the bills and handled all the finances, and the surviving spouse is literally clueless as to what and where the bills and assets are, especially when many of us choose "paperless" so there aren't even bills or statements to find. The best advice I have in the above situations is to find the last income tax return (if one even exists) as this shows us income, interest, and dividends, and to look at the last few months of checking account statements for ongoing bill payments. After that, the Treasure HUNT is on.

The best thing you can do for your loved ones is to have a Treasure MAP instead. I understand that many folks don't want their children to know their intimate financial business...YET. But just because you have established a detailed listing of all your legal papers, assets and liabilities, that doesn't mean your kids need to see that now, they just need to know where to find the "Treasure Map" when the time

comes. That time is certainly WHEN you die but also IF you become disabled before you die. The disability aspect is becoming more prevalent than ever and you already know that I am a huge proponent of having some type of long term care pre-plan in place (and I can help you with that, too).

Our estate planning clients leave our office with a big maroon "Estate Planning Portfolio", it's classy (and of course we tell the kids exactly what to be on the lookout for) but you can certainly create your own binder from Walmart with the same end result. This binder should have signed copies (or even the originals themselves) of all your essential estate planning legal documents: Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney for Assets and Health Care, and Living Will. But it should also house copies of all life insurance information (with confirmation of beneficiaries), property deeds, vehicle and boat titles, cemetery deeds, business formation paperwork, birth and marriage certificates, military papers, etc. Then once a year (I recommend January because you can access all year-end December 31st statements), place a copy in the binder of the first page of your statements (this page usually contains the summary information of balance, account numbers and advisor's name) for brokerages, annuities, cash value life insurance, banks, bonds, credit unions, etc. If you are paperless, don't

forget about account logins, passwords, and safe combinations (or at least how to access the master login program if you have one). I also recommend your annual declaration page for all your car, home, and flood insurances, and a list of all advisors' names and numbers (accountant, attorney, financial planner). If you keep the originals in a safe deposit box, make sure someone else (in addition to your spouse) is named as a co-owner on the box for immediate post-death access.

Your final wishes should be clear. Do you wish to be buried, cremated, or donated to a medical school? If you want to be cremated or donated, it is best to have these wishes spelled out in a legal document ahead of time so there are no family disagreements after you're gone. What kind of services do you want (none at all or a second line)? Some of our clients even write their own obituaries.

The more information you leave behind, the easier (and quicker and cheaper) it will be for your loved ones. As morbid as it may sound, the moment we are born we get in the "waiting line" to be called Home again, but only He knows where in the line we are...so TODAY, please leave behind a Treasure Map and not a Treasure Hunt.

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See other articles and issues of interest!



Ronald "Chip" Morrison Jr. and Ronda M. Gabb are Board Certified Estate Planning and Administration Specialists, certified by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization. Combined, they have devoted 45 years of law practice solely to estate planning, and are Members of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and the Governor's Elder Law Task Force. Ronda is also a Registered Financial Consultant.



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Challenges

Story and photos by Donna Bush

This was, by far, the most challenging photography shoot I have ever done. First, I'm shooting something I've never witnessed in person. Second, it is a one-time occurrence each year. No do-over. Add to that, I was shooting in the coldest temperatures for this event in years. The low was -5 when we woke up with wind gusting from 20-50 mph!

You are probably wondering what I was photographing in such extreme temperatures and why?

Every March for approximately 10 days, the 1,049-mile journey from Anchorage to Nome captures the attention of the world as mushers and dogs take to the snow-covered historic trail to compete in the annual Iditarod race. Most of the mushers are Alaska residents. But, of the 38 mushers signed up for this year's competition, there were also

entries from numerous other states plus Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, and Denmark. And, don't think this is an entirely male sport. This year there were eleven females entered, with over half being veteran mushers, meaning they have completed at least one Iditarod.

This year's event was well covered internationally with film and photo crews vying for the best spots to score their images. I was lucky enough to be invited to be an Official Press Photographer for the ceremonial start of the 2024 Iditarod in Anchorage on March 2nd this year. Yep! I was right there among all the international film crews and photographers jockeying for that prime spot.

The official press meeting instructed us on what we could and could not do; where we could and could not

photograph; our designated badges and what access was granted with them.

My assignment was to photograph:

- The official meet-n-greet pizza party of mushers and their IditaRiders.
- The IditaRiders and their mushers prior to the ceremonial start in downtown Anchorage.
- All downtown pre-race ceremonies - including speeches, Induction, Color Guard presentation, National Anthem, Alaska State Anthem.
- Each musher and IditaRider as they start their trek.

What is an IditaRider? This is a very special passenger who is seated in the sled and rides the 11 miles of the ceremonial start of the Iditarod. The IditaRider position is purchased by the winning bidder of the IditaRider Auction, a huge fund-raising event.

The first Iditarod took place on March 3, 1973, and was created to preserve the heritage of Alaskan sled dogs. Many years before the Iditarod became an international sled dog race, it was 2,300-miles of trails beginning in Seward and passing through the Kenai Peninsula to the Iditarod Mining District and then to Nome. Never an easy trail, winter permitted sled dog teams to travel safely over the frozen bogs and brush along the rivers.

The gold rush era led to development of the Iditarod Trail. With the discovery of gold, thousands of prospectors trekked northward, hoping to stake their claim. With this increased movement came a bigger demand for goods and supplies between Seward and the mining communities. In 1908, the Alaska Road Commission formally surveyed, cleared, and marked a trail from Seward to Nome, utilizing the roughly blazed trails. Meeting in the gold mines of interior Alaska, the route eventually became known as the Iditarod Trail. This Trail, which takes its name from the Athabaskan village on the Iditarod River, was the link between communities and Alaska's winter commerce for at least two decades.

Today, the Iditarod Sled Dog Race commemorates the racing traditions started years ago. It celebrates those intrepid mushers and their dogs who risked, and in some cases sacrificed, their lives in blizzard conditions to bring a life-saving diphtheria serum to Nome in 1925. It highlights the spirit of a long-ago mushing lifestyle, which faded away as airplanes and snowmachines brought faster and more convenient travel between villages and larger towns.

Between 1924 and 1925, Nome had a deadly diphtheria outbreak requiring large doses of



medications. However, ships carrying medical supplies were unable to traverse the frozen tundra from fall until spring when the ice melted.

On February 21, 1924, the first Alaska airmail flew into McGrath. But in 1925, during Nome's diphtheria outbreak, a decision had to be made. Do we trust this new technology of flight to deliver the life-saving medicine to the dying people of Nome or do we go with our tried-and-true dog teams? While flight was trustworthy, severe winter weather made flights from Fairbanks to Nome impossible. To deliver the life-saving

medicine, volunteers organized a relay of dog teams that traveled through blizzards from Nenana to Nome (674 miles) along the Iditarod Trail.

The serum vials were securely packaged and delivered to the train station for the almost 24 hour ride to Nenana. Six hundred seventy-four miles east of Nome, inside the two-room Nenana railroad station, impatiently waited "Wild Bill" Shannon. This town was picked for the start of the serum run because of its proximity to the Nome mail trail. The train ride shortened the serum's trip by days. Even so, the dogsled teams and mushers would need to traverse 674 miles of the most inhospitable territory in the throes of Alaska winter. Wild Bill was about to break "the rule of the 40s." This rule cautioned against running a dog team below minus 40 degrees and above 40 degrees. Above, a husky can easily overheat and dehydrate. At 40 below, 2 degrees below the point at which mercury freezes, it leaves little room for error. The night of Wild Bill's run was 50 below! A cup of boiling water flung in the air at minus 50, becomes a cloud of vapor.

Regardless of the weather, mushing is a dangerous profession with many threats to dogs and musher. A low-hanging branch could knock out an unsuspecting driver. A moose could suddenly appear, charging to kill dogs and / or musher. The driver could fall and be injured. He could get wet and not be able to build a fire due to wet matches or frozen hands, before freezing to death. Basically, death waited around every turn and dip in the terrain, but at -40° to -50° the chances increased exponentially. It was recommended that he wait for morning; more light, warmer temps. But, if you are named Wild Bill and folks were sick and dying, you don't wait.





© Cathy Hart

As the train pulled into the depot, the conductor jumped to the platform, passing the 20-pound package of serum to Wild Bill, who tied it into his sled. He reviewed his emergency supplies of ax, blanket, knife, rations, tarp, and fire-making tools. He also carried a waterproof container with matches and another with wood shavings, dried twigs or camphor. He then dashed into the dark along the Tanana River, headed to the next checkpoint and musher in the relay.

One driver explained, "At minus 50, a lost glove means a lost hand." Winters in the Alaskan interior were nearly 8 months long and temperatures regularly fell below -50° with brutal snowstorms.

"A man is only as good as his dogs when he is on the trails of Alaska.... And a dog is only as good as his feet." Shannon fought a hard battle on the first leg of the serum relay. He reached the Johnny Campbell Roadhouse with severe frostbite on his face, along with 4 dogs suffering from frostbite. Too tired and cold to eat or drink, he realized the temperature outside was minus 62 degrees. Yet, he still had 22 miles to go to reach his final destination of Tolovana and the next musher. It took him four hours of huddling by the stove and drinking hot coffee to warm up enough to eat before continuing his journey.

Six hundred miles away, Leonhard Seppala near Nome received the phone call telling him it was time to hit the trail. Not only did he face the longest leg at 315 miles to Nulato and 315 miles back to Nome, his approximately 6-day journey would be the most difficult. It crossed the windswept Norton Sound ice, not to mention the likely blizzard conditions or worse, such as the risk of ice breaking up and carrying him, along with the serum, out to sea. He departed in a temperature of 20 below and relatively calm winds.

On day 4, he faced a tough decision: Cut across Norton Sound, running his team over the most treacherous form of sea ice, or take the safer coastline route around the inlet, but twice as long. Time was of the essence but so was safety. The Sound was known

What's Diphtheria?

Diphtheria is an acute, highly contagious bacterial disease causing inflammation of the mucous membranes, formation of a false membrane in the throat that hinders breathing and swallowing, and potentially fatal heart and nerve damage by a bacterial toxin in the blood. It is now rare in developed countries because of immunization.

for its difficulty and lack of kindness to mushers, having claimed numerous victims over the years.

The dogs, particularly the lead dogs, were just as important as the mushers. Lead dogs are a special breed in themselves, with their own sixth sense, able to read the trail and find their way in the most blinding snowstorm.

Norton Sound, known as "the ice factory" by locals, is a frightening inlet of the Bering Sea, extending 150 miles long and 125 miles across at its widest point. Quite deceptive, the ice is in a constant state of change. Huge pieces would unexpectedly break free and drift out to sea; or a long, narrow chunk of water would suddenly open up and widen. Adding to this horrific winds and brutally cold temperatures, and this had all the makings of a serious disaster. 70 mph winds are not unheard of, which can quickly drop the wind chill to minus 100!

What's Mushing?

Mushing is the general term that is used when one or more dogs pull a rig. The word *mush* comes from the French verb *marcher* which means "to march". A musher is the person who controls the dogs. The term *dog sledding* can replace *dog mushing* when the rig being pulled is a snow sled.



Feeling the pressure from the aviation fans, Alaska's governor still refused to authorize a flight of serum to Nome and enlisted more relay mushers. With no way to alert Seppala to the change in plans, it was sheer luck that the two mushers crossed paths and were able to relay the serum to Seppala for the dangerous trip back across the Norton Sound. Without Seppala's lead dog, Togo, there is no doubt that the team would have been lost on the Sound. Even with the shortened run, he and his team traveled more than two and a half the distance of any other team, at top speed, in blizzard conditions, over heaving ice. Risking being blown out to sea when the ice separated, only Togo was able to save them.

During their return, Togo suddenly stopped as an open channel of water appeared about six feet ahead of them, growing wider with every passing minute as they drifted out to sea, along with the life-saving antitoxin. For hours, they waited on their icy float, hoping for the wind to shift and blow them backs toward shore. Finally, the wind turned and blew them within five feet of shore; still too far for them to jump. If Seppala could somehow get Togo to the shore, he could pull them together. He tied a long towline to the dog's harness and hurled him across the open channel. Togo seemed to understand, dug his nails into the ice floe and pulled as hard as he could. The towline snapped and slipped into the water, sealing a death sentence for Seppala. But problem solver Togo was not about to give up. He dove into the water, grabbed the line in his mouth, and struggled back onto the shore. With the line held tightly in his jaws, he laid down and rolled over the line until it was twice looped about his shoulders. He fiercely pulled until Seppala and his teammates were close enough to jump to safety.

Within hours of the antitoxin reaching Nome, news services were proclaiming the success. The New York Sun read, "All the mechanical transportation marvels of modern times faltered in the presence of the elements... Other engines might freeze and choke but the oldest of

Dogs vs. ?

Many early US government officials believed that Alaskans would be better off living in Alaska without dogs and attempted to implement alternative forms of transportation that they felt would be superior to dogs. Some of these included horses, goats, hot-air balloons, bicycles, ice skates, ice boats, ice trains and passenger pigeons. However, the favorite choice by several officials was the reindeer. Reindeer and caribou are the same species, with the difference being reindeer have been domesticated and caribou have not. Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary and head of the US government's education program for Alaska, was a huge proponent of replacing dogs with reindeer. In 1903, he argued before Congress that reindeer should replace sled dogs in Alaska and be given the responsibility for hauling the US mail. One missionary reindeer handler, after harnessing a reindeer to a sled, wrote, "With many misgivings, I finally perched myself on top of the loaded sled behind the reindeer, which I was to drive. At first, there was no trouble; but as soon as I attempted to guide the deer, my efforts were treated with contempt. No matter how hard or how often I pulled on the line, he paid no attention to it, except by occasionally coming to a full stop and turning around to look at me in a manner that made me feel rather uncomfortable, for the front hoofs of the deer are formidable weapons." One prospector tried his hand at delivering the mail with a reindeer instead of dogs but soon realized the error of his ways. He traded the reindeer meat and hide for two dogs. In 1914, Archdeacon Hudson Stuck predicted that as long as there were prospectors in Alaska and quick travel over great spaces of country was necessary, so long would sled dogs be utilized. Eleven years later, the decision to use dogs to speed the serum to Nome proved him right.





all motors, the heart, whose fuel is blood and whose spark is courage, never stalls but once.”

Even though the mushers made it safely to Nome with the serum, the extreme number of diagnosed cases led to another round of serum requiring transport. Half would travel by dogsled and half would be flown. The Alaska governor finally succumbed to the demands for aviation action. Issues with fuel and plane readiness plagued the flight, which ultimately was scratched as half the serum arrived by dogsled

quicker and the epidemic began to wind down.

However, this did prompt Federal officials to move towards air delivery for mail by allowing bids on mail routes from airplane companies as well as dog teams. Small aviation companies began to spring up in Alaska, often outbidding the dogsled deliveries.

In the late 1950's, the modern snowmobile was invented and heralded the end of dog sledding, or did it? Soon, the number of sled dogs in rural Alaskan

communities was fewer than the number of “iron dogs,” or snowmobiles.

Yet, an “iron dog” could only travel as far as a tank of gas and was limited by their vast weight maneuvering icy creeks and ravines; while a four-legged dog could travel as far as needed/desired due to their loyalty to their musher.

Sadly, by 1970, travel on most of Alaska's trails was nonexistent, heralding the end of an era. Then, a local historian, Dorothy Page, joined with sled dog enthusiast Joe Redington to create a

An Iditarod Vet

Kathy Doty, Certified Veterinarian of 32 years, has examined Iditarod dogs as an ER vet, Iditarod Checkpoint Vet, and as the vet of record for multiple Iditarod teams. “Some mushers prefer me to come to their house for Iditarod pre-race exams, vaccines, worming, etc. It's less stressful for the dogs and the musher.”

Iditarod requires very strict exam protocols - bloodwork, lung exams, EKGs, up-to-date vaccinations and de-worming.

All dogs are examined by an Iditarod Vet at each checkpoint of the race. The vet can choose to drop the dog from a team if they see an issue. The Musher can also choose to drop a dog. Many times, a musher will drop their dog before a vet does. The entire team of vets have to say Yay/Nay to each dog at each checkpoint.

Under race rules, if a dog dies, the musher must voluntarily scratch from the race or they will be withdrawn unless the dog died due to an “unpreventable hazard” like a moose encounter.





Interesting Iditarod Facts

- Race times are twice as fast as the first Iditarod.
- Sled dogs need 10–12,000 calories per day. On the trail, they receive snacks of frozen meat or dog food. At checkpoints, they are given a warm meal of beef, salmon, chicken, or kibble mixed with fat.
- Dogs wear booties to protect their feet from the ice and rough terrain.
- There's a Jamaican dog sled team, inspired by the Olympic Jamaican bobsled team.
- Dogs can be saved by mouth to snout resuscitation, which happened in 2012. Coincidentally, both the resuscitating musher and the dog are named Marshall. Karma?
- There once was a mushing mortician.
- There are twin sisters mushing in the race – Kristy and Anna Berington.
- Then there's father, Dick Mackey, along with sons, Rick and Lance, who've each won the Iditarod on their 6th attempt wearing bib number 13.
- There's a special prize for the last finisher. Race tradition is to light a lantern at the finish line in Nome when the race begins. It is an old tradition/safety measure to keep track of sled drivers still out on the trail. Today, the "red lantern" is an official prize. Just finishing over 1000 miles of snow, ice, frostbite, sleep deprivation, moose encounters, etc. is no small achievement. Rookie Jeff Reid took home this year's red lantern with a time of 12 days, 11 hours, 22 minutes and 1 second, only 3 days and 9 hours behind the first-place winner.
- Probably the most unusual dog breed used was the black standard poodle. "One major advantage to mushing poodles: If you fall off the sled, the poodles will stop, while the huskies don't care."

sled dog race that would be a tribute to the dogs and their contribution to early Alaska. The first Iditarod took place from Anchorage to Nome in 1973, and has since occurred every year on the first Saturday of March, traveling the once-vital dogsled freight route. The race traverses the westernmost portion of the serum run from Ruby to Nome in even years and Kaltag to Nome in odd years. Changing the route helps protect the trails from overuse and deterioration.

Once it took Iditarod front-runners 3 weeks to reach Nome, now it takes about 9-11 days. Unlike the serum run of Siberian teams, the favored dog is now an Alaskan Husky, even smaller and faster than the Siberian; bred for speed. However, that speed has cost the cold-weather adaptation of Siberians, causing the dogs to need coats and booties.

Fifty-one years ago, that very first Iditarod was won by Dick Wilmarth in 20 days, 0 hours, 49 minutes, and 41 seconds. This year, now six-time winner, Dallas Seavey was the first to cross the finish line in 9 days, 2 hours, 16 minutes, and 8 seconds. And that was after killing and gutting a moose that attacked one of his dogs on the

first evening of the race. Mushers are required to gut any dispatched game on the trail due to safety reasons. The meat is used by natives. Seavey was fined two hours at his next stop for not adequately gutting the moose.

Dallas Seavey has a few milestones under his belt. In 2005, he was the youngest musher to compete, starting the race the day after his 18th birthday. In 2012, he was the youngest musher to win at age 25. In 2013, his father, Mitch, became the oldest musher to win at 57. Dallas also holds the fastest winning time of 7 days, 14 hours, 8 minutes, and 57 seconds from his 2021 win. With this year's win, he owns the title of most wins.

Seavey wasn't the only musher to have a moose encounter. Jessie Holmes shared that he had to punch a moose in the nose on the trail to get him to leave his dogs alone. Gabe Dunham's sled was flipped by running into a dead moose on the course. Bailey Vitello drove his 16-dog team over the deceased moose after unexpectedly encountering it in a tight curve of the trail.

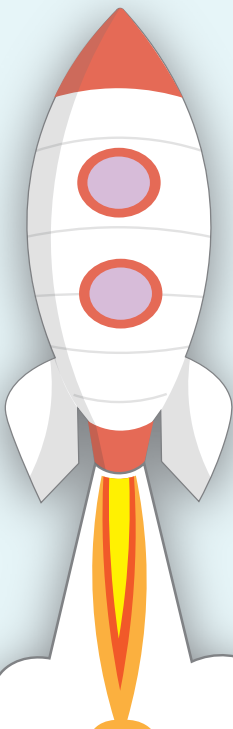
This was a grueling, exhausting, energizing, and exciting experience. And I've been invited back next year!

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“All in the Family”

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May 31 - June 5, 2024

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From artist Joshua Wichterich:

What is it to be a Wichterich? First of all, it means to try and pronounce it the correct way. The German pronunciation was too much to explain so we just say “Witerich”. To be a Wichterich means to be strong-willed, a dreamer, and a fighter; to be rooted of God and walk by faith.

I thought I was special for being in a big family. Three boys and three girls. Sunday was a family day; a hectic day starting with a big van full of kids getting ready to fill the church, and then another loud ride to my grandparents where we would get a free meal and chocolate frosted buttercream bundt cake. My uncles, aunts, and cousins would come. My grandmother would cook something Southern and delicious. The air would be filled with the scents of herbs and hot buttered French bread, followed by fresh cake and hot coffee.

I would walk down the quiet hall, away from the noise of the old house, to the “extra room”. The extra room was little, with one window, an extra TV, a couch bed, a tiny closet with Pawpaw’s good jackets hanging in it, a little picture on the wall of Jesus knocking on a door, and an old wooden drafting table splattered with old paint. This was where my grandfather painted.

My pawpaw use oil-based paints, and my grandmother was the tidiest woman on the planet. Oil paints, a bunch of kids, and carpet do not mix. Every now and again, I would catch my pawpaw painting. Southern scenes of his paintings hung all around my grandparents’ home. This was Pawpaw’s gallery. I never realized it then, but those moments were where it all started for me.

My artistic talent began to show. I was accepted into the Talented Arts Program (TAP) in St. Tammany Parish. My baby sister was often my muse then, much like my daughter is today. I would draw her, inspiring her some kind of way unnoticed by me, to be creative. For me, not only was it a way to pass time while babysitting, but moments I enjoyed spending with my much younger sibling who liked the arts as much as I did. She was a talented kid, and little did I know I was inspiring a future artist, just as my pawpaw inspired me...

As the years passed, adulthood happened, the pressures of life grew, Hurricane Katrina came and set a lasting tone over the community, and eventually my grandfather became inundated with cancer. And I knew in the end no one was coming to save Pawpaw. This wasn’t like being rescued from a storm. So, I just prayed, hoping that God would. We all did. We all had faith, but was it enough





to pull him from this? Pawpaw was eventually taken away from the Wichterich household. We thought it was devastating when Hurricane Katrina took everything... It hurt ten times more when he was taken from us... I know I will see him again... But I never saw his drafting table or paintbrushes move with life again.

The room felt different. It wasn't as it was when I was a young boy. "I'm going to do something great with art, Pawpaw," I said. I mentioned my dreams and goals with tears in my eyes. I wasn't too sure if what I said would come to fruition, but it just came out of my mouth. It was as if I was claiming my future.

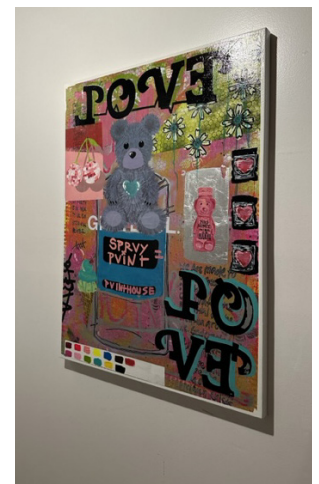
I can still see Pawpaw painting or sitting on the front porch in the southern breeze. Maybe Jesus created him a real art studio in Heaven. I can believe that.

An artist is who God created me to be. I called myself Blue Wing Press, with a blue Morpho butterfly as the sigma, standing for freedom and growth that stemmed from a special spirit. I've had the opportunity to work with award-winning authors and prolific figures. I've illustrated over 60 children's books (and counting), and showed my work in St. Tammany Parish and beyond. Pawpaw never had the opportunity to see the fruition of art blossom from me, but I know he would've been proud.

Soon, my baby sister Kylah, who I used to draw, began to paint. Trading her makeup brush for a paintbrush, she began to thrive and started her own brand called "Pvinthouse." The 'v' stands for an upside down 'a'. Just as my art is completely different from my grandfather's, her art is completely different from mine. Her talent and wit shine through her art. I am so proud of the woman she has become.

We collaborated on the cover art for this edition of *Slidell Magazine*. "Rise" will be featured at our art show, "All in the Family", on May 31. This piece has our touches along with the main image of the St. Louis Cathedral, which is a print from an original painting by my grandfather. This art was spawned by the feelings of "rise" and "gold for ashes". In the wake of the tornados that devastated our community on April 10th, we dedicate this piece to Slidell, in the hopes and prayers that we will grow stronger than ever, just as we always have.

"All in the Family" will be my premiere show, as well as debuting my sister's work. I'm proud to also show Pawpaw's work publicly for the first time. I am honored to share the House of Wichterich with the community of St. Tammany Parish. Three different artists, three different styles, all in the family.





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One of the hardest decisions any pet owner will ever make is the decision to euthanize a pet to end suffering. Why then, do our pets sometimes make that decision harder? Why do some pets have a last rally just before their euthanasia appointment?

It's commonly reported by owners and veterinarians that some pets will have a last burst of energy between the call to schedule the euthanasia and the procedure itself. It can be jarring to see such a thing, causing an owner to doubt a difficult decision. What could be happening? There are several theories.

Most terminal diseases are waxing and waning. It's really not one long downhill slide when seen up-close. It's a mix of good and bad days, one where the bad days become more and more common than the good. As that ratio worsens, and the owner perceives that bad days are becoming the norm for the pet, the euthanasia appointment is scheduled. But in reality, there are still good moments, albeit much less frequent. Odds are that one of those perkier moments will happen between when the decision is made and the euthanasia itself.

It's also possible that it's all psychological. When we are considering whether or not to euthanize a pet, there may be a lot of anxiety and stress involved in the decision-making process. Our pets pick up on those feelings and reflect them back, appearing worse themselves. Then, we make the decision, schedule the appointment, and it's set. A weight is lifted off our shoulders and we become calmer, focusing our attention not on the decision process but on our pet's last

hours or days. They bask in this glow of good feelings, and they appear to improve, just before the euthanasia occurs.

Many of our pets experiencing terminal illnesses are already on pain medications, either for the illness itself or for other common conditions such as arthritis. Perhaps in the days, weeks, or months before we make the decision to euthanize, as conscientious owners, we try to walk the line between giving enough pain medications to keep our pets comfortable but not so much as to cause annoying or debilitating side effects. Now, knowing there is little time left, we may not care at all about side effects because our goal is keeping the pet out of pain. Why worry about long-term side effects when there is no more long term? If the pet has an accident in the house or is more groggy from the drug, we don't care as much as we did before the appointment was made. We go ahead and give full doses of all of the pain medications we can, and our pets experience better pain relief and a happy high shortly before they are euthanized.

Whatever the reason, the majority of veterinarians have either seen or heard of this "pre-euthanasia improvement," so if you experience it with your own pet, know it's normal. Also know that it is not wrong to proceed with the euthanasia, if that is what you want. It may be better to do it that way and have your pet leave the world feeling good than to cancel the appointment and have an "emergency euthanasia" on a subsequent, really awful day. And, please, if you are having difficulty with the decision of euthanasia or the loss of a pet, reach out for support.

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COOL, FUNNY, BIZARRE, OR INTERESTING THINGS I LEARNED THIS MONTH

Story by Suzie Hunt



IN THE WORLD...

Adapting to the Top of the World

For people who practically live at sea level, it is hard to comprehend how anyone can survive living on the world's mountaintops. Scientists have recently found that where your mountain is has a direct effect on how your body survives.

Looking at indigenous peoples in some of the highest points on the globe, researchers have found that specific populations have adapted physiologically different to extreme altitude. The peoples studied included the indigenous highlanders of the Andean Altiplano in South America, the Tibetan Plateau, and the Ethiopian Highlands..

The main concern at such extreme altitude is acute hypoxia, a condition that arises when the body's tissues do not receive enough oxygen to function. The symptoms of mountain sickness are headaches, vomiting, impaired thinking, weakness and in some severe cases, death.

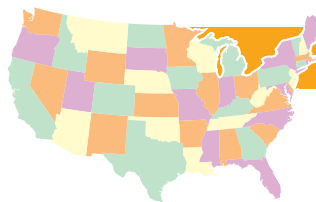
To discover the answer to how people can live in extreme conditions, the researchers looked at a wide variety of biological and cultural reasons on how they survive. They have found that these three diverse populations have evolved and adapted in very different ways.

In the Andes mountains, residents have evolved to have a higher percentage of hemoglobin in their blood. By having more of the proteins that carry oxygen through the blood stream, these Andeans have more of this vital component distributed throughout the body while still breathing at a similar rate as people at sea level.

Tibetans living in the Himalayan Mountains increase the number of breaths they take per minute to raise the volume of oxygen in their system. This population has also biologically adapted to make larger amounts of nitric oxide in their lungs as they breath. The gas naturally expands blood vessels and allows for oxygen to travel through the body easier.

Ethiopian highlanders share neither of these adaptations. It appears that they have adapted to high altitude by having a higher sensitivity of cerebral blood vessels for carbon dioxide. In this situation, the increased cerebral blood flow and oxygen delivery to the brain offsets most hypoxia symptoms.

FYI – The highest point in St. Tammany Parish can be found in Folsom at 206 feet above sea level. No external oxygen apparatus required to summit.



IN THE U.S...

Sky Diving Beavers in 1948

What did a community do when it had too many beavers in residence? It made a call and the next thing they knew, beavers were parachuting to a new home.

In 1948, the town of McCall, Idaho had a beaver population problem. Through conservation efforts, the number of beaver near McCall, and around nearby Payette Lake, had blossomed after their numbers were greatly impacted by the fur trade in the early 20th century. Beavers are

crucial to healthy wetlands by reducing erosion, improving water quality, and creating habitat for fish and birds. But too much of a good thing is never good. The animals were making an impact on the local landscape, and they needed to go.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game decided to relocate part of the population to the Chamberlain Basin in Central Idaho. But how to get them there? Traditional methods included trapping the animals, packing them into trucks and then onto mules or horses to get them into the remote wilderness. This can be extremely taxing on the animals, resulting in a high rate of mortality.

The answer: Parachuting beavers.

Enter IDFG employee Elmo W. Heter. He created the vehicle to get the beavers airborne. He placed two wooden boxes, without lids, together and secured them with elastic bands on the sides. Attached to surplus World War II parachutes, the boxes automatically popped open when they landed from a height of between 500 and 800 feet. One extremely brave, or unlucky, depending on how you look at it, beaver nicknamed Geronimo tested the system and gently floated to earth.

During August 1948, 76 beavers were delivered to their new home range via a twin-engine plane and the special boxes. There was only a single casualty: one beaver took exception to the box and broke out in midair. The other patient beavers arrived in good shape.





IN LOUISIANA...

A Moving National Landmark?

What is the only National Historical Landmark that moves every day? Answer: The St. Charles Avenue Streetcars. The classic dark green streetcars are the oldest continuous operating streetcars in the world and have been taking people across New Orleans for more than 180 years.

The streetcar line started in 1835. The original cars shuttled people and freight and were pulled by steam locomotives. As more people built homes along the route, the noise and soot from the train engines became bothersome and the owners of the line turned to conveyances pulled by horses and mules. Over the years, this means of transportation could not meet demand and the streetcar line was electrified in 1893.

The famous classic cars carrying commuters, students and tourists down shady St. Charles Avenue today were installed on the line in 1923-24. At last count, there are 35 cars that run on the seven-mile route each day.

The National Register of Historic Places recognized the streetcar line in 1973 and it became a National Historical Landmark through the National Park System in 2014.

And the Jeopardy question of the day? What is the other moving National Landmark? Although there are many ships and planes with this designation, they are now stationary. The San Francisco Cable Cars are the other National Monument that moves. A veritable youngster compared to the St. Charles line, having only been in existence since 1873, the San Francisco cable cars are pulled by an underground cable, where the St. Charles Streetcars are propelled by electric current from wires above the cars.



IN SLIDELL...

Why "The Camellia City"?



Camellias are beautiful flowers and when they bloom around Christmas time, they brighten up gardens while other flowering plants lie dormant. But why is Slidell known as "The Camellia City"?

Much of the credit for Slidell's abundance of camellias in yards, parks and byways can be traced back to the founding of the Ozone Camellia Club in the 1950s. Founded in 1951, the club was started by a small group of inspired gardeners and has since grown its membership to include several hundred enthusiasts.

At the club's inception, camellias were seen as a flowering plant for the wealthy, as a single camellia bush cost about \$70 at that time. Ozone Camellia Club members made a concerted effort to share this special plant with the Slidell community through their home gardens and community spaces.

In 1986, Slidell received the title of "The Camellia City" when city councilmen Bob Callahan and Phil Salvaggio presented a proclamation giving Slidell the moniker and the council passed the resolution.

A much-loved Slidellian, Pearl Williams, was a driving force in our community through her extensive service initiatives and work on the Slidell City Council. After her death in 2007, a camellia garden was planted along the railroad tracks at the corner of Front Street and Fremaux Avenue in her honor. Now, as the old year ends and the new year begins, people can enjoy beautiful camellias blossoming in "Pearl's Garden".

Prioritize your Health as you Age

You've heard the saying, "Health is Wealth." As you get older, it's important to invest in your overall well-being. Aging can be hard to come to terms with, but it's important to know that you can still do the things you love by taking steps to prioritize a healthy life. Here are some tips to take care of yourself as you get older.

Move your Body More!

It is no secret that exercise contributes to a healthy life, and as you age, it's essential to keep yourself active. Physical activity is vital in all stages of your life, but it's even more important to stay active as you get older to prevent muscle loss and deterioration. It is never too early to add physical activity to your life. Physical activity strengthens your body, manages your weight, improves your mental health, increases balance and reduces the risk of falls.

So, how much should you exercise to keep up with your health? It is recommended that adults over the age of 65 have about 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week. This could seem like a lot, but it could be as simple as taking a 30-minute walk a day. Any physical activity is good for your body.

Exercise should be:

- Activities that you enjoy doing and not something that feels like a chore to do
- Activity that strengthens and works your muscles
- Activity that focuses on improving balance
- Activity that is stimulating and challenging

If you struggle with daily exercise, start small and focus on moving your body more and more every day. Strive to increase the number of steps you take daily and then incorporate activities you enjoy. As you age, it is crucial to focus on daily activities to keep you happy and healthy.

Make Healthy Food Swaps

South Louisiana is known for having some of the most delicious food, but as you age, it is time to prioritize a diet that is high in nutrients. Did you know that as you age, your body requires fewer calories but more nutrients to keep you healthy? If you struggle to eat a balanced diet, try focusing on small swaps to get more color and nutrients into your diet. Here are a few things you can do to make your meals as nutrient-dense as possible.

- Try to include vegetables with every meal.
- Make it colorful! Include fruits and vegetables in your diet that are colorful, fresh, fun, and delicious!

- Focus on including foods that are high in fiber, like whole wheat pasta, chickpeas, berries and edamame.
- Skip the salt! Flavor your foods with herbs and spices.

Having a healthy diet helps manage health problems that are more common as you age, such as heart disease, stroke and obesity. If you are concerned about changing your diet or finding ways to incorporate healthy options into it, consult your doctor to find a nutrition plan that is best for your overall health.

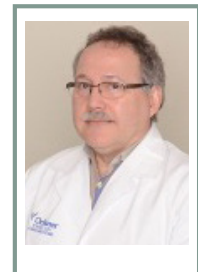
Ditch your Smoking Habit

One of the best things you can do to improve your health as you age is to quit smoking. Smoking cigarettes will lessen your life expectancy and cause a multitude of health problems. When you quit smoking, you reduce your risk of lung disease, cancer, heart attack and stroke. We know that quitting smoking is easier said than done. Nicotine is addictive, and when you decide to stop smoking, you may have withdrawal symptoms that could make you feel irritable. Still, knowing that this feeling will subside is essential, and the long-term benefits will outweigh those feelings. If you are ready to ditch your smoking habit, talk with your doctor about the best way to start. Surround yourself with family and friends who will support you and push you to be your healthiest self. Quitting smoking may feel like a daunting task, but it will add years to your life and give you the energy to do activities that you didn't think you could before!

Don't Skip those Screenings!

Are you dreading those annual wellness checks with your primary care provider? Yearly visits are essential and can help to catch chronic diseases early. As you age, you become at a higher risk for health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Annual screenings are a way of catching health conditions that you may be unaware of. Staying on top of your screenings is a way for you and your doctor to keep your health at the forefront of your mind as you get older.

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