

Free

Spring 2019

Living North of 50

A Northern Ontario Magazine for those of us getting better with age

Chasing life

By Sue Nielsen



Successfully re-entering the workforce as a senior

Tuff's Talk

by Tuffy McNamara

How we manage our lives

By Darlene Wroe

SPEAKER

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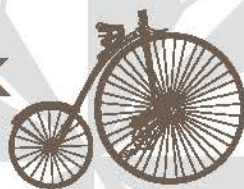
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“

Studies have shown that within 15 minutes of being in nature, your stress level goes down, your heart rate and blood pressure improve.”

Chasing life

By Sue Nielsen

Who doesn't want more vitality and more zest in their life?

After a long, dark winter, we may need to think about the many ways we can add vitality for improved health outcomes to our lives.

Certainly an infusion of sunshine and warm weather wouldn't hurt us given the winter of 2019.

I guess vitality is something we seek as the aging process takes over and we experience lower energy levels.

It might not necessarily come in pill or potion form but come directly from our hands and direct actions.

Because improved health and vitality is up to us as individuals. We often won't find vitality from books, gurus, super foods and other sources.

What makes us feel vital and energized? Each

of us has our own "vitality" source.

What makes you tick, what lights up your life and puts that twinkle in your eye and a bounce in your step?

I know exactly what my source of vitality is.

It is being outside in nature, reading a good book and knowing I am a wild woman seeking her own truth in her own way.

You've heard me talk about nature over and over again, and I cannot emphasize enough the health benefits from spending time in the great outdoors.

Doctors in the U.K. are actually prescribing time spent in nature to their patients for improved physical, mental and spiritual health.

They are prescribing long walks, gardening, beachcombing and bird watching to their patients rather than pills and potions to treat anxiety, depression and high blood pressure.

“Studies have shown that within 15 minutes of being in nature, your stress level goes down, your heart rate and blood pressure improves,” said Dr. Nooshin Razani, a nature researcher with UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital.

The opioid epidemic happening across the world has many of us reaching for pills instead of more holistic avenues of health promotion.

I watched an interesting documentary on CNN recently about health called “Chasing Life” by Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

He is a medical correspondent and Atlanta-based neurosurgeon.

Gupta has been travelling the world sharing the secrets of better living and he was in India. He reported on traditional Indian health techniques associated with Ayurveda, yoga and meditation.

He says the practice of yoga combined with meditation is a holistic, pill-free way to improved health and vitality.

I have practiced yoga on and off for a number of years so I know what he says is true.

So, rather than procrastinate any further, I pulled my purple yoga mat out from my closet, dusted it off and proceeded to stretch my mind and body.

I am not as flexible as I once was but good thing that with regular practice, flexibility can easily return.

So I did a series of asanas, following a Hatha yoga posture regime I had used in the past.

It wasn’t the day after, but the day after that in which I felt the messages from my muscles telling me they were aware of my renewed interests.

I think the Western world underestimates the value of yoga and meditation.



The practice of yoga combined with meditation is a holistic, pill-free way to improved health and vitality.

Wouldn't it be cool if yoga were practiced regularly in schools, churches, nursing homes, sport arenas and workplaces?

How would creativity be enhanced if workplaces implemented a 10-15 minute yoga break during the workday?

I think it would be off the charts beneficial for all involved, especially the North of 50 gang.

Managed by: **Jarlette**
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Using the internet: top tips to get you started

Do you know how to use the internet? Accessing the digital world allows you read up on current events, connect with friends and family members, play games, watch videos, pay bills and shop from the comfort of your own home. As a senior, you have a lot to gain by being internet-savvy. If you're keen to get started, here are some tips that will help.

1. CONSIDER A TABLET

Research shows that seniors find tablets easier to use than computers, as touch-screens are simpler to navigate. While typing on a touch-screen can be tedious, you can purchase an external keyboard to make writing easier.

2. CUSTOMIZE YOUR SETTINGS

There are a number of adjustments you can make on your device to simplify your online experience.

Consider using a high-resolution screen or increasing the size of the text and menu buttons. When you buy a new tablet or computer, get a technician to customize it to your needs and preferences.


3. USE PASSWORDS WISELY

Use sufficiently complex passwords that include at least one number and one symbol. Also, be sure to use different passwords for different sites. By doing these things, you'll keep your information secure. Write down all your passwords and keep them somewhere out of sight.


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*As a senior, you have a lot to
gain by being internet-savvy.*

4. USE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of ways to learn about using the internet. You can sign up for local classes in your community, borrow or buy books on the subject or consult educational materials online. There are online learning materials available, including an array of instructional videos found on youtube.com.

One last tip: be patient with yourself. Learning a new skill takes time and practice, but if you persevere, you will succeed.



Having a pet is scientifically shown to benefit your health.

The benefits of having a pet as you grow older

Pets bring their human caregivers joy, security, companionship and more. But did you know that having a pet is scientifically shown to benefit your health? Here are three good reasons to consider adopting a pet.

1. They improve your health. Spending time with pets reduces stress and decreases blood pressure levels. Furthermore, caring for a pet will encourage you to get more exercise. Taking a dog for a walk, or playing with a cat, is an easy and enjoyable way to stay active.
2. They provide companionship. People often have fewer opportunities for social interaction as they grow older and begin to feel isolated. But pets are good company, and dogs in particular can provide you with more opportunities for social interaction. Walking your dog or taking them to the dog park allows you to strike up conversations with other dog owners.
3. They give you a sense of purpose. Knowing that your pet cares for you and that they are dependent on you for food, exercise and companionship will imbue your life with added meaning and importance. Plus, caring for your pet can help you establish a routine and give your day structure.

These are just a few of the many advantages of owning a pet. However, you can also reap many of these benefits simply by spending time with animals. To this end, an increasing number of senior facilities have programs where pets are regularly brought in to visit residents. If having a pet at home doesn't work for you, look to see whether you can arrange a visit from one instead.

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FUNCTIONAL FITNESS TRAINING: what it is and how it benefits seniors

As we age, everyday tasks become more physically challenging. Activities such as getting up from a seated position, putting on a coat, dusting furniture and putting away groceries become difficult for many people. Functional fitness training helps seniors continue to perform these types of tasks without experiencing excessive strain.

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL FITNESS TRAINING?

Functional fitness training involves exercise routines that mimic the activities of daily life. The focus is primarily on balance, core strength, endurance and multi-joint flexibility.

WHY IS IT GREAT FOR SENIORS?

Nearly everyone stands to benefit from functional fitness training, but it's particularly advantageous to seniors. As we grow older, we begin to lose muscle mass, bone strength and our sense of balance. Functional fitness training will help seniors remain independent for as long as possible. Plus, unlike exercise machines and weight training, it's a low-intensity form of exercise and shouldn't cause strain or injury.



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A satisfying sex life is possible at any age

Your sexuality doesn't come with an expiration date, and in fact, many older people enjoy having an active and fulfilling sex life. To join the ranks of sexually satisfied seniors, you already have the tools you need, including the following:

- You know yourself. A lifetime of sexual experimentation has probably taught you what you like and what you don't like. Don't be shy to share this information with your partner to ensure that both of you have a good time.
- You've got time. Retired (or semi-retired) life leaves you more time for leisure activities. Dedicating more energy into your sex life will make it more pleasurable and rewarding.
- You're desirable. Your body

may have changed over the years, but you're as desirable as ever. Your eyes, smile and personality are fabulous. Take pride in your appearance by pampering your skin, eating well and staying active.

- You have resources. If you need medical assistance to have a

more satisfying sex life, there are many health professionals who can help.

With a little self-confidence and a great partner, you're sure to have a great time between the sheets. A healthy sex life is good for your health and mental well-being, no matter what your age.



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Tuff's Talk

by Tuffy McNamara



Outing

Years ago, many years ago, my friend Fay and I decided to take a walk to the beach.

At that time, the beach was where midways, horse races and ball games were held. Parades generally ended there as well.

Our husbands were visiting and babysitting our children - Fay and Ken had their first child Lynn, and Darcy and I had our first child Danny.

We arrived at the beach in good time, walked alongside of the huge tent there and a gentleman had rolled aside part of the tent and asked if we would like to

come inside the tent. After seeing the lineup at the main entrance, in we went!

The kind gentleman was Joe Louis, the famous boxer, who was the huge drawing to the big event and here he was letting us in FREE!!!

What a thrill that was! We had a nice break away from our daily routines, plus a good walk, plus meeting the famous Joe Louis.

Our husbands were happy for us, meeting Joe Louis and enjoying our afternoon. Oh, to the good old days, when life was simple and fun - and men were gentlemen!

Oh, to the good old days, when life was simple and fun - and men were gentlemen!

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3 misconceptions about cognitive aging

Cognitive aging refers to the changes a person undergoes in their ability to think, sense and reason as they get older. It seems simple enough, but in fact, it's a subject that's rife with misconceptions. Here are three of them:

1. COGNITIVE AGING IS SYNONYMOUS WITH COGNITIVE DECLINE

Health professionals judge that it's incorrect to speak of a decline, given that cognitive aging is a natural process and one characterized by enormous variability. It's true that a person's memory tends to become less sharp as they age and their mental processes tend to slow. However, this isn't the same thing as a change in intelligence. In fact, there's no reason cognitive aging should interfere with a person continuing to learn new skills as they get older.

2. COGNITIVE AGING IS CONNECTED TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

While the signs of cognitive aging resemble the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease to some degree, the two should not be confused. Alzheimer's is a neurodegenerative disease characterized by severe declines in cognitive capabilities. Cognitive aging, on the other hand, isn't a disease but a natural part of getting older; the changes in cognitive ability to which it refers vary and are gradual.

3. NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT AGE-RELATED COGNITIVE CHANGES.

Cognitive aging may be a natural process, but the extent to which one's ability to think, sense and reason will change over the years can be controlled. You can be mentally sharp at any age. To attend to your cognitive health, the the following is recommended:

- Be physically active. Physical health goes hand-in-hand with mental health.
- Be socially and intellectually active. Seek out new experiences and new learning opportunities.
- Make sure you're sleeping well. The quality of your sleep directly impacts your cognitive functioning.

Consult a health professional if you're having trouble sleeping.

- Manage your medications. Certain medications can negatively affect one's cognitive functions.

Consult with your doctor if you're concerned about the effect of your medications, or if you want to learn more about maintaining your cognitive health.



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A photograph of two wooden Adirondack chairs on a dock overlooking a calm lake with trees in the background. A small inset photo of Pauline Lockhart is in the bottom right corner.



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A photograph of a scenic lake view with trees and a building in the distance under a clear blue sky.



How we manage our lives

By Darlene Wroe

This past month, I reached an age which is very close to a number which has reverberated throughout my life, and almost two decades ago it took on even more of a dark hue.

Now that I am getting so close to this number, it really brings home the difference between our perspective on age numbers, the reality of our physical selves, and the reality of our intellectual selves.

It also brings into sharp focus one other thing. We are all different.

Two of my aunts passed well before reaching this age that I am at now, and in one year, I will be the age that my mother was when she passed.

I suppose that we are all the same in that I drive myself, as they did, and my grandmother did.



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But the benefit of my time is that I have information which perhaps they did not.

I have my own vices and hereditary problems which may affect my lifespan, but I have the benefit of being able to access information which can help me strive to overcome them or at least manage them.

That knowledge has also helped me to identify potential impacts on my mother's life which possibly caused her life to be considerably shortened.

As everyone does, I always hate it when someone's life is cut short, for whatever reason.

But at least we do have at our disposal information which can help us stave off life-threatening diseases and activities which may threaten our longevity.

When I was a baby my mother left me with my grandmother and aunt so that she could go down south and work in the tobacco fields to raise money to buy clothes for me.

She did it again when I was a preteen, working in the fruit orchards in Niagara Falls, and trying to carve a life for us down south. (The year at the public school there was wonderful.)

My father was long gone, battling his own demons which had followed him home from World War II.

We returned north though and finally my mother met someone who treated her well, and she gained an education to allow her to make a living at doing what she did best, which was

taking care of others.

But only about ten years later, she was struck with early on-set Parkinson's disease.

She had twisted a knee and a little while later her thumb began to twitch. Gradually it advanced through her body. She lived with that for 20 years, and it was sad to watch such a lovely person suffer with that disease.

Her children have all anticipated that disease to strike us as well, but the age it struck her has come and gone for her children and we are all fine. She was the age I am talking about when I was holding her in the hospital bed and she said softly that she couldn't believe she was that age - that awful, terrible, completely unfair age.

There is one main thing that is different about her life and the lives of her children. We have not worked in the tobacco fields or fruit orchards. My sister is a gardener, but doesn't use pesticides.

I believe very strongly that environmental toxins were the deciding factor in my mother's health outcome. I am sad, angry, terrified that others are still working with these toxins.

I believe that information can guide us all in our future health and general well-being, and that we are all very fortunate to live in a time that information is at our fingertips. All we have to do is ask the question that reflects on how we are managing our lives, and if there is something that we could do better.



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Successfully re-entering the workforce as a senior

Are you a retiree who's looking for work? You're not alone. There's a growing trend among today's seniors of returning to the workforce post-retirement. To find a job in your golden years that's gratifying and meets your financial needs, you'll need to leverage the skills and knowledge you've built up over your lifetime.

IDENTIFY YOUR ASSETS

Before you put yourself out there, take a bit of time to pinpoint your skills and abilities. Consider proficiencies that you gained from your work experience as well as more general ones like time-management, leadership and communication skills. And don't forget the life skills you've developed over the years in other areas such as in your role as a parent or mentor. You can even look to your hobbies and interests as a place to mine for hireable skills.

CONSIDER A NEW CAREER PATH

Your skills and abilities might steer you in a new direction, completely away from your previous career. For example, the people management skills you acquired working as a contractor might be put to use in another context such as real estate agent.

CONSIDER THE JOB MARKET

Sometimes the primary skills you possess have become unmarketable due to advancements in technology or a change in your health or physical capacity. In such cases, it's best to fall back on secondary knowledge and skills you've developed over the years.

CHECK THE NEWSPAPER AND ONLINE

A good place to start is your local newspaper or online job search sites such as Indeed. You may also want to build a public profile on the professional networking site, LinkedIn.

A CUT ABOVE

Hair care tips from the pros



Ditch the dye:

3 ways to embrace your silver strands

Are you tired of dyeing your hair only to have your white roots come back in a matter of weeks?

Here are three ways to transition to your natural hue.

1. CUT IT

This is the quickest and easiest option. Let your hair grow for a month or two and then cut off all the dyed hair.

2. GROW IT

Stop dyeing your hair altogether and wait until it grows. This option works best on lighter hair; the contrast of dark hair with silver roots can be jarring.

3. GET HIGHLIGHTS

Ask your hairstylist to break up your darker hair with highlights that match your natural tone. This option won't work for everyone, because the lightener used can be very damaging to some hair types.



Embracing your silver strands requires significantly less upkeep than dyeing it every

few weeks. However, you'll need to wash your hair with a violet or blue shampoo once a week to prevent it from yellowing.

To learn more about going silver, or to take the plunge, book an appointment with your stylist today.



Over60?Keepaneyearoutforcommonvisionproblems

As we age, we come to appreciate the simpler things in life whether it's playing with grandkids, taking up a hobby or finding more time for a good book. Whatever activity brings you joy, don't let the loss of vision affect your independence.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common cause of poor vision in Canadians over the age of 60 and one of the leading causes of vision loss. While peripheral vision is usually unaffected, people with AMD lose the sharp, straight-ahead vision used for driving, reading, recognizing faces, and looking at detail. Though AMD doesn't always lead to complete blindness, it can sometimes sig-

nificantly impair simple daily activities. Over time, the areas of vision loss may grow larger or denser or you may develop blank spots in your central vision.

If detected at an early stage, there are treatments that can decrease AMD's rate of progression. You can take steps to prevent or reduce vision loss with these tips from the Canadian Ophthalmological Society:

Get regular comprehensive medical eye exams. People over age 65 should get an exam at least once every two years.

Quit smoking. Smokers are twice as likely to develop AMD compared with a non-smoker.

Know your family's eye health

history.

Eat well. Studies show that people who have a reduced risk of AMD have diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon and walnuts, and omega-3 enriched foods like yogurt and eggs.

Stay active. It's important to maintain regular exercise to not only keep a healthy weight, but also reduce the risk of developing AMD.

Leading an active, healthy lifestyle and getting regular eye exams are important to saving your long-term vision, especially after age 60. Speak to your eye doctor about the steps you should take to ensure healthy eyesight for years to come.

Learn more at cos-sco.ca.



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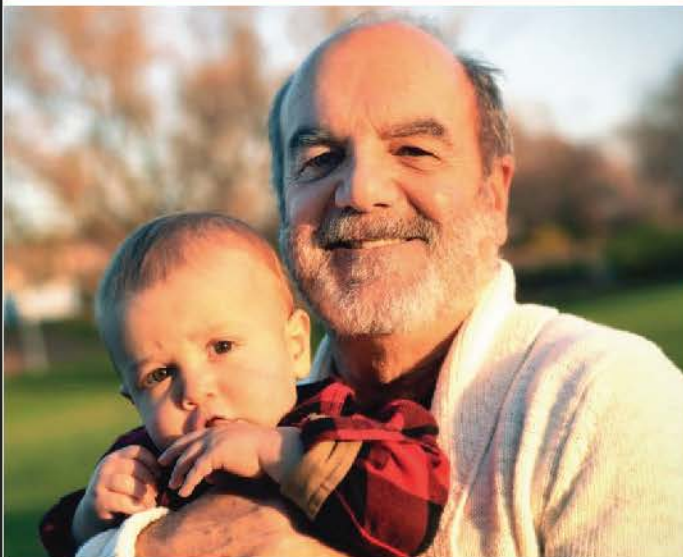
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Safety tips for your next hiking adventure

Ready to venture through the wilderness? Here are some tips for staying safe during your next hike.

1. Choose a trail that's appropriate for your skill level
2. Never hike alone
3. Let someone know where you'll be and when you plan to be back
4. Bring a map of the area and local trails
5. Start early and make sure to finish your hike before nightfall
6. Check the weather and trail conditions before heading out
7. Pack the appropriate gear, even for a short hike
8. Know what animals are native to the area and what to do if you encounter them
9. Wear appropriate footwear and bright, visible clothing
10. Snack frequently and drink water before you get thirsty
11. Protect yourself from the sun and insects
12. Be careful near precipices

Above all else, stay on clearly marked trails and use your common sense. If something looks like it could be dangerous, keep your distance.



Lip reading: a valuable skill for those with hearing loss



If you're hard of hearing, you can greatly facilitate your aural comprehension by learning to read lips. But how do you develop this ability?

The first step is to sign up for a course about lip reading given by an audiologist or a speech pathologist. This course will teach you to interpret other people's speech by paying close attention to non-verbal cues such as lip and jaw movement, facial expressions, posture, and gestures.

Afterwards, you'll need to practise. Every time you take part in a conversation, you'll further hone your abilities.

To get more information about hearing loss, visit the Canadian Hearing Society website at chs.ca.



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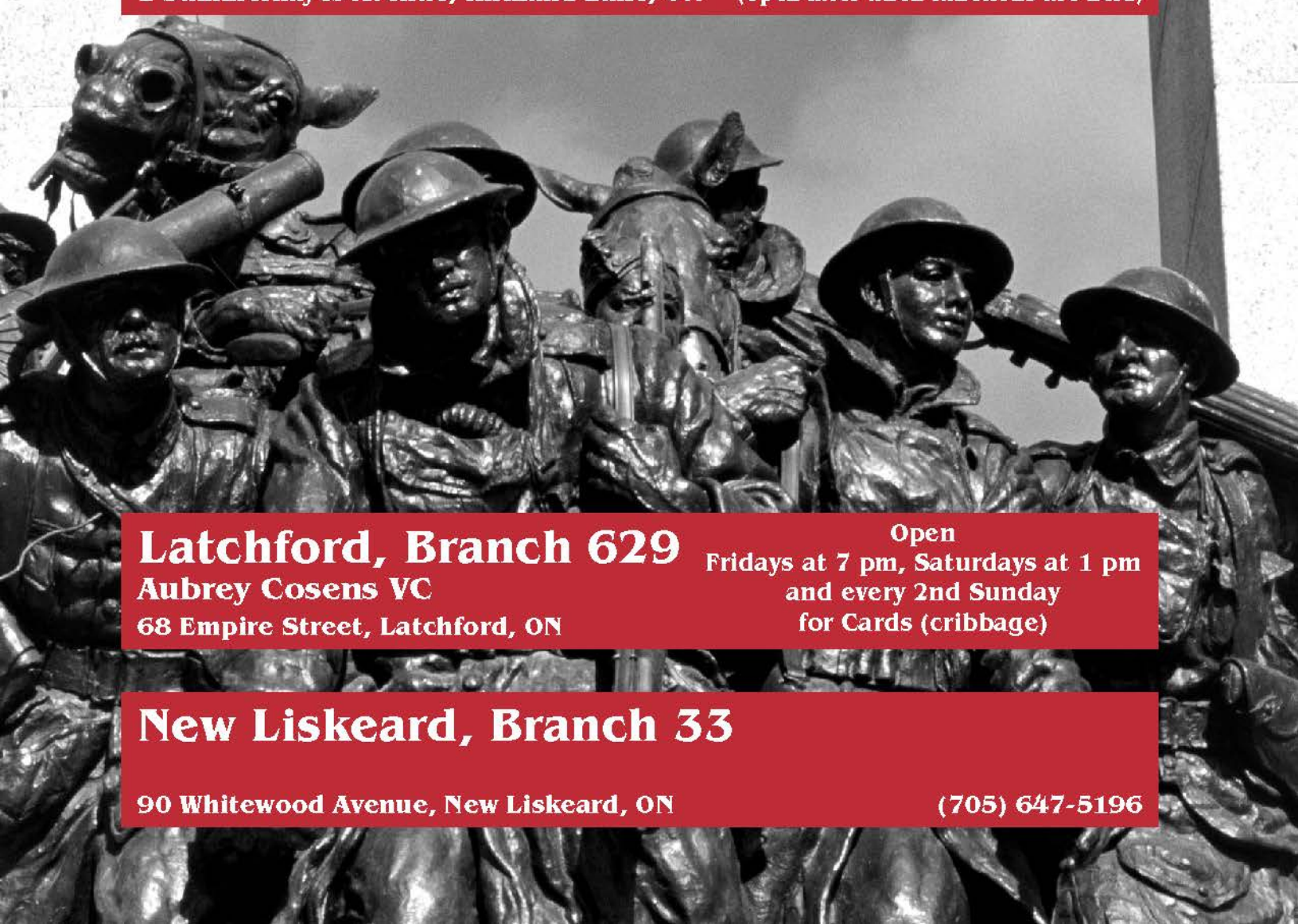
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