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A Difficult Decision - Long Term Care Facilities • February 2, 2017 • Issue #988

EDITOR'S PEN

Gary Barg, Editor-in-Chief

Pieces of the Puzzle

Welcome to the second month of 2017. Well, the Chinese proverb (curse), “May you live in interesting times”, does seem to apply to this year, so far. But, for me, the year actually starts this month. Starting mid-month, we are going back on the road to host our Fearless Caregiver Conferences and I couldn’t be more pleased. I get to spend the days in rooms filled with my favorite folks and the true healthcare decision makers in the nation – family caregivers. ...[more](#)

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FEATURED ARTICLE

**Easing AMD:
Caring for a Loved One with Diminishing Central**

Vision

By Dr. Marjan Farid

As we age, many of us will start noticing changes in our vision as we reach for reading glasses more frequently and need regular eye exams to update our existing prescriptions. But many older adults find their vision is further impeded by the onset of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which can blind people in their straight-ahead (central) vision. Tasks that used to be simple, like selecting the right cereal brand or recognizing the face of a neighbor, become increasingly challenging as the disease progresses. [...more](#)

GUEST ARTICLE

Laughter: Medicine for the Heart

By Jane E. Maxwell

“Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward.” —Kurt Vonnegut

Laughter is like a breath of fresh air that we desperately need. This seemingly simple act affects most of your body systems. Laughter strengthens the immune system by stimulating your body to increase production of immunoglobulin. It improves your heart rate and circulation by boosting the oxygen supply to your brain. Laughter controls pain by decreasing muscle tension, distracting attention, and increasing the production of endorphins, natural pain killers. Laughter is like giving yourself an internal massage as it stimulates and soothes. It truly is medicine for the heart. [...more](#)

CARETIPS

Long Term Care Facilities

By Michael Plontz

It is often a difficult decision for family members to admit a loved one into a long-term care facility. It is equally difficult to learn there is a problem with the facility and/or staff after you thought your loved one was safe and secure.

Many times a caregiver will feel guilty when their loved one has entered a long-term care facility. It is a very complex and emotional emotion issue for many caregivers to face. Having made the decision that long-term care is the best option, it is important to remember that your caregiving role does not stop once your loved one is in the home. Your job is not to sit on the sidelines but to be an advocate and continue as a vital part of your loved one's health care team. ...
[more](#)

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CAREVERSES

Lasting Love

By John Patrick Roche

There is a story to be told in my retirement community.

It is a story of love. It isn't puppy love,
young love or the many-splendored love of years past.

It is lasting love: love over time. Not sexual,
but simply love of each other as partners.

Care is love. Care of what was, what is and what will come.

We walk slower now, can't see as before,
and hold hands for warmth and support.

Aging is not uniform or equal. Time takes from each at its will and whim.

We pray first for the other partner to stay well, then ourself.

Our bodies slow differently:
Alzheimer's disease steals bit by bit the light of knowledge.
Nerve systems weaken and short-circuit, arteries clog.
One partner becomes the light, another helps recognition.

The story is the caregiver.
Care given daily, constantly, wearily shows lasting love.
"Until death do us part" is recalled while time flows onward.
Love becomes duty; honorable, enduring and necessary.

How does one tell the story of lasting love?
I tell it by admiring the spouse pushing a wheelchair,
providing mobility and togetherness,
by applauding those who read to the other with dimming sight,
and by praising those who explain, interpret and encourage loved ones
unable to remember their world.

Any lapses in the past are forgotten with today's love;
a lasting love.

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