



Staying CONNECTED

ISSUE 58 | SUMMER 2026

“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.” –F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Welcome to our July, August and September edition! As summer slowly gives way to hints of autumn, we hope these months bring you moments of joy, relaxation and connection with people and activities you cherish most.

Summer offers opportunities both large and small — from family gatherings and neighborhood picnics to quiet mornings with coffee on the porch or evenings spent watching fireflies dance across the yard.

We hope you find time to enjoy the warmth of the season and the simple pleasures that often mean the most.

As always, our NNC newsletter is designed with you in mind. Inside, you'll find stories, helpful information and community updates.

Most importantly, we want this newsletter to serve as a reminder that you are an important part of a caring and vibrant community. Your stories, laughter, kindness and resilience continue to inspire those around you every day.

We wish you a summer filled with sunshine, good health, happy memories and a smooth transition into the beauty of fall.

The Staying Connected Team 🍷

NNC Bakers!

By Anne Shimanovich, Aging in Community, Program Director



for our creations to be done, the Shinshinim told the Purim story and led us in singing our favorite Purim songs. Then, it was time to eat our hamantashen. All agreed that it was great to spend the pre-Purim time together.

In May, we got together with Shinshinim Tamar and Yagell to make rolled date cookies! Table #1 was given the task of mixing the wet



ingredients. Table #2 mixed the dry ones. Then, the dry ingredients were added to the wet and kneaded into a ball of dough. We divided the dough into 4 pieces and rolled out 4 rectangles. Each was covered with a thin layer of date spread and sprinkled with cinnamon. After carefully rolling them up along the long side, they were baked for 20 minutes at 350°. See the detailed recipe in Wordshop! 🍷

In March a group of NNC members gathered at the Myerberg, along with the Shinshinim (Israeli representatives from Jewish Educational Services) to bake traditional hamantashen cookies in honor of the upcoming Purim holiday. After each group completed mixing, rolling, shaping and filling the dough, we put them in the oven to bake. While waiting

Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA): Our Very Own World Class Museum

By Heidi Schloss, NNC Member

When I was a little girl and it was safe to let your kids walk around by themselves, my parents would drop me off at the BMA as they often had special programs for children.

The Thinker by Rodin sat out on the front steps. Then, I would go in search of my favorite exhibits--the decorated rooms, the mummies (since moved to the Walters) and others. My mom, an artist, introduced me to Andrew Wyeth's work in a special exhibition, and I fell in love, spending lots of time with one of his drawings.

When I graduated from college, having just finished casting in bronze, I attended an artist talk with Baltimore's own Ruben Kramer (and a friend of Mom's). Afterwards, I asked him questions about the chemicals used to make patinas, the color surfaces on a bronze sculpture. He grabbed my sketchbook and began to doodle. He handed it back, and it had the information I had requested as well as a sketch that strangely reminded me of myself! I was also introduced to pop art and laughed at Claes Oldenburg's inflatable art that moved up and down.

As a teacher, periodically my colleagues and I had the opportunity to view an artist's work by ourselves. The Dale Chihuly exhibition was amazing! I still remember looking up through a glass ceiling at blown glass plants! And I learned about the life-sized Chinese terracotta soldiers when they were included as part of pieces borrowed

from the British Museum.

In recent years, a friend and I went to the opening of an exhibition of surrealist works. It was very elegant. I also went to the 50th anniversary of HipHop and saw how music and social change influenced art.

The NNC trips committee has taken several trips to the BMA. The advantage of going to a museum is that exhibits change, so you can visit over and over again. One of my favorites at the BMA was the 800 years of women in art. We learned that during medieval times, women often inherited art shops from husbands or fathers following their deaths. Then, there were the nuns who did beautiful calligraphy on religious texts. This was new to me as I only knew about calligraphy done by monks. It was wonderful to see paintings by two of my favorite Italian women artists: Sofonisba Anguissola and Artemisia Gentileschi! Beautiful!

A recent exhibition was very exciting. Amy Sherald, known for her presidential portrait of Michelle Obama and for teaching at MICA, was supposed to have a huge exhibition at the Smithsonian galleries. However, Amy switched her exhibition to the BMA due to some politically critical remarks made by someone in the Federal government. The museum staff put together a fancy opening and ran the exhibit for about three months. While the BMA is free, for this exhibit they charged a fee for non-members and had timed tickets.

It was amazing! Her paintings are huge--some floor to ceiling. Delicate patterns were on clothing, and some had backgrounds created by dripping turpentine on the surface, creating circles. The Michelle Obama portrait was there. Washington's loss was Baltimore's gain!



The BMA gets a huge THUMBS UP! Make a point of dropping by sometime. It's free, except for special exhibits. And don't forget to take advantage of the lovely bookstore and elegant food at Gertrude's Chesapeake Kitchen! 🍷

Milestone Moments:

Congratulations to:

Sherrie Cohen, who celebrated a big milestone in May (the big 70)! She cannot wait to see what the next chapter brings. *"The end of this chapter has brought wonderful people I have met along the way and plenty of new outings for me to go to. I can only imagine what will be next."*

Shoshana & Avi Harris, on the graduations of their granddaughter, Katie Bravmann, from UC Irvine (Bachelor of Science) and grandson, Ethan Chelf, from the University of Indiana (Master of Business Administration).

Connie Sewing, on the June graduation of her granddaughter, Emily Holstein, Summa Cum Laude from the University of Oregon. Emily will be studying for her LSATs (law entrance exam) this summer as well as working on a research project. She has been offered an internship in the office of Senator Ron Wyden from Oregon starting January 2027.

continued on p.7

From **PARK CIRCLE** to **PIKESVILLE**
Celebrating Northwest Baltimore as a wonderful place to live, work, & play.



AUGUST 9th

**Reisterstown
Road Plaza**

6564 Reisterstown Road • Baltimore

2-7 pm

FREE ENTRY & ACTIVITIES!

LOCAL FOOD and CRAFTS FOR PURCHASE

Visit taste26.eventbrite.com to register to win a prize!
Kosher food & Spanish translation will be available at the event.

Live Music by
Soularites

Presented by:



For more info, email: lschugam@chaibaltimore.org



SCAN ME

Neighbors in the Know

Long-Term Care Insurance vs. Continuing Care at Home

By NNC Member, Anonymous

Seventeen years ago, my husband and I purchased long-term care insurance policies. It seemed to be a good idea at the time (we were in our mid-50s) as three out of four of our parents lived into their late 80s and early 90s. Of these three, only my mother-in-law had long-term care insurance, which helped pay for assisted living.

Naturally, our premiums have gone up over the years. This February, when we received our annual bills, of course with a higher premium, my husband balked at keeping the policies. He calculated how much we've spent so far. Assuming we might live into our mid-80s or longer, should we cash out the market value of the policies and reinvest that money plus future premium payments in stocks, bonds or mutual funds?

As we know, any insurance – car, homeowners, etc. – is a gamble, but his willingness to cancel these policies frightened me. I know what's involved with caregiving and don't know if I'd be able to handle the day-to-day challenge of providing the activities of daily living (ADLs) for my husband should he become sick and vice versa.

I happened to mention this dilemma to senior advocate Joyce Wolpert. She in turn mentioned a speaker, Mary Singer, whom she heard at the Myerberg Center. Ms. Singer works at Silver Lining Aging Solutions, which “offers personalized guidance for seniors and their loved ones, focusing on care coordination, housing transitions,

and long-term planning.” (<https://seniorcaremarket.com/about>)

I called Ms. Singer, who graciously talked to me at length free of charge. She asked about our financial situation, what relatives might be involved in our caregiving, our current living situation, etc. Based on our conversation she suggested we get in touch with a Maryland-based Continuing Care at Home (CCaH) program, a model established in the U.S. in 1990 to provide independent living at home to its members.

The purpose of this article is not to make any recommendations. I just want NNC members to know about another option to age in place, which we all want to do. This Maryland CCaH, a non-profit overseen by the Maryland Department of Aging, was established five years ago. To quote the brochure, “Our program offers a person-centered and proactive approach with services to keep members thriving at home. We can provide options to plan for your future long-term care expenses.” The mission “is to bring coordinated wellness and long-term care services to older adults in Maryland in their own home and communities.”

The eligibility requirements include age 60+, be a Maryland resident (membership is transferable to another state), pass medical qualifications (3 years of medical records, relatively healthy and independent, have well-managed chronic conditions, no dementia diagnosis or need of services right now), be able to meet the financial criteria and have medical insurance.

The CCaH offers 9 buy-in options. Eight have a one-time, five-digit buy-in based on your age at signing plus a monthly fee. The 9th plan is described below. Membership is lifetime and includes care



coordination, emergency response, home assessments, concierge driving services and a 24/7 nurse

hotline. The 9th and least expensive option, Care Coordinator Membership, has a one-time entrance fee of \$8,000. The monthly fee is \$248 for singles and \$238 for couples. *This plan excludes long-term care services.*

In-home care support includes personal care, household support (light housekeeping, laundry, meal planning and prep, errands, grocery shopping), health and safety support, companionship and emotional support. In-home care nursing support includes health related tasks, monitoring medical care, assessments and medical management. When asked how many “members” have signed on in Maryland, I was told 47! Not very many.

On the surface, a CCaH program looks wonderful. Pay the money and your every need will be taken care of. Then again, it appears only those with ample financial means can afford this. The brochure, of course, compares paying out-of-pocket for elder care services versus becoming a member, and explains how much money you will save in the long run.

Again, I am making no recommendations. However, if I was single and had the money, I would seriously consider membership. In the end, though, my husband and I paid the long-term care policy premiums, so we are covered for another year.

If you'd like more information, contact Annie in the NNC office, 410-500-5334. She will pass on your name and phone number to me.

Medicare Plans: Know Your Health Needs Before You Join a Plan

By Rosalind Griffin, LCSW-C, NNC Member

Know before you decide on a Medicare health plan is a suggestion I wish I had offered to a recently hospitalized family member. Her difficulties might have been preventable.

My family member followed the advice of a retired coworker when the health plan enrollment packet arrived from her former employer. She chose a plan without fully considering the complexity of her health needs. Instead, she focused on the lower premiums, deductibles and copayments, as well as other selling points, such as keeping her current providers in network and having no prior denials for prescribed services.

As a result, she did not expect the plan to deny coverage for a community-based residential rehabilitation facility. Although she filed appeals, the appeals were denied by the insurer because her Medicare Advantage program did not include this service. Our family believed she had traditional Medicare. The experience took a serious toll on her self-esteem. Now, her only option is to keep the plan for now and make a change during open enrollment.

Like my relative, readers may think all Medicare plans are the same. As such, you might be swayed by the health insurance television advertisements during the fall that offer a lower price and their many inducements to change your coverage. Take another look.

Briefly, I will outline the basics of Medicare to consider along with seeking consultation at senior centers, AARP publications and the Maryland Department of Aging.

Medicare is comprised of four parts: A, B, C and D. Original Medicare is composed of parts A and B and is available at age 65. An exception to age 65 is those who qualify based on disability criteria.

Part A is granted automatically to most individuals who have contributed through payroll deductions over at least 10 years of work. Those lacking 10-year contributions may purchase the coverage. Part A pays for inpatient hospitalization, hospice and associated home care and limited rehabilitation services. Medicare does not pay for ongoing nursing home care, which is regarded as a program deficiency. For those who can afford the premiums, long-term care insurance is an option to provide assisted living, nursing home care and in-home independent living services.

Medicare Part B requires a monthly premium for outpatient services. These include physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers and rehabilitation therapists as well as medical equipment such as wheelchairs and oxygen concentrators. Excluded from Part B are hearing aids, eyeglasses (except following cataract surgery) and dental services. The monthly premium is deducted from one's monthly Social Security benefit, but beneficiaries may elect to make the payments separately. The premiums do not include copayments and deductibles, and most beneficiaries purchase supplementary insurance to defray those costs. If low-income Medical Assistance income standards are met, Medical Assistance becomes a resource to cover these costs.

Medicare Part C is better known as Medicare Advantage. Private insurers contract with Medicare to manage both inpatient and outpatient medical services with funds awarded, believing the providers will offer high quality services that will reduce the occurrence of

preventable illnesses. Optional dental, transportation, food and eyeglass services--absent from original Medicare--attract beneficiaries to participate in Medical Advantage plans. Finally, often there are no premiums, copayments or deductibles.

Judicious assessment of the complexity of one's health condition when signing up for a Medicare Advantage plan requires determining the adequacy of the provider network and facilities, prior authorization and approval requirements for specialists and appeals processes. The questions to be asked are: (1) how much freedom of choice do you want to have and (2) whether this is the most affordable plan to select. If Medicare Advantage does not work for you, you can change.

Medicare Part D is the drug program that caps out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs. The 2026 cap is \$2,100. However, some prescribed drugs are excluded by both Medicare and private insurance. For example, Medicare just began covering certain weight loss medications after accepting their efficacy to control diabetes.

Also, there are instances where drugs become over-the-counter medicines, resulting in consumers bearing the cost. For example, I have an eye allergy that requires use of a preferred drug no longer covered by my new drug plan. The cost for this medication would be \$1,300. Therefore, I am waiting to reach the out-of-pocket cap to resume using it. In the meantime, I use an over-the-counter substitute.

In summary, Medicare is one of the most beneficial health programs for those over 65 and disabled persons who qualify. A form of universal health care is a wise plan for our citizens. Health debt results in bankruptcies that could be avoided

continued on p.6

if we had universal health care. For those of us who qualify, knowing the specifics of what Medicare provides will give us freedom of choice. A valuable resource is the United States Health and Human Services web site (<https://www.hhs.gov/>)

Driver's Safety Resources for Older Adults

In April, the Myerberg hosted an Older Adult Driver Safety class given by two Shock Trauma nurses. Following their presentation, many attendees mentioned that they were interested in driving assessments for older adults. Here is what is available in the metro area.

Car Fit Program (Free!): The AARP Car Fit program, offered in partnership with occupational therapists, provides a quick and

helpful check of how you “fit” in your vehicle. While you remain parked, trained professionals assess your seat position, steering wheel distance, mirrors and seatbelt use to improve comfort and safety. Appointments can be scheduled online, with locations available throughout Maryland, including Catonsville and Randallstown.

Comprehensive Driver Evaluation: University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center offers a Safe Driver Evaluation on Tuesdays for \$250. Conducted by an occupational therapist, this in-office assessment measures cognitive skills, reaction time and sensory abilities. A detailed report is shared with both you and your physician.

Behind-the-Wheel Driving Assessment: For those interested in evaluating actual driving performance, both the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical



Center and Sinai Hospital of Baltimore can refer you to Branch Driving School. Driving evaluation: \$400

Combined occupational therapy + driving evaluation: \$575.

While these services may involve out-of-pocket costs, they can provide valuable insights—and peace of mind—when it comes to staying safe on the road.

Thank you to Joyce Wolpert for providing this information. 🍀

We Remember

In Memory of Messody Benhamou, March 3, 1932 to April 23, 2026

By Shoshana Harris, NNC Member

For several years, Sharie Blum and I facilitated monthly NNC programs at Weinberg Woods. Unfortunately, attendance diminished to the point where we decided to put the meetings on hold. I was sorry to do so, as I met many of the residents and always enjoyed their company.

Fast forward several months. Due to a challenging illness, my husband was moved to a local nursing home. After settling in, he started going to some of the activities. One day, I was surprised and

delighted to recognize someone who had previously lived at Weinberg Woods and regularly attended NNC programs: Messody Benhamou. When she saw me, she immediately opened her arms, and I went over to her and bent down to hug her in her wheelchair. As she had always done before, she kissed me on both cheeks and said how happy she was to see me. The feeling was mutual.

Since her daughter visited every day, we also became friends, and I always looked forward to chatting with her as well as her mom.

This past Pesach (Passover), I attended the nursing home's first night seder. I was very happy when Messody was wheeled into the social hall and placed next to me. Having my husband to my left and Messody on my right (with our arms linked) felt very comforting,

especially since our Passover celebration had to take place in a nursing home.

Sadly, Messody passed away on April 23. Although I miss her presence, I am grateful for the time we had together and will remember the warm greeting I always received every time we met.

One Park Heights Update: Remembering Sister Yeshiyah Israel

By Shoshana Harris, NNC Member

The One Park Heights column has showcased many wonderful Park Heights events, and you have heard about the multitude of people who collaborated and endeavor

TIPS & TRICKS: ROKU

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

Remember when television was free? Yes, we only had three channels, (with the addition later on of PBS and maybe one UHF station), but somehow, we always managed to find something to watch. Then came cable TV, and free TV became a thing of the past.

There are ways to cut down the cost of what we pay for TV. One of them is Roku, a streaming device that connects to one's smart television. The one-time cost of a Roku device ranges from \$25-\$100. But unlike cable, there is no monthly fee. When connected through your internet, television is free once again. In other words, Roku allows you to "cut the cord." Remember: you must keep your internet provider for Roku to work.

What can you watch on Roku? The channel has hundreds of free options. Plus, for free you can also get Pluto TV and Tubi. Be aware, however, that Roku, Pluto TV and Tubi have ads. One can access local news, old TV shows, movies, game shows and some live channels with these three streaming services. Roku owners can also add paid,

on-demand streaming, such as Netflix, Disney+ and Hulu. These are optional.

The important difference between cable and Roku is that cable bundles all its channels, for which you pay a premium, whether or not you watch them. With Roku, once you buy the device and install it, you have many free channels to pick from. And you can still watch, for a fee, other streaming services, like the three mentioned above.

Is Roku hard to set up? Most people find it easier than cable. The basic steps are:

- Plug Roku into your TV (HDMI cable)
- Connect to your Wi-Fi
- Create a Roku account
- Add apps like Netflix or free channels

The setup usually takes 10–20 minutes. NNC members can call the office and request help from one of our tech volunteers, if necessary.

For over 20 years, an NNC member had a Comcast bundle that included internet, a landline phone

and cable TV. The prices got to an uncomfortable level. In 2013, she paid \$125/month, and by 2023, the monthly fee doubled! A neighbor used Roku and suggested it to her. (The neighbor helped her set it up.)

Roku meets her needs. She gets the basic channels—ABC, NBC, CBS, plus an assortment of channels she rarely watches (but she's not paying for them!). She does however miss CNN. Her add-on streaming services are Netflix and Amazon Prime TV. Their cheapest plans start at \$8.99/month and include ads. Her Comcast bill, which includes internet and her landline, which she's not willing to give up, is now closer to \$125. And she pays \$18/month (plus tax) for the two streaming services. She pays approximately \$140/month (internet and phone) versus \$250/month. Cutting the cable cord has been very cost effective for her.

Learn more about Roku at <https://therokuchannel.roku.com/>. 🐼



Staying Connected is a group effort supported by Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI) but produced by the community. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of CHAI, The Associated and/or their respective staff or any other contributor.

Milestone Moments:

Betty Cherniak, who celebrated her 80th birthday (her Infinity Birthday ∞ !) on May 3.

Betty & Jay Cherniak, on the graduation of their grandson, Leivy Caplan, from Southern California Yeshiva High (SCY High) on June 3, and the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter, Aliza Caplan, in San Diego on June 7.

Shoshana Aaronson, on the birth of a granddaughter in Israel, Ma'ayan Emunah.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

A senior health update published in November 2025 & summarized by Staying Connected staff.
The full article can be found on the listed website.)

Hidden Heart Danger of Insufficient Sleep

By Heidi Godman,
www.health.harvard.edu, 11/1/2025

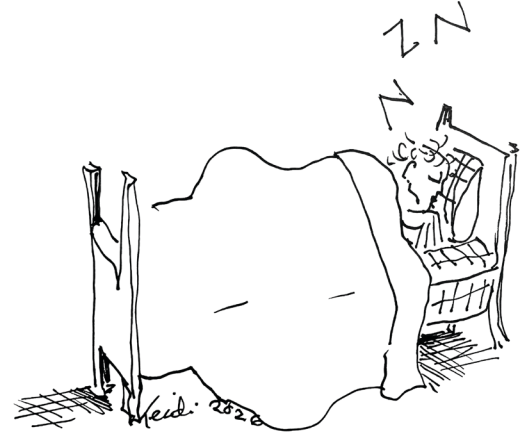
The optimum amount of sleep we should be getting is 7 to 9 hours. If you get less than 6, you can be jeopardizing your health (high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, obesity and diabetes).

Why does lack of sleep hurt the heart? Insufficient sleep does not directly affect one's heart and vascular function. But it triggers a long list of physiological and hormonal changes, such as increase in blood pressure, blood sugar and inflammation. These hormonal

changes contribute to cardiac issues and problems.

What to do? Change your sleep habits. This includes creating a healthy sleeping environment, turning off electronic devices 30-45 minutes before bedtime, avoiding late night exercise, skipping alcohol consumption before bedtime and cutting down on caffeine.

If sleep problems persist, it may be wise to consult a behavioral sleep specialist. Providers can be found at www.behavioralsleep.org (Society for Behavioral Sleep Medicine.) 🗨️



AGENCY FRIENDS

News from the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA)– from March 2026

<https://aging.maryland.gov/>

Maryland Access Point (MAP) Link Provides Warm Handoff

Whether you are an older adult seeking independence or a care-giver looking for relief, MAP is your primary gateway to essential services. Through MAP Link, you can access professional options counseling, specialized caregiver training, and vital community resources for aging in place.

The biggest hurdle is often the "calling loop," or the frustration of repeating personal information

and health history to multiple agencies. To solve this, MDOA has modernized the MAP system with a new "warm handoff" referral process. Now, when you call the MAP Link line, the staff at 211 and the Life Crisis Center will gather your information and send it directly to your local MAP office. A MAP representative will call you back within 48 hours with the specific resources you need, ensuring a seamless connection to support.

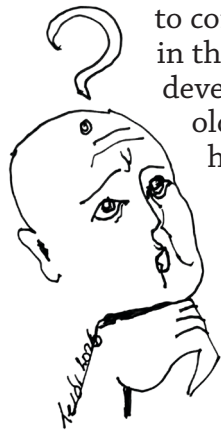


Access support today by calling
1-844-627-5465 or visiting
marylandaccesspoint.info. 🗨️

What do you think?

By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member

Dr. Leana Wen, former Baltimore City Health Commissioner and Washington Post columnist, recently wrote about Abi, an AI-powered, socially intelligent humanoid robot designed



to combat loneliness in the elderly. Abi was developed by 25-year-old Grace Brown, head of Andromeda Robotics. The robot is 4-foot-tall and designed to act as a "companion." It is personable and engaging, with a very "sassy" personality inspired by characters from Disney and Pixar, according to its creator.

Abi can sing, play games, dance and converse in up to 90 languages. She can recognize residents and remember their personal stories. A future version might include safety features, such as fall detection and alerting staff to health risks.

Abi's current uses can be divided into two categories: (1) group activities, such as tai chi, games and music-based activities; and (2)

one-on-one interactions with residents, an application potentially more impactful and more controversial.

Abi's memory is personalized to each person she interacts with. For example, you tell Abi on Monday that you have a doctor's appointment on Wednesday. On Thursday, when she visits again, she will ask "How was your doctor's visit?"

The reaction to Dr. Wen's column was mixed. Here are some of the comments she received:

"I hate this!" wrote one reader. *"I'm 84, still independent and active. This whole idea sets off all sorts of alarm bells. I don't see this project as a move toward life-enhancing, humanistic values."*

"It's a very sad day when robots take the place of a live human being," wrote another reader. A third one agreed, adding that she found robots and other tech-related devices for seniors as ignorant and offensive.

Others pointed out the limitations of the companion robots. *"Can Abi administer medications?"* asked one.

"Bathe a patient? Lift a patient out of bed and transfer to a wheelchair? Change an adult diaper, then clean the patient? No. So, what good is she? The cost of a robot could cover the salary of a human aide."

However, many readers liked the idea of Abi. *"I love this!"* said Mary.* *"I can talk the tail off a donkey! I think the robot and I will be great friends. ... I'm in my 70s. Still pretty fit with lots of friends and community. However, the numbers are depleting. Great to know there may be a backup plan!"*

"I think [Abi] would be perfect for me living alone as an 83-year-old," wrote Bob.* *"She will improve to the point where she can just keep an eye on me and watch for changes in behavior, falls, etc. I have already been in touch with the company and am on the waitlist."*

What do you think? Send your comments to ebcreeger@gmail.com to be printed in a future "Staying Connected" issue. 🗨️ *Name changed

Read Dr. Wen's original article can be found at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2026/04/09/ai-robot-senior-care-abi/>

We Remember continued from p.6

ored to make the events a success. But there is one person who consistently and singlehandedly stood out to bring people together in so many ways: Sister Yeshiyah Israel. Sadly, and shockingly, Sister Israel passed away at the age of 65 on April 30, 2026, after a short illness.

I attended her Celebration of Life service at the New Solid Rock Fellowship Church on Monday, May 11. The church was packed with people from all over Baltimore mourning her passing. The

emotional eulogies were given by so many who knew her as a community leader, advocate, entrepreneur and visionary. It is impossible to list the many projects spearheaded by Sister Israel, but I wanted to name a few that were particularly impactful to Central Park Heights.

In her commitment to community initiatives, she was instrumental in securing a grant to hire and engage the city's youth in meaningful beautification projects, such as painting the murals you see

on Park Heights near the Pimlico Racetrack and the beautiful Black-Eyed Susan bench in front of the 7 Eleven. She also organized many neighborhood cleanups.

As president of the Pimlico Merchants Association, Sister Israel worked tirelessly to reach out to anyone in need. For instance, she organized an annual turkey and food giveaway at Thanksgiving. Likewise at Christmas, she

continued on p.14

BIRTHDAY greetings to these members of our family!

July

- 5 Yvonne Archer
- 8 Toba Falk
- 13 Bonnie Cohen
- 14 Dolores Purzitsky
- 15 Jeffrey Marks
- Elaine Rowland
- 24 Rae Guttman
- 29 Joan Babiker
- 30 Murray Green

August

- 2 Gary Schoenemann
- 11 Vivien Tenenbaum
- Marcia Eisenstein
- 18 Ellen Shevitz
- 23 Deborah Mondell
- 31 Vivian Wiggins

September

- 1 Cora Bigger
- 4 Irma Prestfelder
- 8 Joyce Wolpert
- 14 Judy Gerb
- 20 Sharie Blum
- Barbara Carter

WELCOME NEW NNC MEMBERS

Homa Fakheri
Stella Gold
Theresa Himbrick
Denise Mitchell
Eleanor Opal
Miriam Rabinowitz

NNC Membership

NNC DUES: NNC dues are \$12/month. Membership entitles you to many free in-person classes and events, as well as access to our volunteer services.

For more information, please call Anne Shimanovich, 410-500-5334, ashimanovich@chaibaltimore.org.

WARM HOUSE

Warm House meets weekly at the Jewish Community Center Park Heights or Shomrei Emunah Congregation on Greenspring Ave. For more information, call Malka Zweig at 347-571-5587.

COME AND MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Cross Country Cheswolde:
Presidents: Alan Goldfeder/Caren Cutler
Meets 7:30 p.m., 1st Wed. of month
Email: cccalt1@gmail.com

Fallstaff: Joshua Richardson
Meets 6 p.m., 1st Thurs. of month
Myfallstaff@gmail.com

Glen: Betty Cherniak, President
cherniakb@gmail.com, meets 4th Wed. of the month; myglen.org

Mount Washington:
president@mwia.org; Meets 7 p.m., 2nd Tues. of month; www.mwia.org or on Facebook @mwiasassociation

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Rock Steady Boxing
Mon. & Wed., 1:15-2:15 p.m.
Free if diagnosed with Parkinson's.
Myerberg Center, 3101 Fallstaff Rd
Contact Ilysa Cohen, 443-963-1455

When Your Loved One has Parkinsons

3rd Tues. of the month, 10 a.m.
Contact Beth Hecht, 410-843-7456

Living with Parkinsons

2nd Tues. of the month, 2 p.m.
Contact Michelle Goldberg, 410-843-7355

Living with Low Vision

2nd Thurs. of the month, 1:30 p.m.
Contact Rozi Rice, 410-843-7325

When Your Loved One has Dementia

1st and 3rd Mon. of the month, 10 a.m.
Contact Alison Lynch, 410-843-7514

JCS Memory Café (for individuals with memory changes and their care partners)

3rd Tues. of the month, 2-3 p.m.
RSVP at jcsbalt.org/memory-café or Amy Steinberg at 410-843-7457

SPECIAL DAYS

July 2 – Fast of 17th of Tammuz
July 4 – Independence Day
July 22 – Erev Tisha B'Av
July 23 – Tisha B'Av
July 29 – Tu B'Av
September 7 – Labor Day
September 11 – Erev Rosh Hashanah
September 12-13 – Rosh Hashanah
September 13 – Grandparents' Day
September 19 – Shabbat Shuva
September 20 – Kol Nidre
September 21- Yom Kippur
September 22 – Fall begins
September 25 – Erev Sukkot
September 26-27 – Sukkot
September 28-October 1 – Intermediate Days Sukkot
October 2 – Hoshana Raba
October 3 – Shemini Atzeret
October 4 – Simchat Torah
October 12 – Indigenous Peoples' Day

Who's Who?

Liz Simon-Higgs

By Anne Shimanovich, Aging in Community, Program Director

I recently had the great pleasure of interviewing Liz Simon-Higgs, Director of Community Development at CHAI. Our offices are right next door to each other, and we see one another almost every day. I already know many great things about Liz, such as she's always smiling, always ready to help and in general wonderful. But through our talk I got to hear even more about her, and I'm happy to share what I learned!

Liz grew up in Sudbury, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. Her family was close knit, with an older brother and sister. She recalls having a happy childhood, with frequent visits to relatives in New York and New Jersey. She went to private schools and was a good student and remembers playing board games with her siblings. Her dad was an attorney, and her mom was a Phys. Ed. Teacher. The family enjoyed outdoors activities, including hikes. Liz was so close with her siblings that she moved her family from Texas to Baltimore to be closer to her sister who had relocated here.

Liz shared an interesting family tidbit. Her grandfather was born in Germany. At the young age of 15, her great-grandfather sent her grandfather to England to escape Germany's rising antisemitism. This was the last time her grandfather would see his father, as her great-grandfather was taken to Dachau during Kristallnacht in 1938 and killed a month later. Her grandfather's life was saved by her great-grandfather's foresight in

sending his son to England. Liz's grandfather then, on his own, sailed to Ellis Island and lived in Newark, NJ. That's how the family came to be on the East Coast.

Liz attended Washington University, intending to study chemical engineering, as she loves chemistry. But she decided she didn't want to work for an oil company and instead studied environmental science. In 2001, she spent a semester abroad in Granada, Spain, and was there during the 9/11 attacks. Liz says that it was interesting to observe how the reporting of the news was different there than here. At first the news was sympathetic toward America, but after the U.S. invaded Iraq, it was less so. Thankfully, her host family was friendly, and Liz became proficient in Spanish while living there.

After college, Liz found work in air quality monitoring in California. From there she moved to Waco, Texas, to do airborne air quality work. It was in Waco where she met her husband, a pilot. They moved to Baltimore soon after, and Liz spent 5 years working as a teacher for Teach for America.

Liz and her husband have two children, one of whom is on the autism spectrum. This is where Liz began thinking about community engagement. Navigating the educational system to get her son the services he needed was difficult. She realized principals and staff mean well but are overworked and work within a confusing and tangled bureaucracy. Eventually, her son received the required services, and he is doing well. However, not everyone is so lucky. Liz began focusing on her desire to help others within her community

and shared a quote by Frederick Douglass that is meaningful to her: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Through Liz's



Liz Simon-Higgs

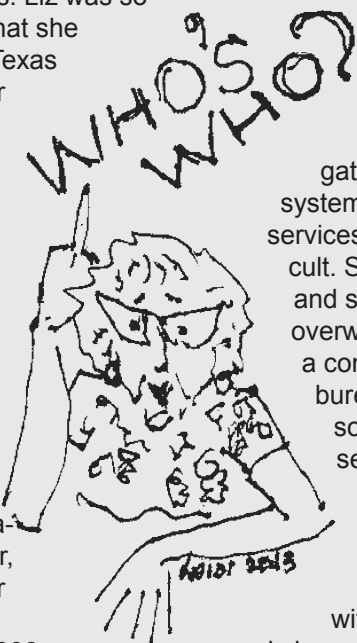
community work, she realized that just as she wants people to see her son's strength and not his limitations, we should all focus on one another's strengths.

Liz moved on to work for Baltimore City's Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board for 12 years. She saw homeowners on the verge of losing their homes and observed other systemic community problems and hoped to find a way to help.

A friend then, fortuitously, mentioned an open position at CHAI's community development department. Luckily for us, Liz began working here at CHAI 8 months ago. She felt ready to put her skills to work for a cause she believes in. She loves working with community leaders and finding ways to strengthen and support them in their work. Liz specifically mentions the enjoyment she finds in working with the five community association presidents and One Park Heights.

Liz points out that just as One Park Heights is all about community building, so is NNC. We have built a diverse community in Northwest Baltimore where our members are committed to helping and supporting one another as we age.

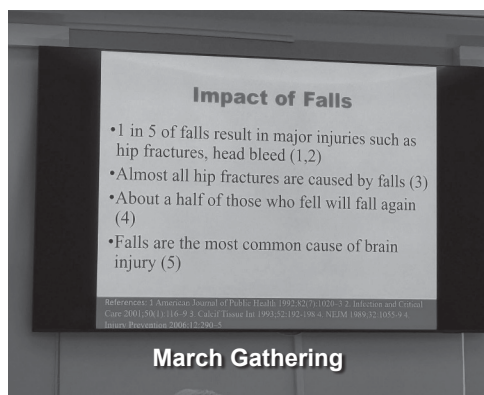
Liz closed with stating that "at a time when the world is seemingly closing their borders, we are broadening ours." 🍷



What's New with NNC

Village Gathering

Dr. Levan Atanelov from Steady Strides made a return visit to NNC at our March Gathering. Dr. Atanelov is a fall-prevention doctor, and the primary focus of his practice is comprehensive medial fall prevention. He presented the latest studies regarding falls and balance issues. For example, studies show falls are the leading cause of injury in older adults. One out of four older adults report falling every year. About half of those who fall will fall again. We all walked out standing a little taller and steadier. *By Miriam Rittberg, NNC Member*



Our April Gathering invited the community to an International Holocaust Remembrance Day presentation by Linda Ambrus Broenniman, author of *The Pulitzer Saga*. Linda shared the fascinating, captivating and engrossing story of her parents: her father, Julian,



a Hungarian Jewish Holocaust survivor, and her Catholic mother, Clara, honored as a Righteous Gentile for risking her life to hide and save Jews in Hungary—including Linda's father and grandmother. Linda and her siblings were raised Catholic and only learned of their Jewish heritage many years later. Jessica Fink, Director of the Jewish Library of Baltimore, was the moderator for this program. *By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member*

On a sunny Tuesday in May, we were informed and entertained by two of our favorite meteorologists from ABC: Dylan Robichand and Abigail Digler. They explained a meteorologist's need to be well versed in science and communication to provide viewers with forecasts, maps and graphics and then be able to deliver a conversational version of weather for us. They were well informed in their subject, animated and clearly had a passion for this field. They spent a portion of the program explaining the difference between weather and climate. Weather is *mood* (happening now) and climate is *personality* (the big patterns). They don't use a script during their forecast segments on the local news and are more accurate than not. The Gathering was well attended and sparked questions and interest. *By Miriam Rittberg, NNC Member*

The June meeting was our fun gathering of friends, old and new, joining together in singing old favorites in karaoke. We began by sharing good news. We then acknowledged Sharie Blum who earlier received the annual Myerberg Center award for "Volunteer of the Year." Then it was music, dancing and schmoozing among friends. A great way to end our successful year of NNC. *By Miriam Rittberg, NNC Member*

Art Class

March: On March 3rd our crafty crafters got together to reverse decoupage. What is that, you ask? You'll have to wait 'til we do it again. First, we cut out pictures from magazines. The pictures were laid out on glass and glued together. Then, we painted the surrounding empty space. The end results were magical. *By Lynn Jacobson, NNC Member*



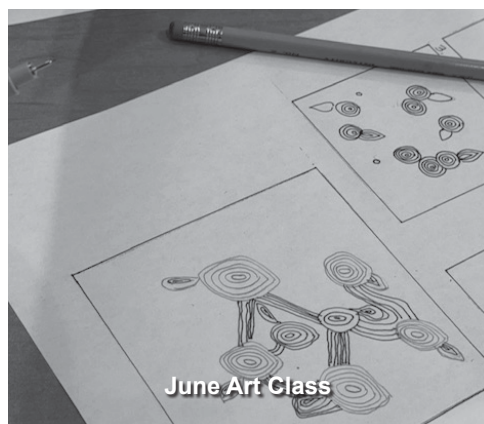
May: You know how folks say to parents not to have a favorite child? Teachers are taught the same thing. Well, I have favorite lessons, and now in my capacity of teaching my fellow seniors, I get to share them! This month's lesson was on mixing colors!

Miriam and I placed small squeezes of red, yellow and blue on everyone's palette. On a piece of creased watercolor paper, we worked together to create our own color wheels. We worked first with the primary colors, followed by the secondary ones. We learned about analogous and complementary colors. Then, giving everyone dabs of white and black, our group learned about tints and shades. Those who had time created something on the clean area of their paper using what they had learned.

As usual, we talked amongst ourselves and helped each other.

Two NNC members joined us for the first time. They made significant contributions. Since we were using acrylic paint, which dries quickly, our work was easy to take home. Thank you to Sherrie and Patria who volunteered to help with cleanup. The lovely comments made by our participants made this teacher proud! *By Heidi Schloss, NNC Member*

June: Zentangles were on the agenda for June's art class. What are zentangles? They consist of different designs and patterns (i.e., tangles) that are supposed to be relaxing and calming (i.e., zen). NNC member Miriam Rittberg led our group through many different designs. We were able to use pencil, fine-point black pens and/or colored pencils when drawing. We all had fun chatting, snacking and of course doodling to our hearts content. *By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member*

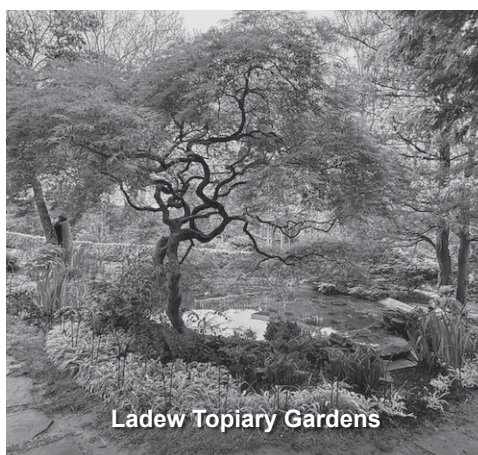


NNC Trips

March: Arundel Mills

Our March trip to Arundel Mills was a success. Many of us have heard of the Mall of America, but Arundel Mills can sure give them a run for their money!

The mall is divided into neighborhoods. For example, restaurants were in the food court. Kiosks were located in the middle of the walkways. Well-known stores sold clothes and home goods. One store fixed my phone cover. I also got



some links taken out of my medical alert bracelet and got my ears pierced!

A section of the mall that sold candy and toys reminded me of Santa Monica. But by far, our favorite store was the Lindt chocolate store. The seller didn't have to ask us twice if we wanted a sample! I didn't know chocolate came in so many flavors.

Some of us decided to meet for lunch at the Cheesecake Factory. The food was delicious and the server a delight. The funny thing was that nobody ordered cheesecake! *By Heidi Schloss, NNC Member*

April: Ladew Topiary

When we arrived at Ladew Topiary Gardens, and those grey clouds started squeezing out rain drops, I thought, "Oh no!" Some of us had been there before but I felt bad for our "newbies."

We separated into groups. One group toured the mansion that had been the Ladew family home. Others went to the gift shop and then to the café for lunch. The café is in the former stable; it is painted white and uses the former stalls as dining rooms! Some of the doors have the names of horses on brass plates. As we were finishing up, NNC folks who had been on the house tour came in.

Finally, the rain stopped. I took my group to a favorite section—the flower gardens. Many flowers were

still blooming, and the colors were beautiful. Some of us used phone apps to identify the flowers.

We also noticed some unusual sculptures in a field. Nancy took pictures of them while the rest of our group headed for the Iris (what I call the Japanese garden). Walking under a squared arch, we saw a stream with huge koi. Up some stone steps and on the left was a topiary Buddha! We crossed a Japanese bridge and saw a topiary pagoda. It was so peaceful.

Ladew is known for its topiary, bushes and hedges trimmed to create sculptures of people and animals.

We then climbed a grassy hill, following a stream that flowed in the opposite direction. Through one of the many arched hedge openings (the tops of which were crenellated like castle walls), we reached what is known as the bowl. A pond was in the center and had a single stream of water plummeting upwards.

We then toured a tiny tea house and many themed small gardens. They included occasional sculptures



continued on p.14

and clusters of topiary. Finally, we reached The Hunt, a fox hunt all in topiary! An amazing site.

It was time to go back to the bus and go home. Everyone who counted steps that day got plenty of exercise! What also made the trip special was Miriam Rabinowitz, a new NNC member who had joined the day before! This was her first activity, and she mentioned how friendly and inclusive everyone was.

Ladew is well kept and it is a pleasure to go there any time of year!
By Heidi Schloss, NNC Member

Diversity Dialogue

In March we continued sharing insights prompted by our having individually watched the PBS series “Black and Jewish in America: An Interwoven History.” Hosted and written by Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., the four-segment series, which began in February, concluded in March.

Our April gathering focused on how the holy days of Passover and Easter impacted us. Members shared how we had spent our respective holidays. Then, Reverend Howard facilitated discussion of the question “How does your religious faith or connection to a faith community help you navigate life during these difficult times?” We also generated ideas for future dialogue topics.

In May we addressed aspects of our work lives by reflecting on these questions:

- What was your most impactful workplace experience? (Consider race, ethnicity, gender and class.)
- When and where did it occur?
- What was your role?
- What were the positive and negative aspects of the experience?
- How was your career journey affected by that experience?

Thank you to Roz Griffin for facilitating a robust conversation.

Traditionally, our social gatherings are held in December and June. Since many of us have been meeting together for more than 10 years, these gatherings provide special camaraderie. For the second time, Rachael Glick generously offered her porch for a mid-afternoon potluck sharing of culinary delectables. At this writing, we plan to surprise Yvonne Archer, whose 90th birthday is July 5, with an early birthday celebration.

Choosing topics for the fall was also on the agenda on Rachael’s porch. Previously, Shoshana Harris suggested we all read “The Color of Water” by James McBride over the summer. The novel has elements of McBride’s mixed Black and Jewish heritages. Diversity Dialogue members have not previously had a book discussion, and there was enthusiastic consensus for Shoshana’s idea. *By Susan Russell, NNC Member and DD Co-Chair*

Yoga & CHAIway

NNC still offers yoga twice per month at NNC (class dates are on the NNC calendar). In addition, our volunteer drivers are doing a great job. Remember: NNC members can schedule a ride by calling 410-500-5303. *By Jeffrey Arenberg, CHAIway Program Manager*

Book Club

Our dedicated readers continue to meet monthly. We enjoy being with each other and discussing what we have read. We usually take a “summer vacation,” but decided to meet in July and August. Our designated meeting date and time is the last Wednesday of the month, 1:30 p.m., at the home of one of our members. For more information, email me at ebcreeger@gmail.com.
By Eileen B. Creeger, NNC Member 🍷

We Remember continued from p.9

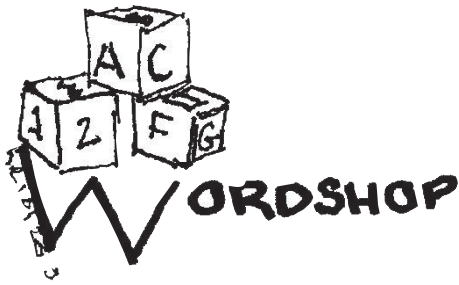
arranged a community toy drive.

In addition to her leadership and advocacy, Sister Israel was a prominent businesswoman. She owned and operated YBI African Apparel and Fashions, located at 5115 Park Heights Avenue, where she celebrated culture, identity and heritage through fashion. Her fashion shows were always a highlight at the annual Taste of Northwest event.

At the time of her passing, Sister Israel was actively working on the development of the Pimlico Market Café, a visionary project to bring a new, community-centered market to Park Heights. The hope is that plans for the café will be carried out and brought to fruition as part of the legacy she leaves behind.

Sister Yeshiyah Israel was truly an *Eshet Chayil*, a woman of valor. As so eloquently affirmed by her family, she will be remembered “for her unwavering dedication, her leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, and her deep love for her community. Her impact will continue to be felt through the lives she touched, the opportunities she created, and the vision she carried forward with strength and grace.” May her memory be for a blessing. 🍷





Wordshop is your chance to share your creativity and inner thoughts with the community. Send your poems, jokes and stories to Northwest Neighbors Connecting, care of Eileen Creeger at ecreeger@chaibaltimore.org or 5809 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215.

Rolled Date Cookies

Servings: 4 rolls – about 50 cookies

Ingredients:

For the dough:

- 3½ cups flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tsp powder
- 1 stick + 6 T butter, softened
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg yolk

For the filling:

- About 1 package date spread (available at 7 Mile Market)
- About 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Powdered sugar for dusting

Mix together the dry ingredients in a medium bowl. Then mix the wet ingredients in a larger bowl. Add the dry ingredients to the wet. Knead to form a soft dough (add more flour if sticky; more orange juice if dry).

Divide into four balls. Roll out each ball into a thin rectangle shape. Spread date mixture on each rectangle, making sure to NOT put it on the edges. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Roll up the dough starting on the long edge, slowly, a little bit at a time.

Place rolled log on cookie sheet. Using a knife, cut into the roll about ¾ down, ½ inch apart. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with powdered sugar when out of the oven and cut into individual cookies.



Northwest Neighbors Connecting
c/o CHAI
5809 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215



Newsletter Committee

Eileen Creeger
Sylvia Eisenberg
Shoshana Harris
Sheila Mentz
Heidi Schloss
Joyce Wolpert

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #1262
BALTIMORE, MD

CHAI is an agency of The Associated



Help *Staying Connected* be environmentally friendly.

Read us online at www.nnc.express.com. Click on "Staying Connected."



ISSUE 58 | SUMMER 2026

NNC ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

**At Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI)
5809 Park Heights Ave.**

Build your own ice cream sundae and learn more about NNC and
the Village Movement.

What would you like to see from NNC?

How would you like to participate in NNC?

Remember: NNC IS YOUR VILLAGE!

