

BOOMERS & BEYOND

You're Never Too Old to Try Something New

There's something to be said for continuing to learn as we get older. Not only does it keep our brains active, but sometimes learning new things is just plain interesting and fun.

I've made a goal of learning or investigating at least one new thing per month this year. Here are some ideas:

New Authors: Librarians have a "what to read next" reference book resource that offers suggestions about what authors

someone might like based on previous books they've read. Tell a librarian what author you've enjoyed, and you'll get suggestions for others to try. If there isn't a library near you, you can do this online. Go to www.whatshouldireadnext.com and put in the name of one author you like. It will list several books by that author. Click on one and suggestions will appear below.

Foreign Language: If you spoke a foreign language as a child or just took

the required two years in high school, how much do you remember? Duolingo (www.duolingo.com) is a great, free online tool with exercises tailored to you. There are 35 languages to learn! You can study online or on a phone app. If you get serious, you can pay \$6.99 per month to remove ads, but you don't need to.

New Tech Skills: Our senior center has a weekly tech hour where a knowledgeable geek from the college comes in to solve any

computer problems and answer how-to questions. I'll be going at least four times to ask about photo-editing software with the goal of learning to manipulate photos I've taken.

Try Some New Things: Shop at the new grocery store in the next town. Knit something that isn't a scarf. Sample an exotic selection of teas.

What about you? Do you have any goals for 2020?

Revisit the Books of Our Childhood

There really is something to be said for going back to a simpler time, even for a little while.

For those of us who work with people who have dementia, or if we just want to take a break from the current crop of books on bestseller lists, here is an idea: revisit the books of our childhood.

Wikipedia can be a great place to remind us of the titles we might have forgotten. Put "books of the 1940s," or whatever decade you'd like to explore, in

its search box,. You'll find hundreds of books from our childhood, most with links to information about the books themselves, such as: "Lassie Come Home" (1940), "Curious George" (1941), "Pippi Longstocking" (1945) and "Scuffy the Tugboat" (1946).

From the 1950s we have "Henry Huggins" (1950), "Charlotte's Web" (1952), "Horton Hears a Who!" (1954), "Danny and the Dinosaur" (1958) and the "Brains Benton Series" (1959-61).

To jog your memory, in 1942, Henry, Jessie, Violet and Benny Alden were orphans living in a boxcar in the woods until they are introduced to their grandfather, who has the boxcar moved to his backyard in "The Boxcar Children."

In 1946, "Scuffy the Tugboat" ended up floating down larger and larger waterways until he was rescued and was put back where he was happiest -- the bathtub.

In 1959, Brains Benton and his sidekick Jimmy

Carson solved the mystery of "The Case of the Missing Message," and continued solving crimes for the next five books in the original Brains Benton series.

If you want to find the old books of your childhood, it's not as difficult as you might think. Some of the books are still in print. Check Amazon.com or AbeBooks.com. Some of them might be found at your library. If you're very lucky, a few of them might even be on your own bookshelves.

Less Money Despite Social Security Increase

I'll be worse off financially this year, despite the Social Security increase we just received. I won't be the only one.

For the average recipient who receives \$1,460 per month, that 1.6% equates to a gain of \$23.36 per month. Medicare went up \$9.10 to \$144.60, so that drops the extra cash to \$14.26.

Except my Medicare supplement went up \$42 and the drug plan went up as well. Rent went up \$20 per month, justified by management with the "big increase" in Social Security

we all got.

With so many of us in the same situation, we need to think of ways to save money:

If you take a daily newspaper and pay for it by the month, calculate whether you'll save money if you pay for it by the year. If you have a tablet, ask if they offer a digital subscription at a lower rate. Making yearly payments might also work for your car or homeowner insurance.

Call the local food bank about getting free food. Don't worry about running

into someone you know. Just make the call. Whatever you get from them you won't have to buy at the store.

Check into "senior helper" groups in your area. These are people who volunteer to take care of home repairs for free, instead of paying a plumber \$150 per hour.

If you have a credit card, make payments on time. Check AARP's member discounts. Buy at Goodwill. Ask for lower prices.

Buy generic groceries. Get serious about clipping coupons. Ask about senior discount day.

If you love movies, consider that the price of Netflix for one month is the same as seeing one movie at a theater.

Check online for a FreeCycle in your area (freecycle.org) and get things you need or want for free.

And always, always ask for your senior discount.

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AARP Free Tax Help

The Cottage Grove Community Center is hosting free AARP Tax Help every Wednesday thru April 15th. Schedule an appointment for this free service, community members are asked to arrive at the Community Center at 8am to sign in for appointments.

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GUEST SPEAKER WILLOW CORDAIN,
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Willow Cordain will discuss the challenges, timing, and options for placing a loved one into a Memory Care Community.

Wednesday, February 26th – 6:30pm
(6:15pm refreshments)
For more information call: Linda LaZar (541) 942-0054

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Refreshments will be served

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