

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

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

**On Sunday, 30 August
We had an Ice Cream Social on the Abbey lawn**



With music provided by *Lazy*,
the group of Janet (2nd from right) and some of her friends



continued...

With perfect weather, and thirty-plus residents and guests in attendance,
it was a fun time..



Eternal words of wisdom:

“When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

- Yogi Berra

A gentle reminder:

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

Annie Dillard

Guilty of Ageism Toward Yourself?

Why You Should Stop Saying “I’m Too Old”

Ever told yourself you’re too old to do something? That kind of discouraging self-talk is common at any age: Many of us convince ourselves it’s too late to learn a new technology at 70, start weight lifting at 60, or change careers at 35. But where do those thoughts come from? And should we listen to them?

As you may already suspect, negative beliefs about our own aging are often the result of societal messaging we’ve been receiving since childhood, and don’t necessarily reflect our individual abilities. What’s more, research shows that — at least to an extent — viewing getting older through a positive lens might be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more we think about aging as a wonderful experience, the better our health may be, potentially lengthening our lifespan.



“Research has suggested that people who adhere to ageist stereotypes could have shorter lives, although the controlled studies on this have yet to be done (for obvious reasons),” Susan Whitbourne, adjunct professor of gerontology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, told Nice News. “However, there is evidence that people who internalize ageist views are more likely to rate their mental and physical health as lower than people who avoid falling prey to these stereotypes.”

Below, we’ll break down what self-directed ageism is, make the science-backed case for embracing every birthday with positivity, and offer some words of wisdom from Whitbourne on how you can put that mindset into practice.

The Impact of Internalized Ageism

There’s actually a technical term for writing yourself off under the guise of “I’m too old”: internalized ageism. That verbiage inherently suggests that these negative beliefs aren’t our fault. After all, we’re exposed to harmful cultural messaging about older people from an early age — from the grandparents in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, who rarely leave their bed, to the Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, who transforms into an old hag to offer Snow White the poisoned apple.

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One study revealed that adults 50 and older are only depicted in a positive light 72% of the time in stock media images online (compared to a massive 96% for those 49 and younger), and another identified age discrimination in children as young as 6 years old.

Throw into the mix abundant ads for anti-aging products and ageism in the workplace, and it's no wonder we dread admitting to ourselves how many years we've racked up. "It is very difficult not to take personally the messages that are so widespread in the media, from stereotypical portrayals in TV, films, jokes, and even 'over-the-hill' birthday cards," Whitbourne said.

But shedding these beliefs is entirely possible (we'll get to that in a bit), and there's *plenty* of incentive to do so. For one, a study published by the American Psychological Association showed that participants who viewed their own aging in a positive light lived 7.5 years longer than those with less favorable perceptions — a result thought to be partially caused by their will to live. The authors noted that this increase in longevity is even more significant than the years gained from low blood pressure or cholesterol, a lower BMI, abstaining from smoking, and regular exercise. Not only could rejecting ageism extend your lifespan, but it may also help keep your brain in tip-top shape during your later years. In 2018, researchers studied people with the $\epsilon 4$ variant of the APOE gene, one of the strongest risk factors for dementia. They found that those with positive beliefs about aging were nearly 50% less likely to develop dementia than the group with negative perspectives. And for folks with mild cognitive impairment, a common type of memory loss, one study demonstrated that they were 30% more likely to recover their cognition if they'd absorbed positive views on aging from their culture.

The benefits don't end there, though. If you're worried about having a stroke or developing diabetes, cancer, or heart disease, a 2022 study addressed these conditions in one fell swoop, revealing that positive attitudes around aging may reduce your risk. It also uncovered that participants who maintained those glass-half-full beliefs were more optimistic with a stronger sense of purpose, and less likely to be lonely and depressed.

"There's a connection between mindsets and health behaviors," the study's senior author, Eric Kim, said in a news release at the time. "One leads to the other."

How to Embrace Aging With Joy

It may sound intimidating to reverse a lifetime's worth of internalized negative beliefs about growing old — but the first step, Whitbourne says, is to pay attention to how you think and speak about entering your later years. “

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Most importantly, question your own views about aging and how many of them are shaped by society's ageist assumptions," she advised. "Check out the way you speak about aging and whether you communicate pessimism about the future, make jokes about aging (and its effects on you), assume that you can't do things because you're 'too old,' and feel that there's nothing you can do to alter the effects of aging on your health."

Psychologist Becca Levy's ABC method can help you put this into practice: To start, increase Awareness by writing down the first words or phrases you think of when you imagine an older person. Next, place Blame where blame is due by identifying the *real* source of any negative beliefs (which might be a TV show or skin care company, like we mentioned earlier). Finally, Challenge those assumptions about aging, which could mean learning more accurate information or calling out bias when you see it in real life.

And once you've done the work, Whitbourne recommends recognizing your achievement and giving yourself a pat on the back — because remember, cultivating positivity is a key part of the process. "Take stock of how you've improved over the years, including how much wisdom you've gained and how much you've been able to accomplish," she said. "People who age successfully tend to focus on the positive and, even if changes have occurred, manage to incorporate them into a sense of their own identities as competent, cared about by others, and adaptable."



As Tara was dressed quite elegantly, Karen Fierman sent me running for my camera. Tara wanted Joseph to take her photo on my phone which he did. But prior to that he insisted on taking a threesome. Which is what you see here. Was quite fun.

Betsy Hall

And I was able to persuade the indispensable Jessica to pause long enough for me to snap a photo.

Jim Mc

Feeling restless?

Level up your life by starting a side quest

From an article by Malaka Gharib, 19 August 2026, NPR

Feeling stuck, bored or restless in life? You might be ready to start a side quest. In video games, it's a mission that deviates from the main storyline, helping to build the world's lore. In real life, it's an activity that doesn't serve any other purpose than bringing more whimsy into your day-to-day.

When was the last time you did something just for fun? Like skipped down the sidewalk, roller-skated or learned a new language without the pressure of becoming fluent?

In other words, when was the last time you took a side quest?

The term comes from video games. It's a mission that deviates from the main storyline, helping to build the world and add flavor to the experience.

But in real life, it's an activity that doesn't serve any other purpose than bringing more whimsy and exploration into your day-to-day. And it's a great way of practicing play and opening up new possibilities, especially if you're feeling stuck, tense or restless.

"Just like in the gaming world, it makes the main quest stronger. It gives it more nuance or new dimension or brings out a facet of you that you convinced yourself you couldn't [be]," says Kyra Gaunt, an ethnomusicologist and the author of *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes From Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop*.

Research has shown that play can help us adapt to difficult circumstances, practice survival skills, problem-solve and collaborate. "Doing something you've not done before will open up the brain's different neural networks," Gaunt says. "You'll get this sense of wonder and awe."

Think of how you liked to play as a kid

This is a good prompt to start with, said Jeff Harry, a public speaker who teaches workshops on the importance of play, in a 2023 interview with Life Kit.

Were you super into Lego? Finger painting? Catching fireflies? Seeing how far you could catapult yourself off the swing set?

Then, think about how to incorporate that form of play into your life now. If you liked pretend play, maybe your side quest could be an acting or improv class. If you liked physical challenges, maybe you could go on an adventurous hike.

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Take a quiz to figure out your play personality

If you're striking out on your fave activities as a kid, take this quiz to find your play style. It uses thousands of personal play histories collected by the National Institute for Play and play researcher and psychiatrist Stuart Brown.

The idea is to find the type of play activity that naturally "gives you a sense of joy and engagement and sustained motivation," Brown told Life Kit in 2023.

According to the quiz, you might discover you're a "dreamer," someone who finds play in fantasy or alternate worlds, or an "organizer," someone who enjoys creating order by arranging things or connecting people. Then, see whether your results spark any side quest ideas.

Pick something you don't know how to do

You can also make your side quest something totally different from what you're usually drawn to. "I like to encourage people to do things [they] don't know how to do," Gaunt says.

A couple of summers ago, she took a drawing class. "There was a figure [model] I was supposed to draw, and I'm like, 'I can't draw,'" she says. The instructor told her to let her hand "follow your vision."

She took the advice to heart and found she could apply it to other areas of her life. "The next day, my writing was easier. My writing was better," she says. So be open to new activities that intrigue you — you never know how it will affect your main quest.

When in doubt, don't overthink it

If you still don't know what your side quest should be or if you feel too tired or busy to think of something, pause, listen and follow your urges, says Sahara Moné, curator of Let's Play NYC, a community group that prioritizes play.

Maybe you've been wanting to take an acting class since you graduated from college and told yourself this is the year you'll do it. "That's a nudge. It's very loud," she says. "It's a good place to start."

Don't forget to have fun. "Adults spend so much time in environments where they're trying to control the outcome," Gaunt says. Side quests, on the other hand, release us from worrying about that.

Thanks, Bill Winkley

Think you're too old to get active?

At 91, He Just Reclaimed His Age Record on the Appalachian Trail

By Chris Cohen, Sept. 2, 2026, New York Times

This week, Dale “Grey Beard” Sanders became the oldest person to complete the roughly 2,190-mile trail.

Dale Sanders, known as Grey Beard, is reclaiming his record as the oldest person to hike the entire Appalachian Trail. A team from The Times met him about three quarters of the way through the 2,190-mile hike. On Monday, Dale Sanders was about 1,000 feet from the end of the Appalachian Trail when he lost his balance.



The 91-year-old, who is known by the trail name “Grey Beard,” was headed to the summit of Mount Katahdin, the highest peak in Maine and the trail’s northern terminus. The weather on the mountain is too harsh for much besides lichen to grow, and he fell heavily onto sharp granite.

He lay on the ground and prayed. After a few minutes, he was able to get to his feet. Soon, he was standing on the summit, having reclaimed his record as the oldest person to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail. It was a final reminder of a lesson he said the trail had taught him repeatedly over the previous year. “When it hurts, keep going,” he said. “It’ll probably go away.”

Mr. Sanders had previously set the age mark in 2017, at 82. That record was [broken in 2021](#) by an 83-year-old hiker, M.J. Eberhart, known on the trail as “Nimblewill Nomad.” Mr. Sanders had befriended and encouraged Mr. Eberhart, but was also inspired to try [to reclaim the record](#).

Mr. Sanders began chipping away at the trail last September. While most thru-hikers complete the distance end-to-end in one direction, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy requires only that hikers cover every mile of the trail within a 365-day period for it to count as a thru-hike — in any direction, in any order.

To make the most of a year’s hiking weather. He planned to cover around 12 miles a day and sleep most nights in a camper in the back of his pickup truck.

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With roughly 140 miles left to hike in sections of the Southeast and Maine, he left the trail and let go of the idea of finishing within a year. “I accepted it, but I wasn’t happy about it,” he said.

That went more or less according to plan until early August, when numbness in his left arm sent him to the hospital, where a doctor advised him to return to his home in Memphis for a thorough assessment. Shortly after, he received news that his mother-in-law had died.

After spending time with his family and receiving clearance from his doctor to return to hiking, he received a detailed plan from two of his volunteers that would allow him to finish in time. They said making the record-setting deadline would be tight, but doable. After some hesitation, he returned to the trail on Aug. 16 for a final push.

When Mr. Eberhart got word that Mr. Sanders was back on the trail, he rushed from his home in Alabama to surprise him on the trail in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and offer support in camp in the evenings.

“This is not a competitive thing at all,” Mr. Eberhart said after Mr. Sanders had reclaimed his title. “He helped me and encouraged me when I took the record away from him. You have no idea how happy I am to have this relieved from me, and to have it go on.”

Reached on his way back to Tennessee, Mr. Sanders said he was looking forward to some rest. But, he added, he has also started thinking about a long hike in the Grand Canyon.



Getting to Know

September 2026

Katie Babits

Katie came to live here at the Abbey with her mom after her mom, Merlene, had a brief hospitalization.

Katie says that throughout her life, she has had unconditional support from Merlene, making it an easy choice to move home for her mother.

Katie's birthday is March 24.

She grew up on a farm in Shedd, Oregon, which is in Linn County, north of Harrisburg. The farm was primarily a tree farm, but also there was a water powered feed mill on the property when her mom bought it, and for some years Merlene did use the mill to produce animal feed. The mill is now a historic site called Thompson's Mill State Heritage Site.

Katie attended a Montessori School through grade 5, and she credits this early education for laying a foundation for her curiosity, creative thinking, and kindness, that became hallmarks of her career. From grades 6 through 12 She attended Central Linn School in Halsey, where she became a champion wrestler. Both while she was in high school and again when she was in college, Katie was ranked fifth nationally in women's wrestling!!

It was on a wrestling scholarship that Katie attended Missouri Valley College, with a double major in Criminal Justice, and Religion and Philosophy. She then attained a master's degree in public administration from Missouri State University. She also recently completed a second master's degree in international relations.

Katie's work history is very impressive. She has held several positions in Human Resources in cities and nonprofits. Her work has often had a humanitarian slant. For example, from 2015 —> 2019 she worked for the city of Eugene, doing Human Resources and human rights, developing training programs for city personnel; one of these (many) programs was for identifying and reporting hate crimes, a collaboration between the city managers office and the police department, and that program received national recognition.

Over the years Katie also worked with city administrations in Veneta and in Phoenix, in Human Resources at the Phoenix Airport, at a national security organization in Washington, DC that, among other things got 1,100 people out of Afghanistan, and at a huge food bank in Washington, DC. When the World Athletics Championships were held in Eugene in 2022, Katie had a very challenging position as the Human Resources Director for that event.



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Basically, all of Katie's jobs have involved helping others. Her dream has been to be involved with International Human Aid Programs, and some of her jobs have touched on this, and others have had more to do with local Human Aid Programs.

Katie's current job, which she is able to do mostly remote from here, is working for the Oregon Secretary of State, where she administers the voting programs for the military and people living overseas who are registered to vote in Oregon, ensuring that those two populations are able to vote.

Katie's hobbies include weight lifting and CrossFit, and she is a Certified Olympic Weight Lifting Coach.

When asked what she likes best about life at the Abbey, she said that it is the very interesting and supportive community of people who live here.

Janet Bernstein

About Our Bulletin Boards

There is a note on each bulletin board that says,

“Notices must include the name of the person posting, the date posted, and the post must be removed after two weeks.”

The reason for these simple rules is to provide each resident equal opportunity to use the boards.

Any commercial messages must be approved by Management before posting.

If you see a posting that does not meet those simple requirements, feel free to rip it off! (I have seen notices in place for months; and I believe that shows a lack of consideration by the person responsible for the post.)

Jim Mc, self-appointed Bulletin Board Monitor

Squirrel Code

Squirrel in the old twiggy tree stops still,
folds its tail to become an autumn leaf,
tucks motionless, nearly invisible in a twiggy nook.
Its eyelids drift almost closed,
open as a breeze passes, flutter to half-mast.

Watching, Old Memory whispers
Three, now One, now Two, remembers
how the baby cried harder if I stopped walking her.
The baby so new to the world,

I so new to the world of being a mother,
both of us exhausted by newness.
Her limp head on my shoulder,
eyes turned where I could not see.
Was she falling asleep? Awake?

Her father and I made a code.
One: her squirrel-bright eyes gazed around, alert,
explored a breezy tree outside our window.
Two: eyelids fluttered, her brain more awake than asleep.

Three: eyelids drooped, more asleep than awake,
ready to pop open at any sound or change.
Four: internal storm finally soothed, fully asleep,
safe to softly be laid down with no dissent.

Old Memory and I watch today's Squirrel.
In the twiggy old tree its eyes drift *One* to *Two*,
Three, Three and a half, almost Four.
Sudden breeze gusts past.

One!
Squirrel flips its tail, clambers bright-eyed up a branch.

Bonnie Hirsch 9/17/26

“If you don’t laugh at yourself, everything becomes heavy.”

The late Jim Henson,
Puppeteer extraordinary

Physical Touch Is the “Mother of All Senses” — Get an Expert’s Insight on How It Can Benefit Your Life

Stephanie Baxter, 26 July 2025, [nicenews.com](https://www.nicenews.com)

We need four hugs a day for survival, eight for maintenance, and 12 for growth — at least according to a saying credited to renowned family therapist Virginia Satir. While regularly receiving a dozen daily hugs may feel excessive or improbable to some, it’s all too easy to fall on the *other* end of the spectrum: spending more time connecting with your devices than your fellow humans.

A hug or a pat on the back may seem fairly inconsequential, but receiving (and giving) physical touch can contribute greatly to our physical and mental well-being. “Touch is the mother of all senses; if we receive touch regularly, it helps us to grow emotionally,” internationally acclaimed massage therapist and healing expert Beata Aleksandrowicz told Nice News. “Touch is what makes us human. It is the first sense developed in [the] human embryo.”

Nevertheless, the rise of technology, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other factors have whittled down our exposure to touch, she pointed out. But our craving for this type of connection hasn’t gone away: One 2019 study found that 72.7% of participants reported that their desire for touch exceeded their current touch frequency. “Touch is fundamental to all human interaction,” Aleksandrowicz said, adding: “It gives us a sense of reality.”

But in what other ways does it impact our bodies, and how can we get more of it? Read on for Aleksandrowicz’s insights and advice.

This sense’s effect on us literally starts before we’re born. “Even before the full development of the face, the embryo is already responsive to touch,” Aleksandrowicz said. “It is through touch that a baby learns about the outside world.”

And perhaps unsurprisingly, its importance doesn’t diminish as we grow up. Research from 2020 found that affectionate touch from caregivers to infants plays a “foundational role” in early psychosocial behavior, as well as in establishing close bonds with family and friends. A report from 2024 also discovered that touch interventions had “medium-to-large effects” on respiration, weight gain, and the stress hormone cortisol in newborns.

“Sometimes a stressor can be the failure to provide something essential, and the absence of touch is seemingly one of the most marked developmental stressors we can suffer,” neurologist Robert Sapolsky wrote in his book *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers*.

Another study demonstrated that children struggling with mental health conditions felt less depressed and anxious after just a 30-minute back massage. “Touch is crucial in our early development, in our communication and personal relationships,” Aleksandrowicz confirmed.

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And for adults, the absence of non-sexual touch (often called “skin hunger” by psychologists) may have negative effects. “Touch deprivation leads to an increase in loneliness that so often leads to depression,” Aleksandrowicz said. “Lack of touch causes personality, mood, and anxiety disorders, [as well as] secondary immunity disorders.” In some cases, it may also lead to eating disorders — a study examining participants with anorexia and bulimia found that a lack of touch may play a role in body image-related disease.

But the flip side is also true: Aleksandrowicz explained that our skin holds some 5 million touch receptors, and that vagal activity increases in our nervous system when we stimulate them, which can lead to a multitude of benefits. “When the vagal activity increases, there is a significant drop of cortisol, the ‘stress’ hormone; and an increase in oxytocin, our ‘bonding’ hormone,” she said. “There is also an increase in serotonin, which is the body’s natural antidepressant and anti-pain chemical.”

She also cited a study co-authored by Tiffany Field, director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine, which found that massage may increase dopamine levels and natural killer cells. The latter destroy infected and diseased cells in our bodies, helping to prevent cancer and other illnesses from spreading, and are “the front lines of the immune system,” per Aleksandrowicz.

These are all fantastic reasons to seek out more physical touch in your life — and in today’s technology-driven world, doing so is “more important than ever,” Aleksandrowicz emphasized. “It’s a powerful, instinctive way we stay connected as human beings. We’re wired for touch; it soothes us, grounds us, and affirms that we belong. A simple hug, a gentle hand on the shoulder, or a moment of shared laughter with someone close can calm our nervous systems and remind us that we’re not alone.”

As a touch therapy researcher for over 30 years and an author on the subject, Aleksandrowicz is a clear advocate for the healing power of massage. “My clients always emphasize how strong they have become — mentally and physically — since [incorporating] regular massage into their lives,” she said. “They feel positive, healthy, much more aware of their body and posture, and more able to cope with the stresses of everyday life.”

But you can reap benefits like these in smaller ways, too. If you’re participating in a team sport, go ahead and give your teammate a hand squeeze or a pat on the back — research suggests that the tactile support could improve their performance. “My advice is to be intentional: Reach out for that embrace, sit close to your loved ones, or hold someone’s hand a little longer,” Aleksandrowicz said.

And while you’re at it, take a breather from your devices, which can replace the “intimacy of human presence,” she noted. “Turn them off during meals, look someone in the eye, really listen, and allow space for physical closeness. Try things that bring people together physically: Dance, play, cook, garden, or simply be near someone without distraction.”

Aleksandrowicz continued: “When we engage our senses and bodies in connection with others, we feel more whole, more seen, more alive. In the end, it’s not the messages we send but the warmth we share — heart to heart, hand to hand — that fills our lives with meaning.”

Getting to Know

September 2026

Karen Duncan

Karen was born on October 17, 1950, in Sheridan, Oregon, a small town south west of Portland, where she lived on her family farm until they moved to Eugene when she was in third grade.

Her father, a widower with three small children, moved to a farm in Sheridan after his first wife died, and advertised for someone to help with household chores and caring for his children. The woman who answered the ad was a single mother with a young son, she took the job, and she and Karen's father were soon married. When Karen was born, she had four older siblings, who were quite a bit older than she was. Three of them have died; the youngest of the four, an older sister who is 8 years older than Karen, is still alive.



Karen enjoyed being with the calves on the farm when she was little.

When the family moved to Eugene, her father worked at a lumber mill, and her mom took care of the home and the children. Karen attended first and second grade in Sheridan; her family moved several times in Eugene, so she attended three different Eugene schools between third and twelfth grade. Karen did very well in school, and because she finished high school during the time of the Vietnam war, she was also quite active in protesting the war. She attended two terms at the U of O, and then moved to Vancouver BC with her partner Shaun, whom she then married.

She moved back and forth between Eugene and Vancouver, attending the U of O for another term, then a semester at Vancouver City College, then attending the University of British Columbia, and after separating from Shaun and later divorcing him, returning to the U of O, where she graduated with a degree in Political Science. She then got a master's degree in education.

For a few years after that Karen did substitute teaching, and then she became pregnant with her daughter Anna, whom many of us have had the pleasure of meeting when she has come for dinner at the Abbey. Karen, a single mother, got a lot of support from her parents at that time. She got a job in the Registrar's Office at the U of O, and rose through the ranks over the 20 years that she worked there to the position of Assistant Registrar.

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Karen retired after 20 years at her job, which was also the beginning of the pandemic, when she was dealing with several medical issues, including breast cancer. She is doing well medically these days, thankfully.

Karen's hobbies include reading, sewing, and gardening.

When asked what she likes best about life at the Abbey, she said, "the people, the ability to be independent, and the ambiance."

Janet Bernstein

Today's Quote:

"Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could
Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well."

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Tara dresses for all occasions – including Halloween

Photos by Linda Shield

Art Committee Report

Back by Popular Request: Silent Art Auction

During October, the Art Committee will hold a weekly silent auction of unclaimed art which we will not be adding to the walls.

- Each Thursday afternoon, (October 1, 8, 15, 22) we will hang art for sale in the Pub.
- To bid on an art piece, write your name and bid amount on the sheet below it. The starting bid must be at least \$3.00.
- Bid as often as you like, on as many pieces as you like, until bidding closes the following Thursday. Additional bids must be at least one dollar more.
- Bidding closes at Thursday noon. If there are no bids on a piece by that morning, you may bid one dollar. Winning bidders pay and claim their art.
- Art that receives no bids will be donated to a charitable organization.

Do you have supplies stored in the 4th Floor Studio?

Along with the art auction, we will clear out unclaimed supplies and equipment from the Studio and closets, and reorganize the room to make it more user-friendly. Before Oct 8, put your name on anything you have stored in the Studio area and blue lockers, or it may go away. (You may claim and label an empty locker to store your art materials.)

Where Did That Picture Go?

In the past few months some art in the hallways has moved. Bill and Stan reclaimed one of their artworks and replaced it with another. (Check out “Brother Bluez” in a stairwell landing.) Linda S traded out some of the art near her door. The Monet print of a bicyclist in a garden rode down to the other end of his hall, but may ride back closer to Pat’s door. Near the laundry room, enjoy John Roy’s newly framed “Ghandi and Child” drawing.

If your favorite artwork is not where you expect it to be, though, please ask someone on the art committee about it. Ask us also if you see an empty hook. Usually there is an explanation. For instance, a piece might need repair, or an owner forgot to tell us that they were retrieving it. But if something does disappear, the sooner we know, the better our chances of tracking it down.

Upcoming Pub Shows

- November/December: Collage artist Marilyn Kent
- January/February: Wildlife photographers Betsy Hall and Fred Ramsey
- March/April: Watercolorist Bruce Bonine

Art Committee: Bonnie, Bruce, Karry, Katherine, Patty, Nita, Sandy, Wes

It is bit of a conundrum:

When I came to the Abbey on 16 October 2016, I found that the dining room was eerily quiet; about forty men and women were seated four or six to a table, but no one was talking. They just sat and looked at one another or around the room. It felt strange.

When the meal was served, folks finished their dinner and left, with hardly a word spoken.

I found this situation unusual for a public dining experience, so I took it upon myself to do something about it. My solution was to make up slips of paper with three or four simple conversation-starting questions, such as: What was your favorite pet, how many siblings did you have, where were you born, etc.

I distributed these simple questionnaires to each table after the residents were seated, but before meal service started, and asked one person at each table to act as moderator by reading the questions and asking for responses.

This seemed to break down whatever barrier had been inhibiting conversations, and soon people were conversing normally, without the prompting. I discontinued the prompt slips after a couple of weeks, as I recall.

Now, folks are complaining that we may have too much, or too loud talking. We seem to have gone from one extreme to the other.

According to those “experts” we always hear about, a comfortable level of sound in a public dining room is approximately 60 – 70 decibels. Since all or most iPhones have built-in decibel meters, you might check the level at your table and perhaps do your part to dial it down a bit.

Jim McConnell

Today's Quote (from the *Snug* app):

“Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow; it only saps today of its joy.”

-Leo Buscaglia

Another wise quote:

“Don't sit down and wait for opportunities to come... get up and make them!”

- Madam C. J. Walker, d.1919.

- American entrepreneur, philanthropist, activist

Stan and Bill share this announcement from KLCC:

TPVOE! BEWJDF ;!VOEF ST UBOEJOH!! F BSJOH!MPT T !BOE!BDDF T T JCJRNZ

Led by thirty volunteers with hearing loss and The Shedd Institute's LOOP OREGON committee, Sound Advice is a free, monthly gathering of peers to share knowledge and experiences with hearing loss. **The group meets on the 2nd Saturday of every month** in a hearing looped classroom, practices using this powerful assistive listening system, and explores ADA-guaranteed rights to hearing access. Drop ins and partners welcome. Sign ups encouraged so we have adequate materials, or for more information call 541-434-7000.

The John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM, every month on Saturday through Feb 13, 2027.

Event Supported By

The John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts

(541) 434-7000

info@theshedd.net

<https://www.theshedd.org/>

Some wisdom of the ages:

“Everything has beauty, but not everyone can see.”

Confucius

Missing Art!



The beaded necklace pictured here is missing from the third floor art display near the laundry room. It is one of three necklaces which came to us from the collection of former resident Tillie Krieger.

If you see it anywhere or have any information about it, please tell Michele or one of the Art Committee members. You may leave a note on a member's door clip or under Michele's door if you want to remain anonymous.

Art Committee members and their apartment numbers are Wes (108), Bonnie (115), Sandy (210), Nita (211), Bruce (213), Karry (214), Katherine (307), and Patty (404)

You Just Gotta See This!

And it will bring tears – the good kind -- to your eyes.

If you don't wish to read the entire, short, article, just skip ahead to the very brief video clip.

The last moments show an example of pure, unmitigated love and joy on the part of the dog and his owner.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2026/09/13/her-dog-had-been-missing-seven-months-then-his-photo-appeared-online/?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=&utm_term=

Jim Mc

Two short love stories:

The First: While in the Army, after being grounded from the 101st Airborne Division because of an irreparable (at the time) knee injury, I was assigned to a recruiting office. My commander in an office of four persons, was a tall, raw-boned Captain Thomas J. Ralston, whom I came to know well. He told me his life story, which I found most interesting:

In civilian life he was a railroad engineer before being drafted for the Korean War. While at war he received a battlefield commission and two Silver Star medals for bravery in action.

Captain Ralston left the Army after the war and found a job as a telephone service man. In this work, he went on a service call to the mansion of one of the then richest families in America, the Motts were early investors in both General Motors and Dow Chemical Company.

While on the service call, Thomas met and became friendly with a young woman of the family. It was an instance of “love at sight” for both of them, and they began dating and, finally, asked her family’s permission to get married. After a long series of discussions, her family agreed to the marriage on the condition that Thomas re-enter the Army, so that they could introduce him to their friends as “an officer and a gentleman.”

When Thomas and his love were married, they agreed that they would live on Thomas’ Army salary and not touch the bride’s inheritance until he retired after twenty years of Army service.

I then did, and still do, consider that a truly great love story.

The Second: Is a much simpler story, but is still vivid in my memory.

After I retired at age 54 because of a complicated heart problem, I decided to tour Oregon’s official Scenic Byways. This adventure landed me in Lakeview. Struck by its traditional courthouse square, a full block park with spacious lawn, benches and trees, I leased a house, and stayed there for three years. My house had a large back lawn with a flower garden and a couple of fruit trees. The back yard was enclosed by a woven wire fence, with a gate leading to the alley.

One afternoon while I was sitting on the back deck, a young California Quail hen came down the alley, ducked under the gate, and began scratching in the flower garden. After a few minutes, a male California Quail came down the alley past the gate, and (literally) did a double take when he saw the hen in my garden. He retraced his steps, entered under the gate and then, very casually, picked his way along until he was beside the hen.

After a few minutes of studious pecking, they left the garden together and went back into the alley and strolled off side by side.

A very typical teenage romance, no matter the species, I thought – and still do.

Jim McConnell

Have You Met These Neighbors?

‘The Missus and I have lived in this little house since we were married many years ago.

Our ancestors were here when this tree was alive and well. We have raised two children here, but they have gone



off to find their own little hollow. I’d wager a bet that you have never noticed our tiny house on your walks by the Extension Service on 10th Avenue, Eugene.

We are little people, gnomes, and our house may look tiny but we are earth dwellers and our rooms inside this tree stump are quite spacious. Actually we got our moniker way back in the 16th Century from some wise person who spoke Greek. Gnome means “earth dweller”; we are protectors of the Earth, its minerals and hidden treasures. Some folk confuse us with elves, but they are a mischievous sort whereas we are thoughtful, truthful and live by a strict moral code. Our home is comfy and occasionally we do invite other little people over for a game of cards or some fun. Some big people like to put replicas of us in their gardens for good luck.”

Quotation and photos by Betsy Hall

One liner:

A favorite line from a book I’m reading, One Good Turn, by Kate Atkinson:

Two actors in a play in rehearsal in London talking about the play’s gay director:

“Tobias is about as camp as a Scout Jamboree.”

Well, maybe you had to see it in context (or be English).

Jim Mc

On Wednesday 6 September, Fred took us on another enjoyable trip to birds of the tropic, this time around Oaxaca Mexico.

Below are some of his most vibrant photos.



Ruins of former Zapotec Empire



Rosita's Bunting



Yellow-winged Cacique



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher



Lucifer Hummingbird



Swallowtail Butterfly

continued...



Painted Bunting



Lazuli Bunting



Red Warbler



Inca Jay



Elegant Euphonia



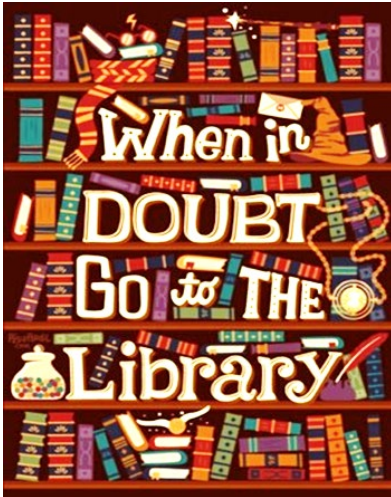
Montezuma Bald Cypress

Thank you, Fred, for sharing with us.

Betsy

(Incidentally, **Oaxaca** is pronounced Wa-ha-ka. I learned that on a cooking show! Jim Mc)

Library Report



League of Women Voters Event to Focus on Election Security

The Abbey Library Committee will sponsor a presentation by the League of Women Voters of Lane County at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 7, in the 4th Floor Lounge. First, the League's Nancy Mills will address election security. Following her talk, Peggy Dame will provide one-on-one assistance to residents who have questions about their voter registration status, or who would like to register to vote.

Eugene Public Library Books

The Eugene Public Library loans the Abbey 100 books, including large print, at no charge on a quarterly basis. These books are located in the first-floor landing bookcase, across from the elevator. A new selection arrives late this month. Keep on checking out the public library books, but try to finish by mid-month. A book can always be held over by arrangement. A check-out form, separate from the one used to check out Abbey Library books, is on the adjacent table.

Oregon Books—

Various Oregon-related books, including “Looking Back: Lane County,” “In Search of Ancient Oregon” and “Lewis & Clark—Voyage of Discovery,” are located on the lower shelves. Please use the open notebook on the desk inside the library to check out these Oregon books.

Books on Display

New acquisitions continue to be featured in Books on Display thanks to your generous donations. The display is located under the window at the top of the stairs on the first level. To borrow these book(s), please use the open notebook on the desk inside the library.

Book Talk

Book Talk, an informal time of book sharing and a wonderful source of ideas to put on your reading list, is the first Thursday of the month, from 4-5 p.m. in the Downstairs Lounge, B Floor.

— Library Committee: Chair Chris, Jeanne, Wes, Maggie, Karen, Cindy

NDE?

After pondering the following for some time, I decided it wouldn't do any harm to share it with the community, and it may even be of help to some:

I had a wonderful, extraordinary experience the night of 16 September, and will try to explain it to the best of my ability. I am an engineer by temperament, training, and experience, so cannot readily put the experience into words as well as if I were a poet.

After a busy day, I was tired (because of heart failure, I am usually about used up by 5:00 PM) and went to bed early at about 9:30. I fell asleep almost at once.

Shortly after falling asleep (I checked the clock later), I was awakened by the words,

“You are dying.”

Immediately, I was standing on a trail that sloped gently down toward a meadow. On my left was a pastureland with lush green grass, with a few scattered flowers and bushes. This grassland sloped up to a forest. To my right was a rippling creek with grass and willow trees along the banks.

As I stood on the trail, I could see a wider valley stretching below, with a small town or village in the distance.

The entire scene was lighted by a soft, non-directional light; every detail was sharp and clear, it didn't seem like the sunlight as we know it, and there were no shadows.

I awakened to a delightful feeling of joy, peace and anticipation. I'm in no hurry to leave this life and my family, but I do look forward to that time when it comes. I have always enjoyed just being in the outdoors, whether farmland, forest, desert, or whatever.

So, if what I saw was the Heaven of my ultimate destiny, I will feel welcome and at home.

As I said above, I am simply not able to adequately describe what I experienced that night, but would very much like to experience it again. And again.

Note: Since I am a Christian, I have no fear of the consequences of dying, because I am completely confident of what comes next. (However when I do go, I hope, like everyone else, it is peacefully in my sleep - and not after a long, painful illness.)

Jim McConnell



An Important Reminder!

From the Lane County Elections
Department



The General Election is 3 November

Some Important Dates for Voters:

New Voter Registration Deadline – The deadline to register to vote is October 13, 2026.

Current Voter Deadline to Update - You may update your voter registration until 8 p.m. Election Day, November 3, 2026 at the Elections Office at 275 West 10th Avenue, and receive a ballot.

Ballots are mailed to local and out-of-state voters on October 14, 2026. Absentee ballots are available beginning September 21, 2026.

Ballot Dropsites open on October 14, 2026.

The last day our office will mail ballots to voters is Thursday, October 29, 2026. After this date, ballots must be picked up in person at Lane County Elections.

Election Day is Tuesday, **November 3, 2026**.

Election results will be posted according to the Results Posting Schedule (see website).

Watch the election process live online starting on October 14, 2026, and follow along with our Tentative Schedule for Ballot Processing.

Election results will be certified no later than November 30, 2026.

Your Vote Counts!

Fred Ramsey takes us on a visit to...

Australia

Part 1: The Southeast New South Wales to Tasmania

The October bird show takes us Down Under to the temperate zone of eastern Australia, home to Kookaburras, brilliant parrots, lyrebirds, and this lovely ...

Spotted Pardalote



Wednesday, 14 October
6:30 pm - In the Fourth Floor Lounge