

The Abbey *Echo* ... *Echo* ...*Echo*

A monthly newsletter by and for the residents of Eugene Abbey - **June 2026**

We Celebrated “*Cinco de Mayo*”

In a fashion of its own, the Activity Committee orchestrated a party celebrating the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo - the 5th of May - on May 3rd. The holiday celebrates the unexpected victory by the smaller, poorly equipped Mexican army over the French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. The victory provided an enormous emotional and symbolic boost to Mexico. The Abbey party was set to be held in the Lounge, but Mother Nature decided that would be a good day for the temperature to be in the mid 80's, so the festivities were moved to the cooler dining room. Mexican music was provided by Alexa and got some folks up dancing to the beat. As usual, good company and good food was enjoyed by all.



Liane's photo by Carolee

Text and most photos by Betsy

A Memorial Day Meander

Probably it was war-time coincidence that Mama and our Aunt Mary had their first babies, Tom and Fred, near the same time in 1943. I wonder whether it was sisterly coordination that Martha and I both were born in 1945, and Doug and Julie in 1947. For a while after the war, we Cochranes and our Gustavson cousins lived almost next door to each other in Boise. Before I was old enough to remember, though, Uncle Don became an engineer at the Hanford plutonium production plant, and the Gustavsons moved to Richland, Washington. Tom said later, “I thought I was a Gustavson, until they moved away and didn’t take me with them.”

The timing of cousin births probably was coincidence. Years later, Aunt Mary told me that in 1950 she was keeping her pregnancy a secret, planning to surprise Mama when they got together at Easter. But at Easter, Mama was also wearing a maternity smock, planning to surprise Mary. Mama spoke first, “We’re naming ours John.”

Doug and I were dissenting voices about that name. He wanted to name the baby Joe. Daddy brought us a dog from the Pound and let Doug name it Joe. A few days later, Joe trotted in, trailed by half a dozen panting male dogs. Obviously she should have been named Josie. Daddy promptly took Joe/Josie back to the Pound.

But I insisted that the baby *must* be a girl. We already had two boys. Another boy wouldn’t be *fair*. But Mama still brought home John. I didn’t even get a dog to name, just an early belief that Life Is Not Fair.

Mama and Daddy stopped there. All four of us kids, just like our parents, were bright, imaginative, independent thinkers. Mama half-joked, “Fritz and I agreed that four children were too many, but we never could agree on which one to drown.” Meanwhile, Aunt Mary and Uncle Don named their 1950 baby Donnie, and went on to have two more – Bob, followed on schedule by Mooie (formally Mary Louise.)

In my memory, we Cochranes lived in Boise, Idaho and our Gustavson cousins lived in Richland, Washington and we visited back and forth. Roughly halfway between Richland and Boise were the Blue Mountains and Catherine Creek Campground, where we and the Gustavsons sometimes met on three-day weekends. It must have looked like a circus act, all us kids scrambling out of the cars and dashing toward the creek, while our parents set up camp and tended to babies and toddlers.

We kids didn’t pair up by age, exactly. The four older boys and Martha headed out to explore, while Julie and I tended to our dolls. It was as though we still were next door neighbors.

One particular Memorial Day weekend stands out in my memory. Martha and the boys dashed up from the creek, demanding something to hold the baby snakes they had found – “a whole nest of them!” Our mothers produced some empty cans – that’s what mothers were for, after all – and the tribe dashed off.

Before long, Martha came to report that one of the bigger babies had a rattle on its tail. The fathers went to see, and identified it as a nest of baby rattlesnakes. The activity then turned to cheerfully stoning baby snakes to death.

Although many of us grew up to become war protesters, I have little hope for peace on earth.

By Bonnie Hirsch6



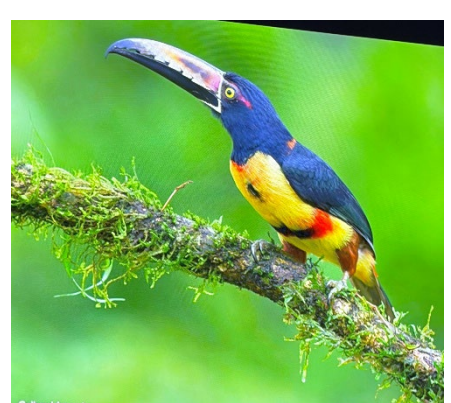
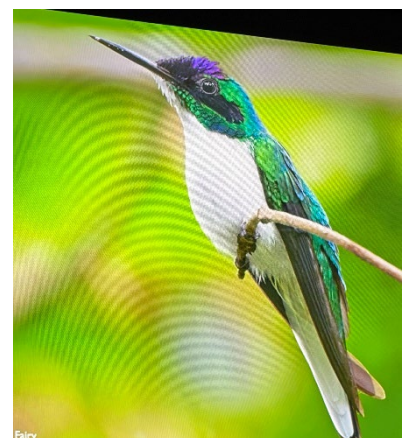
An Abbey Trip to Guatemala

On April 29th at 6:30 it was standing room only in the Abbey Lounge for a delightful guided birding trip to Guatemala led by our own Fred Ramsey.



The price was right and the birds were so gorgeous one would be excused to ask if they were indeed real. Fred and his brother had the privilege for 10 years to take these wonderful trips in Central and South America and beyond with the best birding guides they could find. We are lucky to have the opportunity to go along vicariously and I'm sure Fred would be happy to bring us along on more. So what is your pleasure for next time ? More Central America ? Australia ? Mongolia with Roslyn and Jimmy Carter or in our backyard at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, OR. Fred could do one a month for the next 10 years if we should live so long. Let Fred or yours truly know what is your pleasure.

text by Betsy Hall



Plus...Fred has many more photos...

The Better Hearing Forum.
I said, "The Better Hearing Forum
Did you get that?

Last month our residents' Better Hearing Forum sponsored a gathering with Kayla Chase from the Audiology Associates. She spoke to us about the social and emotional issues associated with hearing loss. Among the issues addressed were increased social isolation, depression, and feeling less personally competent which prompt increased anxiety, worry, and isolation. Clearly, hearing loss is not just a challenge to the person who suffers it. It is also a challenge to the family and friends who try to relate to them in everyday life.

One venue where this is most evident is in our dining hall. Each dinner hour I count 20 to 35 residents in attendance. Where are the missing 10 to 25 residents? Is it the acoustics of the room? Is it the discouragement or embarrassment of the absent residents?

In a retirement community such as ours, where so many of us must wear hearing aids, taking steps to address the social isolation prevalent in our community is of great importance for our well-being as individuals and to our community as well.

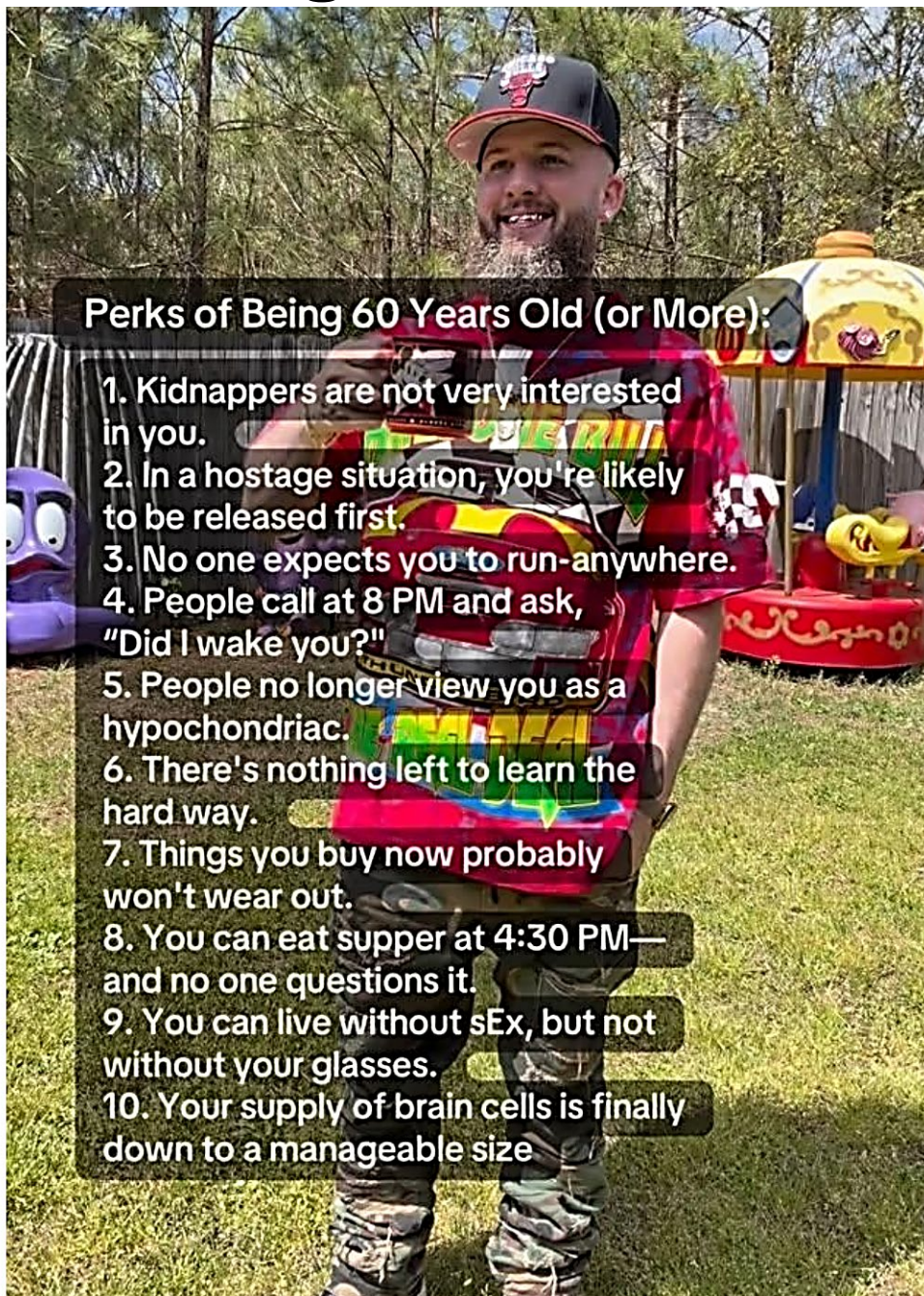
They Abby's Better Hearing Forum invites you to consider your own participation as members of a healthy, sustainable community, and to **join us at our next meeting in the 4th Floor lounge at 1:00 on Thursday, 27 June.**

J. Wesley Brown

Would you like to have the Echo emailed to you?

If you would like to receive a copy of the Abbey Echo via email, just send a note to the editor at mconnelljim9@gmail.com, and I will add you to the email list. Please specify whether you wish to receive it solely via email, paper, or both.

Growing old ain't all bad...



Thanks, Bill Winkley

An Intriguing Encounter

(A true story)

Recently on my daily walk, I was accosted by a well-groomed and attractive forty-ish young woman in a sun dress who asked to borrow my phone. Not being born yesterday, but not wishing to appear boorish, I handed over my phone, but stood directly in front of her within arms length, in case she wished to abscond with my phone.

She “fiddled” with the phone for a bit, then said she “couldn’t remember the number,” and handed it back to me.

She asked my name and said that she would like to walk with me for a bit if I didn’t mind. We walked and she chatted, asking me my age and marital status without revealing anything at all about herself. She was clear-eyed, and didn’t show any of the usual indications of drug use.

I was bemused as to her motive for spending time with a man who was obviously at least twice her age. Our walk brought us to the Abbey entrance. Somewhat suspicious by nature, I didn’t use my door code, in case she might be looking over my shoulder, but instead used my key .

I told her goodbye, but she asked if she could come see my apartment. I declined and let the door close behind me. As I started for the stairs, she was still standing outside the door looking in.

What was that all about... did I miss an all-to-rare chance at romance? Or what?

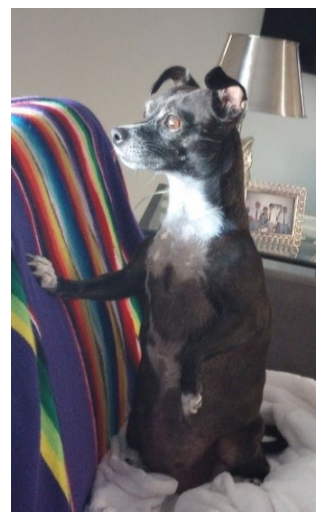
If you have a theory or comment, send it to the editor and it will be published next month.

(Ed. Note: The Abbey resident author of the above, understandably wishes to remain anonymous.)



If you happen to be visiting the Abbey’s Second Floor, you should be on your best behavior.

**There’s a K-9 attack dog on duty
24/7.**



Actually, Gracie is a very friendly dog. She’s also very protective of her roommate, Robin..

Fred is going to Trinidad and Tobago, and we can go too!

Like pieces of the Venezuelan coast, the islands of Trinidad and Tobago lie just off the coast in the Caribbean Sea. But like separate universes, their birdlife features many surprises, including the Tufted Coquette hummingbird (below).



Come to Fred's second talk and slideshow.

Wednesday, June 10th at 6:30

in the Fourth Floor Lounge

Thanks Betsy Hall

In Memorium

Phyllis Weare

Phyllis Jane (Bower) Weare was born April 20, 1932, to Milton and Ethel Bower and died on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

Phyllis grew up in small towns in Washington and Oregon and graduated from high school in Burns, Oregon. She attended Northwest Christian College and the University of Oregon and graduated from the UO School of Nursing in 1955.

Phyllis and Dr. Clifford Weare were married in June 1955. Their new family included Clifford's three children; William, Sally and John.

Phyllis and Clifford became Christian Medical Missionaries. In 1957, they moved to Belgian Congo where they ran a hospital in Wema. They eventually returned to Burns where Phyllis and Cliff adopted Tom, Mike and Camille.

In Burns, Phyllis started an afterschool tutoring program for children from the local Paiute Native American Tribe. She also started a Head Start Early Education Program in Harney County. As a result of this work, she was awarded the 1969 Human Rights Award by the OEA Commission on Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Phyllis moved to Eugene after Cliff's death. She worked as an RN and joined the First Christian Church. She was active in choir and several church committees. She also became a Master Gardener and a Master Recycler.

Phyllis lived on a small farm near Monroe for a time, where she was self-sufficient. She had a huge garden and raised chickens, geese, goats and sheep and preserved much of the food she grew.

Phyllis moved back into Eugene in about 2008 and maintained a large garden at her home. From there she moved to a senior apartment and most recently to River Grove Care Facility.

Phyllis is survived by her children William (Nancy) Weare, Sally (Steve) Edney, John Weare and Michael (Donna) Weare. She is also survived by her grandchildren Heather Anderson, Walter Weare, Neil Weare, Eric Edney and Brian Weare and nine great-grandchildren. Several nieces and nephews also survive her. Phyllis was predeceased by her parents, five siblings, husband Clifford, son Thomas, daughter Camille Harte and grandson Bryce Weare.

A Memorial Service for Phyllis was held Saturday, May 30, 2026, at the First Christian Church, 1166 Oak Street, Eugene, Oregon.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to your local food pantry in Phyllis' name.



Linda and The Abbey,

by Monica White

Linda Gordon moved to Eugene in 2016. Aside from a brief stint in Delaware in the mid-1970s, she had never lived outside California. However, she settled into her new abode quickly, appreciating the greenery, friendliness and cultural opportunities of the city and making friends through books, crafts and Temple Beth Israel. These varied interests and groups supported her through Covid and some unsuccessful living arrangements before she discovered The Abbey in 2023.

The Abbey was a dream come true for Linda. After the isolation of lockdown, she felt the need for a closer-knit community in which neighbors could easily check in on each other and meet casually. From her first week, I (her daughter Monica) was entertained by stories of costume parties and other events. Our weekly family video calls usually included a blow-by-blow of the latest goings-on with the food committee, library committee, or other groups. I could tell that she had found the right balance of sociability, independence, and do-it-yourself spirit, with plenty of projects and causes to get her teeth into. She found great satisfaction in working together to improve everyone's experience.

When my family and I visited for the first time in April 2025 we were thoroughly impressed by both the physical space and the warmth of the residents. This warmth was very much on display when I visited again in April 2026 under much less happy circumstances. The kindness everyone showed to me and other family members was quite simply astonishing, and I don't know how I would have coped without it in such a stressful situation. Thanks to everyone who dropped by, said hello in the corridor, helped with the memorial and generally looked after us with such generosity. Although I'm sure you know this, it bears repeating that you have an extraordinary community. Continuing its traditions would be a wonderful tribute to my mom, who enjoyed her time there so much.

Ed. Note: Linda's daughter, Monica, sent this charming note in response to the Abbey Community's response to her mother's passing. If you would like to respond to this note, Monica's email address is monica.white@nottingham.ac.uk



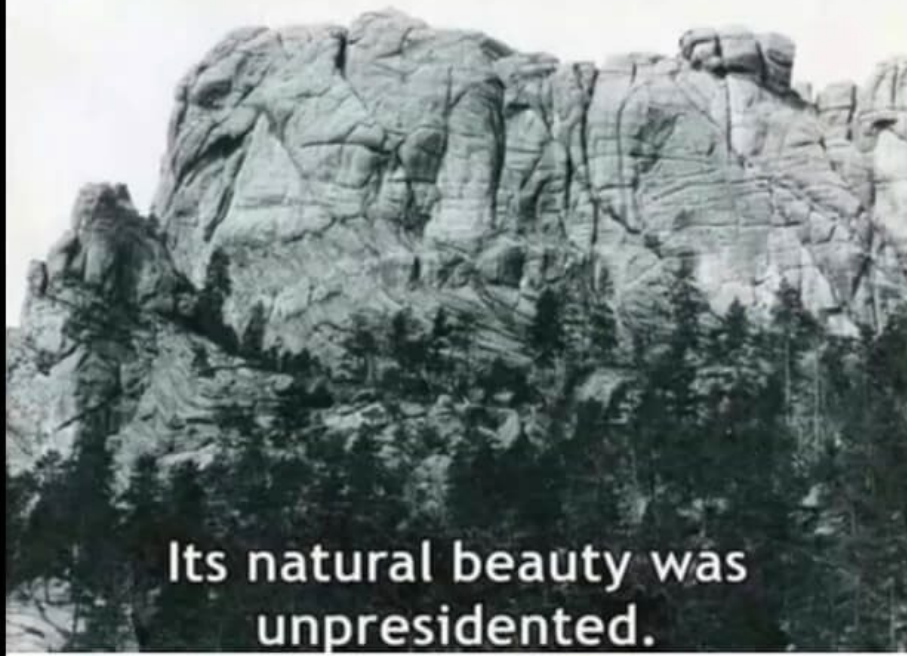
“The most beautiful thing about a flower
is its quite reserve.”

Quote by Henry David Thoreau

Photo by Larry Leverone

Thanks, Larry

MOUNT RUSHMORE BEFORE IT WAS CARVED



**Its natural beauty was
unpresidential.**

Washing cows' tails? Really?

Yes. I'm not kidding. The North Dakota State Agricultural College - NDAC - was located in Fargo, North Dakota. In 1952 it had yet to become renowned as a football power. It was always second tier below the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, so moving south from Grand Forks to Fargo may have been a promotion for my Dad, but it was a real comedown for me, jobwise.

NDAC had, among other agricultural features, the state dairy farm, located about a mile northwest of the campus. The NDAC teams were called "The Bison." It would not sound so romantic or fierce to call their teams "The Holsteins," but this was the breed of cows kept at the state dairy farm. Visitors from around the state and even from other states and countries came to visit the State Dairy Farm to learn what was the latest and best practice in the dairy industry.

Now Holstein cows are big animals, and a herd of twenty-five Holstein cows all lined up side by side with their heads in stantions and their backsides in prominent view in the barn was an impressive sight, that is, if you were interested in seeing cows at all. This lineup of cows meant that all their poop and pee was deposited right behind them in the gutter that ran the length of the cow barn, and visitors to the herd had a rear-end view of the cows, the tails prominent, whisking back and forth to discourage flies that were attracted to the gutter and, perhaps, to keep the big girls from being pestered, as well as bored, standing in the stalls for hours on end.

Given the location of their tails, these tails became soiled and redolent with cow poop and cow pee. This was not the kind of good first impression the Dairy wished to make upon persons who came to view the North Dakota State Dairy herd. Hence, it was necessary that someone groom these cows' tails regularly— neither a dignified nor attractive task. Thus, it became my task as a newly hired hand for the summer at the NDAC State Dairy Farm to carry a bucket of soapy water and a curry comb, to dip the cow's tail up and down in the bucket, and to comb the now wet and slippery tail of each cow.

Now, a cow's tail is not meant to hang limply and indecorously behind the cow. The cow's tail is connected by muscles that allow the cow to swish her tail back and forth and up and down to discourage flies and other bugs that might be attracted to her and bother her. Holding a wet, soapy cow's tail with one hand did not prevent that cow from expressing her irritation with what was happening behind her. **Flip! Swish!** And I was sprayed with the wet, soapy, now polluted, smelly guck I was combing out from her tail!

Yes, the cows' tails were now white and fluffy. Yes, guests saw clean, attractive (in their way) dairy cows. And Yes, my shirt and arms and face were now damp with the spray. In no way would anyone give me a ride home from work in a car. No! I would need to ride my bicycle to and from work all that summer, and take a shower as my first task when I arrived home.

But I was making 35 cents an hour! And it did convince me to seek a different job the next summer.

J. Wesley Brown

The Personal Profile Project

The Personal Profile Committee is continuing to interview residents for this project as we now have new residents moving into the Abbey. Each interview with a photo will be added to the existing notebook in the library. This is an interesting way to get to know both new residents and by looking in the notebook to better know older residents. We are also interviewing management and staff.

This is completely voluntary, but these profiles are a great aid in promoting a spirit of community and a help in sparking conversations and getting to know one another. One of the profile committee members will be contacting you to schedule a time for an interview and photo; each interview should take about an hour. Each individual will have total control of what information is included in his/her profile. Once the interview is in draft form, it will be submitted to the interviewee for approval or editing. The final copy will be your decision. It will be added to the notebook and if you wish published in the Echo..

Thanks for your participation.

The committee:

Betsy Hall, Jeanne Armstrong, Janet Bernstein, Stan Coleman, and Jim McConnell,



Jeanne interrupted Jerry's spring window cleaning.

Remember:

“Good advice is something a man gives when he is too old to set a bad example.”

--Francois de La Rochefoucauld

The Food Pyramid... Wheel..Plate



Jillian Drewes
OSU Extension Agent



Trey Dennis w/Jeanne Armstrong (Trey is the tall one.)
Trey is an Intern with the Extension Service

The Abbey’s Food Committee hosted Jillian Drewes from the OSU Extension Office, with UO intern assistant Trey Dennis, for a more interesting talk than I expected about that food chart I first saw in grade school. (Note: I found conflicting histories of the Food Pyramid online)

The graphic was developed by the US Department of Agriculture. Ostensibly it encouraged us to eat well so we would be a nation of strong and healthy citizens. The real purpose was to support American farmers by encouraging us to eat a wide variety of the over-abundant foods the farmers were growing. The message still urges healthy eating but varies with changing economies and priorities.

In the 1930’s Depression, for instance, the Dust Bowl and bank crashes put many farmers out of business. USDA advice told how to maximize calorie and nutrition intake on a bare budget. World War II followed, with food rationing.

Research improved nutritional knowledge. Later decades brought Recommended Daily Amounts for different food types, and laws requiring more nutritional information on food labels; then emphasis on hunger prevention through school lunch programs, food stamps, and distributing surplus food. (Of course, food processing industries jumped to spin their messages toward supposed nutrition. I remember Saturday morning TV ads for sugar coated cereals, “The *fun* part of this nutritious breakfast.”)

The Food Groups graphic changed as emphasis changed. It wasn’t always a pyramid, and didn’t always provide useful information. An unpopular “Food Wheel” chart just confused. From 2011 to 2025, the simple and effective “My Plate” showed recommended portions of the major food groups.

In 2026 we have a new, upside-down, food “pyramid,” and a new message: Eat Real Food instead the over-processed food that is eroding the health of so many people. In her talk, Ms. Drewes emphasized that the Extension Service is non-political. It presents information based only on research. Since the Food Pyramid is developed by the USDA, a government agency, much of its history is political history, It is still being affected by current political currents. All she said about this new pyramid and its wording was, “the visual doesn’t match the new DGA.” I looked at the website myself. It’s all old news. Let’s hope its glitzy repackaging is effective for getting an important message across.

by Bonnie Hirsch

StrongPeople –
with Jillian Drewes

OSU's Lane County Extension Service is currently offering a program called **StrongPeople**, a moderate-intensity progressive exercise program, designed to improve muscle strength, dynamic balance, and flexibility among seniors.

It is based on the results of strength training studies in older adults conducted by Dr. Miriam Nelson, PhD with the School of Nutrition Science at Tufts University in Boston.

Abbey residents who attended Jillian's presentation on May 20 were invited to join this class that is offered just down the street from the Abbey! Several persons asked for further information and for registration forms.

StrongPeople
Mondays and Wednesdays 10-11am
OSU Extension office at 996 Jefferson Street.

No Cost to participants

The Food Committee has registration forms.
These include a Readiness Questionnaire
to help you determine if this class is a good one for you.

See Jeanne, Patty, or Nita if you would like to pick up a form.

I just learned that I have been “Earthing”

By Jim McConnell

For the last couple of months,, weather permitting, I have made a practice of lying in the grass of the Abbey Yard for half-hour or so each day, just soaking up the Vitamin D and watching the sky. I have found that very relaxing and energizing.

On 24 May, I learned that I’m not the only one who enjoys this. The practice even has a name...

Is the Ancient Practice of “Earthing” an Antidote for the Digital Age?

From an article by Rebekah Brandes, [nicenews.com](https://www.nicenews.com), 21 April 2026

When’s the last time you walked barefoot in the dirt or lay in the cool grass staring at the sky? In childhood, that was just part of everyday life. In adulthood, it has a name — earthing — and there’s a solid case for giving it a go more often.

Also referred to as grounding, the practice involves making direct skin contact with Earth’s surface. The theory is that doing so essentially “recharges” our bodies with the planet’s electrons, which have an antioxidant effect. A few small studies found that it reduced inflammation and improved sleep, but there’s not enough replicated research to back up any serious health claims. What isn’t in question, though, is simply how *good* earthing can feel.

“There’s something powerful that happens when we take off our shoes and feel the ground. It brings us out of our heads and into our bodies. There’s a slowing down that brings us back to a rhythm and pace set by nature rather than clocks and deadlines, which our nervous systems love,” Leslie Davenport, a licensed therapist and climate psychology consultant, told Nice News.

She continued: “It’s a kind of reset that can go beyond stress relief to a quality of belonging to something larger than ourselves. It’s almost as though there’s a genetic memory in our feet that we are gifted from our ancestors. Stepping onto the grass is stepping into a greater sense of our humanity.”



continued...

Earthing has received renewed interest in recent years, but it dates back millennia and can be traced to multiple cultures. In traditional Chinese medicine, the term “qi” refers to “vital energy,” and walking barefoot is a means of stimulating the flow of that energy through the body. In the ancient Indian medical system Ayurveda, grounding is thought to help balance “vata,” one of three bioenergetic forces. Native American cultures have also long embraced the healing power of direct contact with the Earth.

In 19th-century Germany, natural health movement leader Adolf Just, an early naturopath, helped popularize the idea of Earth’s electrical current being central to well-being. “In inflammatory maladies, fever, etc., lying on the bare earth will be found specially serviceable,” he wrote in his 1896 book, *Return to Nature*.

He added: “It is, of course, of the greatest advantage to be on the bare ground under the open sky. Under the great dome of heaven, especially at night, a wonderful secret health-giving strength from above works upon man, revivifying and strengthening his whole body.”

That’s a pretty hard sell for cozying down on a spot in your backyard and stargazing, but you don’t need your own patch of land to start earthing. And while the practice itself has limited science behind it, interacting with nature in general has been shown many times over to improve well-being — shoes or no shoes.

Spending time in nature can reduce inflammation, improve sleep, and lower stress,” Cory Reid-Vanas, a licensed therapist and founder of the Rocky Mountain Counseling Collective in Colorado, told Nice News, adding: “Accessing nature can happen in lots of different ways. You don’t have to walk barefoot. You could sit on a bench. There are different levels based on your individual needs and interests in getting those positive results.”

But if you ask Kenneth Posner, a runner and hiker who calls himself Barefoot Ken, no shoes is the way to go. He’s run over 100 races sans footwear — and he even walks around New York City without anything covering his feet (!).

“I call it the original human mindfulness,” he said of the practice. “It is surprisingly focusing and calming. This is coming from someone who never went around barefoot as a kid, and only got into the practice in his 50s. Does it have anything to do with electricity? I doubt it, but who knows.”

(A note to arachnophobes: In my time on the grass, the only insects I have encountered were a couple of small butterflies... no spiders at all. An occasional crow comes by to complain.)

Quote of the Day

“Put blinders on to those things that conspire to hold you back,
especially the ones in your own head.”

Meryl Streep

Stop Saying These 12 Things About Aging—Especially to Yourself

Condensed from an article by Angela Haupt, 14 May 2026, *Time Magazine*

It's time to retire some of the most common ways we talk about aging: the “senior moment” excuse when we fumble for a word; the cheerful “young lady” from a stranger at the grocery store; the matter of fact “it's all downhill from here” we sigh at every birthday.

These reflexive clichés do more than trigger an eye roll: They can affect your health. Decades of research from Becca Levy, a professor of public health and psychology at the Yale School of Public Health, and author of *Breaking the Age Code*, show that the messages we absorb about aging and then repeat to ourselves are linked to how long and how well we live. People who hold more positive beliefs about aging tend to walk faster, heal quicker, take better care of themselves, and show fewer of the brain biomarkers associated with dementia. Levy's research has even found that older adults with positive beliefs about aging can reverse mild cognitive decline.

“Those who take in more negative age beliefs are more likely to show worse physical, mental, and cognitive health outcomes,” Levy says. “Conversely—and this is the good news—it goes the other direction too. If people are able to take in more positive age beliefs, or switch from the negative to the positive, that can have health benefits in a number of different ways.”

That's why rethinking our language is so essential. Here are the phrases experts wish we'd stop saying—about other people and ourselves.

“I'm too old for that.”

Think you're “too old” to join a band? That's not necessarily because of the year you were born. “It's never about age,” says Ashton Applewhite, an activist and author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*. “There's always someone your age who did it yesterday.”

“I'm 70, but I feel 50.”

Every time Tracey Gendron gives a talk about aging, at least one well-intentioned person approaches her afterwards and offers up the same line: “I'm 70, but I feel 50.” The problem with insisting you feel decades younger is that it reinforces the very idea you might think you're rejecting: that younger is better, and your actual age is something to distance yourself from. “It continues to devalue what it means to be of our own age,” Gendron says. A better move? Resist the urge to translate how you feel into a younger number altogether. If you feel energetic, curious, and in love with your life, that's not 50 talking, she says. That's you, at 70.

“You can't teach an old dog new tricks.”

People can learn new things at any age—and science backs it up. “Older people can benefit from the same cognitive strategies that people of all ages benefit from,” Levy says. “There's also some nice research on neuroplasticity, so we know that in later life, older people can continue to form new neuronal connections when they have challenges.”

continued...

“It’s all downhill from here.” It doesn’t have to be. In a recent study, Levy and her colleagues followed a nationally representative group of older adults for up to 12 years and tracked two markers of function—cognitive function (including memory and mental-processing tasks) and walking speed, a key indicator of physical health. Almost half of people showed improvement on at least one of those measures over time. “A meaningful number of people are defying that statement,” she says.

That doesn't mean every ache and ailment is optional, of course. But it does mean the assumption of inevitable decline is simply wrong. “There are all these different trajectories,” Levy says, and yours is still being written.

“That’s not age appropriate.” Applewhite doesn’t wear miniskirts. But that’s because she doesn’t like them—and she didn’t in her 20s, either. The idea that there’s a right way to dress, behave, or live at a given age is one of her biggest pet peeves. “There is no such thing as ‘age-appropriate’ for adults,” she says. “Adults do not revert to children. There are styles, but, hello, people of all ages have access to the style pages and can decide whether or not they want to dress like Sabrina [Carpenter] or Alicia Keys.”

The same goes for the activities you're "supposed" to age out of—or into. There's no expiration date on getting a tattoo, taking up skateboarding, or starting a new career, just as there's no minimum age for taking a nap or buying sensible shoes. So if you want to wear that miniskirt at 70, wear it, Applewhite says. And if you don't, don't—just make sure it's because you genuinely don't want to, not because someone decided it wasn't for you anymore.

“Now *that’s* successful aging.” The phrase sounds like a compliment—who wouldn’t want to age successfully?—but Gendron isn’t a fan. “If you woke up this morning and you’re breathing, you’re succeeding at aging,” she says. The problem with framing it as something you can ace is that, by definition, it means other people are flunking. “There is nobody who’s failing at aging,” Gendron says. The phrase also promotes ableism, suggesting that staying mentally sharp and physically active is the only way to age well—a standard that ignores the reality that most of us will, at some point, age into some form of disability.

There’s another problem, too: “Successful aging” assumes you already know what a good life will look like for you decades from now. You don’t. “Don’t project your current self onto your future self,” Gendron says. The activities you can’t imagine living without today may matter less to you at 80—and you may have picked up a whole new set of passions by then.

Thanks, Bill Winkley

Words to inspire -

“Real generosity is doing something nice for someone who will never find out.”

Frank A Clark, newspaper cartoonist

So Many Creating Questions!

The eight-year-old Abbey Writers Group has dwindled. Earlier members have changed interests, moved, or passed on. We few who are left are involved in so many other activities that we are writing less. Despite the challenges, we want to keep meeting. We like to share when we do write. We like to talk about the other ways we create – making music, painting watercolors, working with textiles, crafting. Besides, we like the friendships we are forming.

At the same time, the three-year-old Friday afternoon Crafters Group has dwindled, again due to members moving, changing interests, passing on, or finding that their current craft interests are less portable. At least one other resident never joined the crafters, because of claustrophobia in the dark, low-ceilinged space. Some artists and crafters prefer working in their own apartments, but would enjoy talking shop with like-minded people and sharing finished or in-progress projects.

So we few have decided to join forces, and you are invited to come help us shape whatever the group becomes next. Because the space is already reserved, we'll meet in the 4th floor Lounge from 3:00 to about 4:30 on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. (June 8th and 22nd this month.) The art studio opens just off the Lounge and we can work in there as well.

What shall we call ourselves – we who play with art in all its many forms? When and where would you prefer to get together? Shall we just keep the space and time open for whoever drops in and whatever kind of art happens? We're creative people and are open to many creative ideas.

What happens next? If you want to find out, come to the Lounge June 8 at 3:00 pm, or any time the monthly calendar still says, "Writers Group."

If you have ideas, but the time doesn't work for you, talk to Janet Bernstein, Wes Brown, Bonnie Hirsch, or Maggie Springer.

Bonnie Hirsch

About the submissions deadline for the Abbey Echo:

As it has been since the Echo's inception, the **last** day that submissions will be accepted is the last Friday of each month for the edition that will be published on the first Friday of the following month.

Please deliver your submissions as early in the month as possible to allow time for editing/formatting, printing, assembling and publishing the newsletter by the first Friday.

Thanks! Jim Mc

Memories of Dick Gann

With Dick's Memorial coming up this weekend, I've been thinking about what Dick meant to me. When I first moved in here 5 years ago, I began living in what until recently had been Dick and Chris's apartment. They left for a 2 bedroom because as Dick told everyone they needed two bathrooms. At that time we had a really good continental breakfast in the dining room. Eggs, fruit, good yogurt, some kind of goody. Dick was always there off to one side with his notebook and pencil working on a story. I always stopped by so he could read me his latest - or maybe two or three of them. He was a prolific writer up until the day before he died. Dick and his stories were a welcoming presence to this newcomer from Arizona.

Dick was part of the writer's group and I soon joined the group where I got to know Dick better. He always had a story or two to share. Pranks with his fishing buddies, scuba diving in his beloved Hawaii, sometimes deeply personal and poignant, often funny. The only time I saw the curmudgeon was when I was trying to learn how to play pinochle with Dick and two other seasoned players. I knew the rules they had taught me, but one day I broke a rule that I hadn't been taught and Dick let me know in no uncertain terms that he was very displeased with me. I was shocked at this sudden change in him. Dumbfounded. End of my pinochle career. One day when I joined the morning Pub breakfast club, Dick looked at me and said, "If you want to talk, you'll have to raise your hand." All but one of us got a laugh at that including Dick.

Betsy Hall

Some wise words:

“They say that love is the best investment;
the more you give, the more you receive in return.”

Audrey Hepburn

How to Be Old

By Roger Rosenblatt, 25 May 2026, *New York Times*

This is a list of rules for the elderly, the aim of which is to keep us elderly elderly, and not to see us go one step further. Staying alive in one's later years is an art generally requiring the avoidance of wrong moves. The key word to a lot of one's behavior is "don't." If more old people simply did not do certain things, especially on impulse, the world would be a safer place. Duller but safer. I should add that if you fail to follow these rules, I'm not saying that you are doing anything morally wrong. Only that you will suffer.



1. Run when you hear "We must do this again." This is often said at the end of some pointless social event in which you participated reluctantly. Inevitably someone will say cheerily, "We must do this again." Nonsense. They don't mean it. You don't mean it. Nobody means it.

2. Marry above your station. Usually you can't help it. But you've probably found that out already.

3. Don't forget to bestow confidence. It's the best thing you can give someone you love. Saying "You can do it" to a loved one in a situation in which that person has self-doubt — taking an exam, making a speech, writing a poem — means more than any sweet profession of affection. It means that you love that person so wholeheartedly that you wish him or her the inner satisfaction of self-realization. The pride of achieving themselves. What more can you say that so expresses your love?

4. Observe the moth. In her essay "The Death of the Moth," Virginia Woolf notices a moth in its death throes, batting about a small windowpane. The author watches the animal's plight with pity and admiration — awe, really. Its struggles are beautiful. She imagines the moth saying death was too strong, even for it. Observe the moth in its monumental fight for life, and do likewise. We gain life's powers by knowing that eventually they will be taken away. There is beauty in this struggle. Murmurations of starlings occur only in the evening.

5. Don't share despair. Not even with your friends. Not that they won't sympathize. It's just too much to ask of someone dear to you to bear your burdens.

6. Don't compromise, especially a little. Unless you're a professional negotiator, don't compromise. Give in a little, you might as well give up the ship. During the McCarthy era, students were required to submit loyalty oaths to maintain their scholarships. At a meeting of the Harvard faculty, a professor who had escaped Mussolini's Italy challenged the dean on this matter. The dean responded that signing and sending in the oaths was merely pro forma and had no more meaning than licking the stamps on the letters. The Italian professor stood and said something like, "Mr. Dean, I'm from fascist Italy, and in fascist Italy you learn one thing. First you lick the stamps. Then you lick something else."

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7. Screw it up royally. You've spent a long life telling yourself that mistakes are to be avoided, but that isn't necessarily so. Playing jazz piano, whenever you make a mistake, which is inevitable, you make another mistake deliberately to make something right out of something wrong. Then you do it again. Theoretically, you could play an entire tune of mistakes, and it would sound just fine.

You may think it would be better not to make the mistake in the first place. But a creative mistake may be truer to life, as you've no doubt discovered. You took a job you didn't want, soon to discover it's the ideal job for you. You were born to do that job. When you think of it, life is an assembly of creative mistakes. Even when you don't think of it.

8. Don't question everything you don't understand. The older you get, the more wonderful the world appears. Wonderful meaning full of wonders. The sudden appearance of something beautiful in the midst of heartbreak, for instance.

You are at a low point, and you think you're going to stay there, there's no relief, when out of the blue, something by Mahler or Beethoven comes into your air, and all at once the sorrow dissipates. You don't question or analyze the moment. You're simply grateful for it.

Where heartbreak is, beauty intrudes. Wondrously.

9. Grab the chicken leg. So there we were, in our 20s, Ginny and I and a bunch of friends, having a picnic by the Charles River in Cambridge, when I picked up a chicken leg with the intention of eating it and held it aloft. A little boy walked by and took it from my hand and kept walking. My friends and I laughed — the boy was so casual. Ginny said, "He must think that life is a chicken leg, waiting to be snatched." In fact it is, even when you're no longer a spring chicken.

10. Look only at the rim. When I was playing intramural basketball in college, I was 5-foot-11, a mite in the land of giants, and my all-around game was so-so at best. Yet most of the time I managed to score in the double digits by paying no attention to the defense. I simply pretended it wasn't there. I looked only at the rim of the basket. And sure enough, most of the time the defense didn't touch me.

Other games in life offer similar opportunities, at any age. Disregard the impediments to your well-being — a noisy neighbor, a treacherous colleague — and concentrate instead on where you are headed. You'll be pleasantly surprised how easily you get there. Nothing but net.

11. Do not seek immortality. It won't come to you anyway, certainly not through your works and achievements. But the good feeling you have for others, and they for you, that goes on forever. I'm fond of quoting the poet Philip Larkin: "What will survive of us is love." That should do it.

Roger Rosenblatt is the author of "More Rules for Aging," from which this essay was adapted.

How exercise increases brain volume — and may slow memory decline

By Gretchen Reynolds, January 24, 2024, *Washington Post*

Exercising for 25 minutes a week, or less than four minutes a day, could help to bulk up our brains and improve our ability to think as we grow older.

A new study, which involved scanning the brains of more than 10,000 healthy men and women from ages 18 to 97, found that those who walked, swam, cycled or otherwise worked out moderately for 25 minutes a week had bigger brains than those who didn't, whatever their ages. Practical tips and smart solutions for your health, technology, travel, food, money, home and more. Elevate your daily life with expertise from The Washington Post. Bigger brains typically mean healthier brains.

The differences were most pronounced in parts of the brain involved with thinking and memory, which often shrink as we age, contributing to risks for cognitive decline and dementia. "This is an exciting finding and gives us more fuel for the idea that being physically active can help maintain brain volume across the life span," said David Raichlen, a professor of biological sciences and anthropology at the University of Southern California. He studies brain health but was not involved with the new study.

The results have practical implications, too, about which types of exercise seem best for our brain health and how little of that exercise we may really need.

Little exercise, big brain

"We wondered, if we chose a very low threshold of exercise what would we see?" said Cyrus A. Raji, an associate professor of radiology and neurology at Washington University in St. Louis, who led the new study. He and his colleagues were well aware that exercise is good for brains, especially as we age.

Physically active older people are far less likely than the sedentary to develop Alzheimer's disease or other types of memory loss and cognitive decline. But he also knew that few people in the real world exercise much. "You hear that you need 10,000 steps a day," he said, "or 150 minutes a week. But it's very hard to reach" those goals.

Would less — even far less — exercise still help to build healthier brains, he and his colleagues wondered? What about, for instance, 25 minutes of exercise a week, a sixth of the 150 minutes recommended in most formal exercise guidelines? "It seemed an achievable amount for most people," Raji said. But would it show effects on brains?

10,125 brain scans

He and his colleagues turned to existing brain scans for 10,125 mostly healthy adults of all ages who'd come to the university medical center for diagnostic tests. Beforehand, these patients had provided information about their medical histories and how often and strenuously they'd exercised during the past two weeks.

The researchers divided them into those who'd exercised for at least 25 minutes a week and those who hadn't.

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Then, with the aid of artificial intelligence, they began comparing scans and exercise habits, looking for differences in brain volume, or how much space a brain and its constituent parts fill. More volume is generally desirable.

A clear pattern quickly emerged. Men and women, of any age, who exercised for at least 25 minutes a week showed mostly greater brain volume than those who didn't. The differences weren't huge but were significant, Raji said, especially when the researchers looked deeper inside the organ.

There, they found that exercisers possessed greater volume in every type of brain tissue, including gray matter, made up of neurons, and white matter, the brain's wiring infrastructure, which supports and connects the thinking cells.

More granularly, the exercisers tended to have a larger hippocampus, a portion of the brain essential for memory and thinking. It usually shrinks and shrivels as we age, affecting our ability to reason and recall.

They also showed larger frontal, parietal and occipital lobes, which, together, signal a healthy, robust brain.

Moderate exercise was best for brains

"It was surprising and encouraging" to see such widespread effects in the brains of people who were exercising so little, Raji said.

Of course, this study was associational, meaning it showed links between exercise and brain health, but not that exercise necessarily caused the improvements. So it's possible other lifestyle factors or genetics were at play, or that people with big brains just happened to like exercise.

But given the number of scans and the wide age range, Raji believes the effects of exercise on people's brains were real and direct and would help to maintain our ability to think well as we grow older.

Exactly how exercise might be altering brains is impossible to say from this study. But Raji and his colleagues believe exercise reduces inflammation in the brain and also encourages the release of various neurochemicals that promote the creation of new brain cells and blood vessels.

In effect, exercise seems to help build and bank a "structural brain reserve," he said, a buffer of extra cells and matter that could protect us somewhat from the otherwise inevitable decline in brain size and function that occurs as we age. Our brains may still shrink and sputter over the years. But, if we exercise, this slow fall starts from a higher baseline. Perhaps best of all, the most effective exercise in the study was also relatively gentle. People who said they exercised moderately, meaning they could still chat as they worked out, wound up with somewhat greater brain volume than those who exercised more vigorously, such as by swift running.

But the numbers of vigorous exercisers were quite small, making comparisons suspect, Raji said, and their brain volume was still larger than among those who rarely, if ever, exercised at all. Overall, any exercise of any type and in even small amounts is likely to be "a very good idea" for brain health, he said. Raichlen agrees. "Studies like this continue to provide strong evidence that moving your body even a small amount may have an impact on brain health, and that it is never too early, or too late, to start."

Thanks, Betsy

A Surprise from the Past

If you came to the Abbey before late 2023, you may remember **Bonnie Powell**, who lived in Apartment 102 from 2018 until October 2023. She still enjoyed dancing, despite her energy being sapped by Parkinson’s Disease.

Needing more care, she moved to an assisted living facility close to her daughter near Portland. We kept in touch for a while, but I hadn’t heard from her recently, and guessed that perhaps she had passed on.

Far from it, it turns out! Bonnie called me after Memorial Day and we talked for more than a half hour. She has moved from the assisted living facility to an adult foster care home. This is a better fit, with only five other residents, more homey personalized care. There’s a public library just across the street. She is taking speech therapy, and I could understand everything she said until we both became too tired to talk or hear well.



by Bonnie Hirsch

Art Committee Report

The current art exhibit in the Pub features the varied styles of Artist Karen Sherman-Nester. Most of us know her as our Abbey neighbor Karry. You can enjoy Karry’s art through the end of June. She will give a talk about her work on Friday, June 12, at 1:30 pm.

Gabby Damon is next in line, for the July- August Pub exhibit. Exact dates are not yet set, since Independence Day plans may coincide with our usual installation dates.

Our multi-artist exhibit “Artists Respond to Current Social Unrest” will probably be held in September and October. Tell Bonnie (458-205-0633 or Apt 115) if you hope to contribute art for the exhibit, so we can start planning the space. Remember, we want a variety of responses. Even “Meh” is a valid response if you do it creatively. If you have questions or just aren’t sure about submitting your art, let us know that, too.

Look elsewhere in this issue for the article “So Many Creating Questions.” Although the Art Committee is involved with the display of art rather than the creation of it, there is some overlap of interests. Let us know what *you* think.

Bonnie Hirsch

Library Committee Presents Literary Event Sunday Afternoon, July 12

Mark your calendars and reserve your spot for “The Life and Words of Henry David Thoreau,” an interactive slide show presentation by resident Larry Leverone, on Sunday, July 12, at 2 p.m. in the Fourth Floor Lounge. Seating is limited. A sign-up sheet is in the pub. Fun trivia: Larry and Thoreau were both born on July 12!

Public Library Book Loan

A new selection of Eugene Public Library books will be ready to check out on Monday, June 8. Since 2013, the library on a quarterly basis has loaned the Abbey at no charge 100 regular and large print books. These books are located in the first-floor landing bookcase, across from the elevator. Please use the check-out form on the adjacent desk. A bin is on the bottom shelf for book returns, and committee members will reshelve them.

Resident Profiles

Binders of articles featuring Abbey residents along with historical background, organized by resident Jim McConnell, editor of The Abbey Echo, are in the library. The “Eugene Abbey and Its People” binder is located next to the magazines on top of the table under the west window. A file folder of 2026 copies to date of The Echo is on a lower bookshelf.

Books on Display

Thanks to your continuing donations, “New Acquisitions” will remain the theme for Books on Display, located under the window at the top of the stairs on the first level. To borrow these book(s), please use the open notebook inside the library on the desk.

Resource Rack

New to the Resource Rack on the wall in the library is the Spring-Winter 2026 performance schedule for The Shedd Institute, located downtown on the corner of East Broadway and High Streets. The popular Oregon Festival of American Music at The Shedd is August 12-22 with the theme, “Beyond the Sea: Crosscurrents & Convergences.”

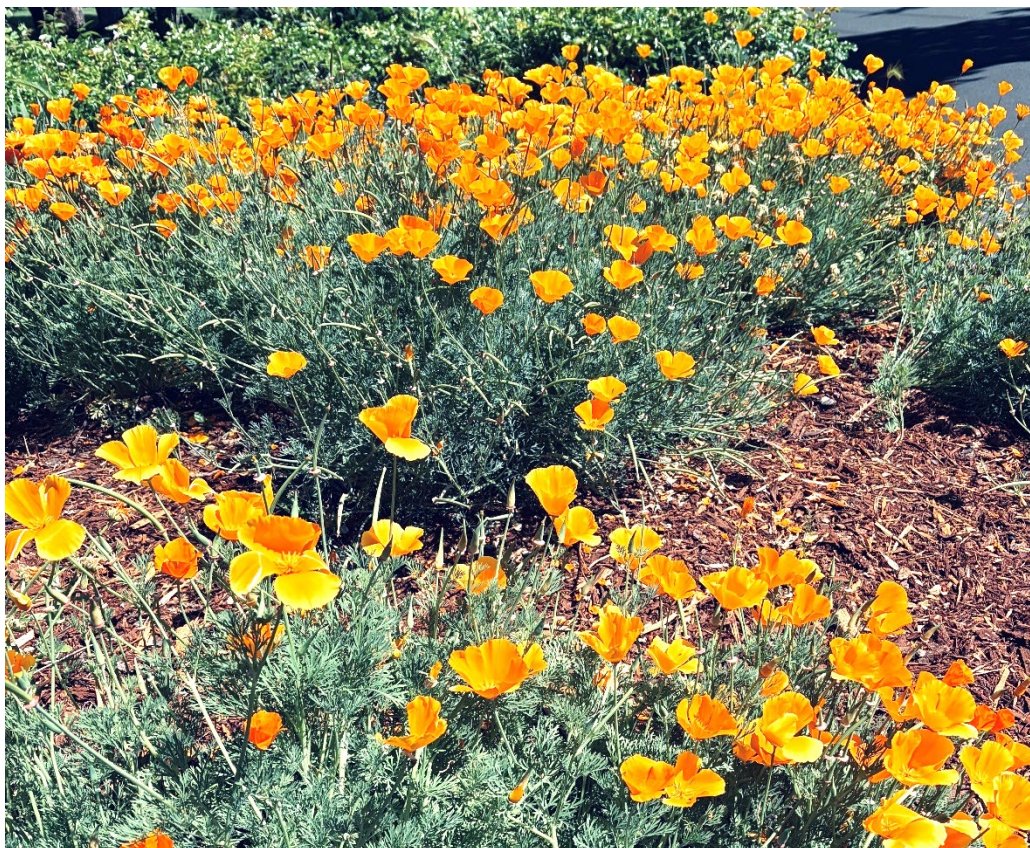
Monthly Book Talk

Book Talk, an informal time of book sharing with other residents, is Thursday, June 4, from 4-5 p.m. in the Downstairs Lounge, B Floor. All are welcome, even if you don't have a book to talk about.—

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Thank you to Linda Gordon's family for donating her beautiful bookcases to the Abbey for the Eugene Public Library books. Linda was a longtime member of the Abbey Library Committee. Thank you Jerry for installing them. Also, a thank you to Bonnie for donating her decorative lamp.

Library Committee: Chair Chris, Jeanne, Sue (Wineland), Wes, Cindy



Betsy found these California Poppies in Monroe Park.



Juneteenth* Celebration



**Come celebrate a holiday of justice and freedom.
Enjoy our program of Negro Spirituals!**

Performed by:

Martha Moultry, Vocalist

&

Stan Coleman, Vocalist and Pianist

June 19th, in the 4th Floor Lounge

4:00 to 5:00 P.M.

**Our food service staff are serving a soul food dinner
at 5:30p.m.in the Dining Room**

*Juneteenth is a federal holiday commemorating the freeing of the many slaves in Texas some two years *after* President Abraham Lincoln announced the emancipation of *all* slaves



Your Activity Committee: Karen F., Karry Nestor, Katherine Witt & Bill W