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January 3, 2022 meeting.

Attendees: Harry Redford, Tony and Linda Homolka, Ralph Luft, Eddie Weaver, Steven Marshall, and Doug Petee.

Doug Petee won the 50/50 raffle. Tony described it as a down payment on his breakfast!

The Treasurer's report is \$54.00 after making our annual charitable donation.

Our attendance has been down and we imagine that this is due to the fears (and possible illness) of the pandemic. We also understand that many of us "go south" this time of year. This did, however, make me think about the importance of maintaining relationships with old friends. These gatherings offer an opportunity to reminisce but also to offer support and understanding to each other and have some good laughs.

I did a little research regarding the importance of social interaction for seniors. It was interesting to read that many times relationships with friends was more meaningful than family relationships due to many factors. I have copied a few comments here:

From Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School

A strong social life has been linked with many health benefits, like less risk of depression and longer life span. But a new study suggests that interacting with a wide range of people may offer even greater benefits.

The study, published Feb. 20, 2019, in *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, found that older adults who interacted with people beyond their usual social circle of family and close friends were more likely to have higher levels of physical activity, greater positive moods, and fewer negative feelings.

The researchers asked 300 adults ages 65 and older to record their activities and social encounters every three hours for a week. They also wore activity trackers to monitor their movement. They found that the people who had more variety in their social interactions spent less time being sedentary.

The reason? The scientists suggested that while older adults may be more sedentary when they're with their closest friends and family — for instance, watching TV together or lounging at home — they need to leave the house to engage with other people and thus have to be more active.



Think these guys are doing a 50/50 raffle?

From [healthline](#). Written by [Cathy Cassata](#) on September 20, 2019

“We know social isolation is a serious threat to health and affects us mentally and physically,” Dr. Raymond Hobbs, physician consultant at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, told Healthline. Hobbs offers the following five suggestions for getting socially involved.

1. Volunteer your talents

Not only can volunteering a few times a week or month bring structure to one’s life, but it can also create connections with others.

“Whether you went to college or not, you have a lot of life experience when you get older. Maybe you’re a wonderful cook or knitter or are great at playing bridge or chess or scrabble. You can use that knowledge to teach others and interact with them,” said Hobbs.

2. Find a hobby

Practicing something you enjoy can fill time, bring joy, and help you meet new people. “If you like doing pottery or water coloring or playing music, get out there and meet others who like to do the same things you do,” Hobbs said. However, he recommends picking a hobby that truly interests you.

“Make sure it’s something that you like and you’ll stick to it,” he said. “I had a patient who was going to retire and I asked him what he was going to do. He said, ‘I’m going to fish, and I’ve never done it before.’ I thought that’s not a good sign. Maybe he’ll like it, but if he’s never done it, maybe he won’t.”

3. Learn something new

Community colleges and senior centers offer courses in many subjects, as well as private businesses. “I don’t mean take organic chemistry — unless you really want to — but acquiring new skills and trades can maintain mental health for seniors,” Hobbs said.

If you’re looking to take on a new physical activity that also combines cognitive and social benefits, he says to also consider taking a dance class.

“A study years ago looked at people for over 25 years and which cognitive things challenge you like reading, playing a musical instrument, or learning a foreign language, as well as exercising and lifting weights,” said Hobbs. “They found that the only physical activity that seemed to benefit was dancing. Might be because you are learning moves

and so you're doing something physical that's actually stretching your mind, and you're also interacting with people."

4. Travel

Seeing new places can encourage interactions with others.

"Travel can expose you to different cultures and people even within your own city or country. Travel can also get you physically active with walking and sightseeing," said Hobbs. For short, local outings, he says carpooling is a good way to socialize. "You're talking with other people and may develop friendships too," Hobbs said.

5. Embrace social media

For those who are homebound or unable to get out and about, online tools offer a way to stay connected with family and friends, and even provide opportunities to meet new friends. "The internet expands people's world. Now with social media you can go online and see grandchildren or friends. Also, if you have an obscure interest in [something like] Bulgarian pottery or south Vietnamese cooking, and want to find other people who like it, you might not find people locally, but online you can find a group who likes it," said Hobbs. For those who are wary of technology, he suggests asking a younger relative for help.

"Know that computers are easier to deal with than they were 20 years ago. They are an easy way to get involved in something you're interested in," said Hobb.

Another concern I have been reading about is scammers trying to get money from us. The following is some advice from the www.consumersenergy.com page:

Outsmart Scammers by Learning to Recognize Scams

Con artists have long preyed on utility customers by pretending to be a Consumers Energy employee in person and on the phone. They use scare tactics, threats and urgency to gain entry into your home, or trick you into surrendering credit card information, money orders, gift cards or cash.

Here's how to spot a fake Consumers Energy worker asking to be let in to your home:

- Ask to see their company identification badge. Real contractors or employees of Consumers Energy always wear one, and will gladly show it to you on request.
- Remember, we always provide advance notice if we need to get into your home. We never show up unannounced.
- We will never use scare tactics or threaten to shut off your service if you don't let us into your home.
- If you believe a scammer is trying to get into your home, lock all your doors and immediately call 911 and report it to the police.**

Keep in mind that there are times when we have to shut off electric or natural gas service for safety, security or non-payment. But we will never threaten to shut off service if you don't comply with immediate demands.

In a phone con, scammers impersonate Consumers Energy workers and contact homeowners in an effort to get some fast cash. They'll:

- Claim that you're late on an energy payment or past-due on a bill.
- Tell you a Consumers Energy truck is on its way to shut off power within 24 hours if a payment isn't made.
- Walk you through an online money transfer or instruct them to go to their nearest convenience store to purchase a prepaid gift card or send money via wire transfer.

Our next meeting will be Monday February 7th at the Monroe Grill. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us!

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Homolka