
❖ Home Care Network News ❖

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Winter 2008

Pets are wonderful companions. For some seniors, they can take away depression and isolation. Pets can easily start a conversation, that can lead to socialization with others. I love animals. I have 2 dogs, 4 cats, and 6 tortoises. In the past my animals have also included sheep, lambs, chickens, a baby wild boar pig (who is about 350 pounds now), a rabbit and guinea pig. Animals and pets do take time but they give so much in return.
Sally Ryan

Puppy Love

Her name is Abby. She wears jewels around her neck, has an energetic personality, and loves to socialize with people. Abby is short in stature, but that doesn't stop her from getting around, not only her home but also outdoors.

Abby, less than 6 months old came to live with 82 year old Mary who had previously lived alone. Mary now lives in assisted living. Before Abby arrived Mary rarely left her apartment except for meals and to the beauty salon. While opportunities and activities were all available to her, she seemed apprehensive, secluded, depressed and lonely. Mary wasn't very active and had some minor mobility problems. She didn't know how to develop social relationships with other residents. Life was challenging. Her world was getting smaller. Then Abby came to live with her.

In just 1 month with Abby, Mary's life changed dramatically. She left her cocoon of isolation to become a beautiful social butterfly. Abby brought out the best in Mary. She was now in high spirits. She was laughing and giggling over the antics of her puppy. Abby started conversations between Mary and her fellow residents.

Abby has become a medium for Mary to once again enjoy life. Mary is active again,

often seen in pink sweats white sneakers, holding onto a long leash. At the end of the leash is Abby, with her energetic personality.

Together, the once lonely Mary and the charming Abby comprise a team of socialites who walk outdoor trails, visit with other residents in the assisted living community, and are always hand in paw.

Pets accept their elder owners as they are. They are devoted, forgiving, and loving. They don't hold grudges, bring up the past, or stop interacting with their owners because of a difference of opinion.

Research has proven that touch is very important to the well being of humans. We all need to be hugged, and be able to hug in return. A cat curled up on a lap or the friendly touch of a dog's nose will help the elderly feel safe and secure and give them a sense of reassurance and satisfaction. Stroking a beloved pet can lower blood pressure and lift depression.

By caring for a pet's needs, such as feeding, grooming and walking, animals give seniors the incentive to maintain their own hygiene. Pets give the elderly a sense of independence, boosts self-esteem and motivates them to perform daily tasks that may be ignored such as bathing, eating and getting out of their home.

Pets also give the elderly a sense of security. Dogs alert them when someone comes to the door. (My dogs will alert me but they just



want a cookie from the visitor). Dogs can also alert seniors who are hard of hearing to a ringing telephone or door bell.

Pets live for the moment. They cope with life's ups and downs and then forget about them. Pets help the elderly to keep focused on the present and keeps them in touch with the small pleasures of life. Animals take time to stop and smell the roses everyday. Seniors who have a companion pet tend to do the same. The innocence and trust of a companion pet help seniors to be less cynical toward life and to overcome feelings of isolation and rejection.

Disadvantages of Companion Pets

Pet ownership is not for all seniors. Before a senior adopts a pet into their life, it is important to look at every aspect of how the animal will impact their life

- **Costs.** Many seniors live on a limited income. It may be hard for them to incorporate food, grooming, and vet bills into a budget.
- **Limited Mobility.** Will you be able to walk a dog 2-3 times a day? Can you change the litter box daily?
- **The Pet's Future.** Seniors consider companion pets as family members. If a pet dies, the senior can be overcome with grief in the same way they would be if it was a human companion.

Be Sure

If you are a senior who is contemplating a pet, take into consideration how it will affect your life. Will you be able to properly care for the animal financially and physically? Be honest and evaluate the pros and cons carefully. Never adopt a pet because a family member or friend encourages you to do so. You are the only one who knows if a pet will be an asset or liability. Make your decision, whatever it may be, and stand firm.



Bad For The Bones

It's the real thing. Drinking cola can weaken women's bones. Tufts University researchers evaluated the bone mineral density and cola drinking habits of 2500 people in the Framingham Osteoporosis Study. In women, drinking an average of four cola drinks a week was associated with lower bone density. The more cola the women drank, the weaker their bones. Caffeine, already known to lower bone density, likely plays a role. Because decaffeinated colas showed a similar effect, experts suggest cola's phosphoric acid, which can leech calcium from the bone is also at work.

Got milk instead???

New Hope For Chronic Pain Sufferers

Radio frequency for pain management utilizes electricity and heat to help block the transmission of pain through nerve pathways. The procedure works well for patients who experience chronic low back pain, or complex regional pain syndrome—all involving nerves along the spinal column.

When a nerve is destroyed by chemicals or surgically removed as an option for pain relief, there is the risk of feeling phantom pain—similar to the pain associated with a limb amputation.

With radio frequency, the nerve is not destroyed. The nerve is put in a dormant state for a period of time so patients don't risk as many complications. Patients don't feel anything from the procedure thanks to anesthesia, they usually feel great the following day.

During the procedure, a radio frequency needle is directed into the center of the pain-inducing area with the help of x-ray guidance. Once the needle is precisely placed, a heated tip temporarily alters the nerve and blocks pain receptors.

Most patients remain pain-free for several months or years before requiring a second procedure.

100 Years of Change

Now that we have started a new year, lets look at what was going on 100 years ago in 2007. It will boggle your mind.

- The average life expectancy was 47 years.
- Only 14 percent of homes had bathtubs.
- Only 8 percent of homes had a telephone.
- There were only 8000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- The tallest structure was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average wage was 22 cents per hour.
- The average worker made \$200-400/year.
- More than 95 percent of births happened at home.
- 90 percent of all doctors had no college education. Instead they attended schools which were condemned by the government as "substandard".
- Sugar cost 4 cents a pound,
- Eggs were 14 cents a dozen.
- Most women washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- The five leading causes of death were: Pneumonia, influenza, TB, diarrhea, heart disease and stroke.
- The American flag had 45 stars.
- The population of Las Vegas was 30.
- Crossword puzzles, iced tea and canned beer had not yet been invented.
- 2 out of 10 adults could not read or write.
- Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.
- Coffee was 15 cents a pound.
- There were about 230 reported murders in the entire US.

- Marijuana, morphine and heroin were all available over the counter "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and was a perfect guardian of health"
- 18 percent of households had at least 1 full time servant or domestic help.
- Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering their country for any reason.
- An accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1500 and \$2000 per year, an a mechanical engineer about \$5000 per year.

Try to image what it may be like in another 100 years. It staggers the mind!!!!

Caregivers Holiday

With the following holidays, Caregivers are to receive time and one-half for working that day. If you choose not to have the Caregiver that day, please tell them in advance.

2008

New Year's Day	January 1, 2008
Martin Luther King	January 21
Presidents Day	February 18
Memorial Day	May 26
4th of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 1
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 27
Christmas	December 25

What's Happening To Grandpa????

Every 72 seconds, someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. People are living longer, and while the disease is not a normal part of aging, one of the greatest risks is old age. With the baby boomers poised for retirement years, the disease is expected to triple and many children will experience the disease through contact with their elderly grandparents and other relatives, and the child might not understand the disease. For that reason, several children's books have been written to answer the child's questions honestly and in a way that is easy to understand.

In her book **What's Happening to Grandpa?**, Maria Schriver describes her father's journey through the disease. Sargent Schriver, her father, had been an important man in politics for many years, but the family watched while this high functioning, intelligent man was taken away from them little by little.

Alzheimer's disease has an impact on every member of the family, including the children, and it is important to take some time to answer their questions openly and honestly. Schriver's book shares the changes the disease might bring, now and in the future.

It is important for children to understand that even though a person with Alzheimer's disease may forget, love and kindness are still felt. When a family member is living with Alzheimer's disease, a child will feel many things. They feel sad because the person is changing and may not recognize them. They may feel afraid because the person does not act the way they used to. They could be worried that other members of the family may get the disease and they sometimes are embarrassed to have others know that their grandparent is acting strangely.



All of these feelings are normal. Encourage the child to ask questions, and answer them honestly. Use terms that match the child's level of understanding. Begin sharing information about the disease and its symptoms as soon as you can. Continue to reinforce your answers and information that is given to the child or teen.

The child has special memories about favorite times shared with the person with Alzheimer's disease. Let them create a memory box filled with at least 5 items that will be a reminder of those special times. Or make a photo album with the child and loved that they can look at together and remember fun times. Be creative.

Also use books such as **What's Happening To Grandpa?** to open lines of communication and discussion.

[Your local Alzheimer's Association has many pamphlets and fact sheets to help explain the disease to children and teens.](#)

[Alzheimer's Association, Mountain View](#)

650-962-8111

CAREGIVERS PAGE AND INFORMATION

Former Caregiver Death

I am sorry to announce the unexpected death of a former caregiver, **Meme Watson**. She died suddenly of a complication following a surgical procedure. She had been with us since 1995 then worked at Valley Medical Center since the early 2000's. She leaves a daughter Jamie, several sisters, and many family members. Please keep her in your thoughts or prayers.

Hospice Class

HCN is offering those caregivers who would like to learn more about hospice care and care for those clients on hospice. By now you should have received a notice of the class. This is a **FREE** class. HCN is paying for the design and presentation of the seminar.

Please mail in your reservation by February 15, no later, so that the class sizes can be confirmed.

If you need to leave your client early, for example: you work 7am-7pm and need to attend the 7pm class, ask your replacement to cover for you the last hour of your shift.

Let's work on this together so everyone can attend the class who wants and needs to!!!

Late Caregiver Receipts

I thought I would list those Caregivers who are continually late in sending in their receipts to HCN.

Martha M.	Tayech W.
April G.	Selam A.
Angela E.	Fatuma B.
Elmira S.	Maria C.
Merdis G.	Lauren D.
Elizabeth P.	Lorna J.
Sela M.	Claudia M.
Enanu M.	Evelyn M.

CPR & First Aid

Nurses Workshop

408-269-3715
1777 Hamilton Ave. # 204C
San Jose

American Red Cross

408-577-1000

CPR renew every 2 years
First Aid renew every 3 years.

Holidays 2008

With the following holidays, you are to receive time and one-half for working that day. Please remind the client in advance of the holiday because a family member may not need you on the holiday.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King	January 21
Presidents Day	February 18
Memorial Day	May 26
4th of July	July 4
4th of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 1
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 27
Christmas	December 25

TB and Chest X-Ray Testing

US Health Works

408-288-3800

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
7AM-7PM
\$36.00

St. Valentine's Story

Let me introduce myself. My name is Valentine. I lived in Rome during the third century. That was long, long ago! At that time, Rome was ruled by an emperor named Claudius. I didn't like Emperor Claudius, and I wasn't the only one! A lot of people shared my feelings.

Claudius wanted to have a big army. He expected men to volunteer to join. Many men just did not want to fight in wars. They did not want to leave their wives and families. As you might have guessed, not many men signed up. This made Claudius furious. So what happened? He had a crazy idea. He thought that if men were not married, they would not mind joining the army. So Claudius decided not to allow any more marriages. Young people thought his new law was cruel. I thought it was preposterous! I certainly wasn't going to support that law!

Did I mention that I was a priest? One of my favourite activities was to marry couples. Even after Emperor Claudius passed his law, I kept on performing marriage ceremonies -- secretly, of course. It was really quite exciting. Imagine a small candlelit room with only the bride and groom and myself. We would whisper the words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of soldiers.

One night, we did hear footsteps. It was scary! Thank goodness the couple I was marrying escaped in time. I was caught. (Not quite as light on my feet as I used to be, I guess.) I was thrown in jail and told that my punishment was death.

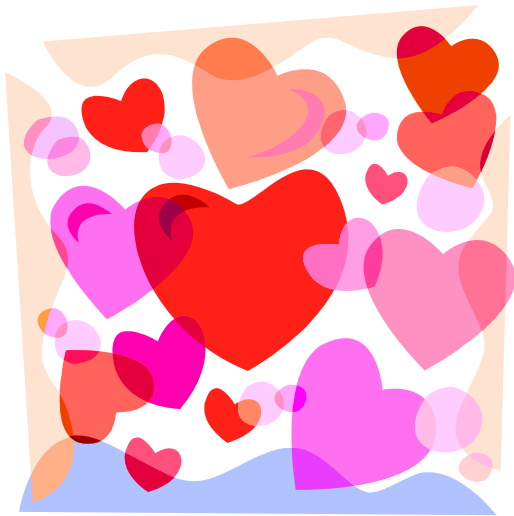
I tried to stay cheerful. And do you know what? Wonderful things happened. Many young people came to the jail to visit me. They threw [flowers](#) and notes up to my window. They wanted me to know that they, too, believed in love.

One of these young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit me in the cell. Sometimes we would sit and talk for hours. She helped me to keep my spirits up. She agreed that I did the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and going ahead with the secret marriages. On the day I was to die, I left my friend a little note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. I signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

I believe that note started the custom of exchanging love messages on Valentine's Day. It was written on the day I died, February 14, 269 A.D. Now, every year on this day, people remember. But most importantly, they think about love and friendship. And when they think of Emperor Claudius, they remember how he tried to stand in the way of love, and they laugh -- because they know that love can't be beaten!

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