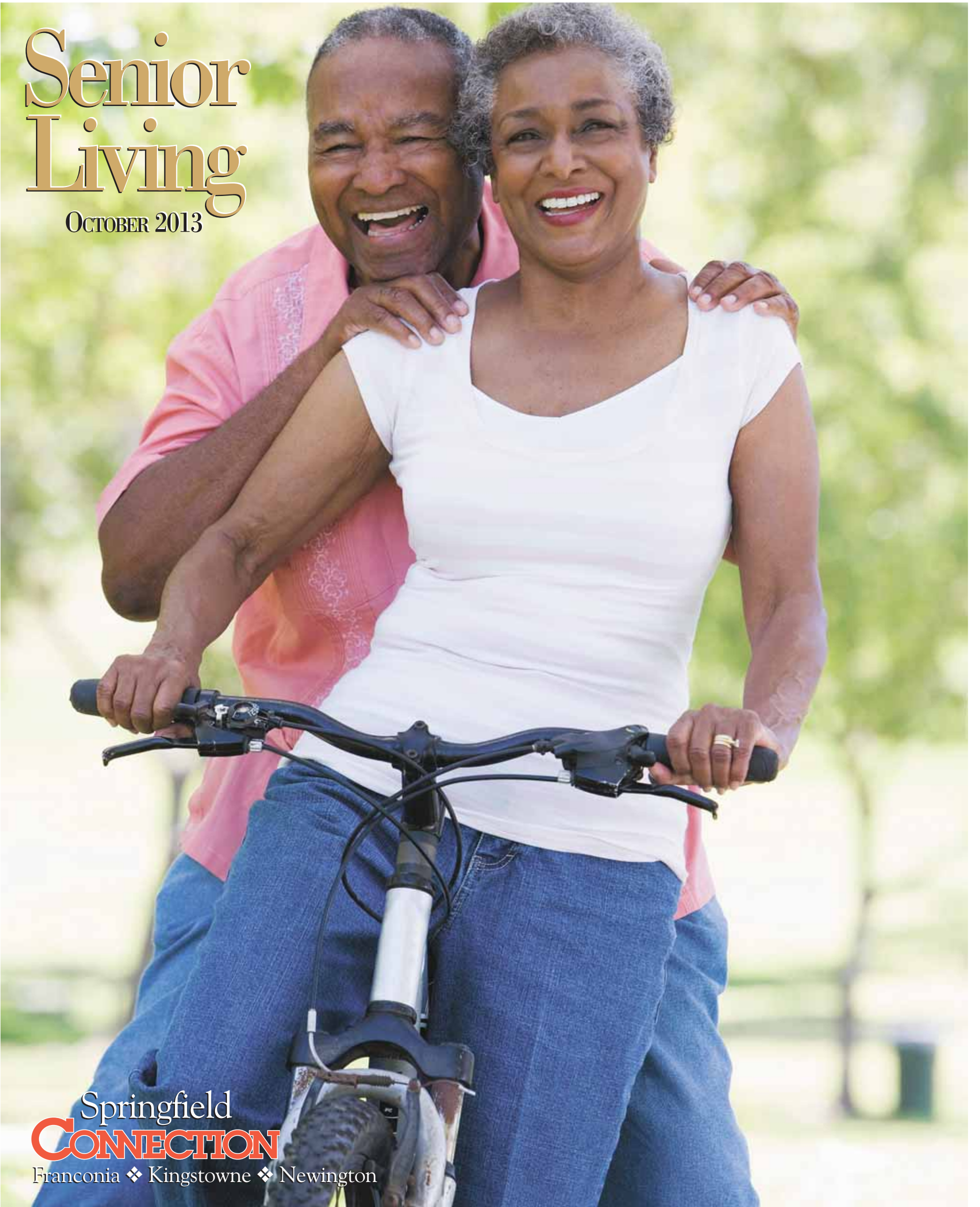


Senior Living

OCTOBER 2013



Springfield
CONNECTION
Franconia ❖ Kingstowne ❖ Newington

Senior Living Calendar

THURSDAY/OCT. 3

Evelyn Mo Plays Piano. 2:15 p.m., at Reston Community Center, Center Stage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Hunters Woods Village Center, Reston. Evelyn Mo is a 14-year-old piano prodigy and sophomore at Thomas Jefferson High School who has already won awards. She plays in the third of six Thursday afternoon "Meet the Artists" concerts cosponsored by Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University and Reston Community Center. 703-503-3384, olli@gmu.edu or www.oli.gmu.edu.

TUESDAY/OCT. 8

Caregiver Support Group. 7-8 p.m. Fairfax County's free family caregiver telephone support group, meets by phone. Register beforehand at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/caregiver.htm or call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

Family Caregiver Seminars. 7-8:30 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. "Financial Issues for Caregivers." To register, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults and link to Register Now for Caregiver Seminars, or call 703-324-5205, TTY 711.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 9

Health Expo. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 600 Dulany St. Free. Features healthy cooking demonstration, heart healthy information, health screenings, booths and more. Registration is preferred, but not required. Call 1-855-My-Inova (855-694-6682) or visit inova.org/expo.

Medicare 101. 3-4:30 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly. Fairfax County is offering Medicare 101 — a two-three hour program on Medicare basics. Information and registration at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/vicap.htm or call 703-324-5205.

Oktoberfest Tour and Tasting. 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler

Ave., Alexandria. \$50. Register at www.seniorservicesalex.org.

THURSDAY/OCT. 10

Medicare 101. 10 a.m.-noon at Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Fairfax County is offering Medicare 101 — a two-three hour program on Medicare basics. Information and registration at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/vicap.htm or call 703-281-0538.

NARFE Meeting. 1:30 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center 120 Cherry St., Vienna. National Association of Federal and Active Retired Employees, Chapter 1116 Vienna-Oakton presents Gayle Nelson from Blue Cross, Blue Shield. Also Del. Mark Keam and challenger Leiann Luse. Free and is open to all members and their guests. Call 703-938-7346.

TUESDAY/OCT. 15

Medicare Open Season Workshop. 10:30 a.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St., Alexandria. Fairfax County is offering free Medicare Open Season workshops. Information and registration at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/vicap.htm or call 703-914-0223.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 16

Navigating the Local Transit System. 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Reston Association, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive. Learn to read bus schedules and route maps, pay the fare and how to signal the driver to stop, as well as other bus travel skills. The bus will deliver participants to a Metrorail station to learn how to determine the fare and purchase Metrorail fare cards, load SmarTrip cards and read the system map. 55 years and older. Free. Call 703-435-6577 to register.

Medicare Open Season Workshop. 11 a.m. at

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7

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Senior Living

Choosing a Home for the Golden Years

Many options for retirement communities in the region.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Jim Harkin, 81, and his wife, Phyllis, 80, have little free time these days. Jim spends his days protecting and photographing wildlife on the 60-acre campus at The Fairfax, a Sunrise Senior Living Community, in Fort Belvoir. He helped build, refurbish and maintain more than 20 birdhouses on the grounds, including homes for tree swallows and purple martins.

Phyllis Harkin manages a small gift shop and runs marathon bridge games. The couple moved to The Fairfax more than two-and-a-half years ago from their home in Fairfax because they wanted the freedom to pursue their interests and live among people with similar lifestyles without the responsibility of maintaining a household.

"We were getting older and keeping up a house and yard in Fairfax was getting harder," said Jim Harkin, a retired Navy captain. "We also wanted to make our own decisions about where and when we moved and not have that left up to our busy children."

Phyllis Harkin, a former real estate appraiser, said, "We did it in time, but after living at The Fairfax, we wish we'd done it earlier. You have no idea how much fun it is over here."

Kathy Aust, 67, has lived at Heritage Hunt Golf and Country Club, an independent liv-



Phyllis and Jim Harkin are active residents of the Fairfax, a Sunrise Senior Living Community, in Fort Belvoir. Jim, 81, runs the facility's birding club and Phyllis, 80, manages the campus gift shop. The couple wanted to live among people with similar lifestyles without the responsibility of maintaining a household.

ing retirement community, in Gainesville, Va., since 2001. She moved there from Burke, she said, for social reasons. "I wanted to move into a community where there were people who had lifestyles that were similar to mine," said Aust, a retired federal employee who has no children. "I like living in

a community with people in similar situations. It is very active here. There are indoor and outdoor pools, tennis and golf. There is so much to be done here." Aust volunteers on the Heritage Hunt community task force and with the

Where to Find Help for Seniors

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community's women's group.

THESE TRANSITIONS were smooth and logical for them, based on their own choice.

But the decision to move out of one's home and into a retirement community is often complicated and can be fraught with anxiety. Experts in geriatrics say that reasons to relocate to a retirement community usually boil down to three factors: social connections, physical condition and personal safety.

"It's like a trifecta or a three-legged stool. It is hard to be stable if one leg isn't working" said Andrew Carle, an executive-in-residence at George Mason University's pro-

gram in senior housing administration in Fairfax. "A person might be physically healthy, but if they are isolated in their home and not driving or have lost touch with friends, they could become depressed."

Carle, who has more than 25 years of

"We wish we'd [moved] earlier. You have no idea how much fun it is over here."

— Phyllis Harkin

SEE CHOOSING A HOME, PAGE 4

Diverse Needs, Desires Drive Mobility Solutions

Seniors increasingly seek innovative plans that embrace both the present and the future.

BY JOHN BYRD

Russ Glickman was a traditional full-service remodeler until the late 1990s when he abruptly added a host of accessibility certifications to a long list of building industry credentials. The service extension was less about opportunity than a personal call to apply what he'd learned from personal experience in helping his son, Michael, who was born with cerebral palsy.

"As a professional builder and a parent, I was fascinated with the challenges entailed in helping people with mobility issues make use of their homes, and really eager to absorb the evolving strategies and technologies that were then beginning to evolve," Glickman said. "I spent several years acquiring new certifications while continuing to execute full-scale remodeling projects."

Starting initially as a helpful neighbor with sound advice, Glickman, who has op-

erated Glickman Design Build for more than 30 years, eventually recognized that the demand for accessibility solutions was larger than he had thought.

"I was offering feasibility studies in special needs situations mostly on referral, but the inquiries pretty quickly became about half of my work," he said. "It wasn't that there weren't other practitioners in this field. But I soon discovered that the need for original solutions was as pronounced among people with mobility requirements as it is in remodeling — may be more so."

His conclusion: an accessibility solution that's tailored to an individual is always best, especially when designed to accommodate both current and probable future needs.

"Mastering guidelines and practices specific to a particular condition is a good starting point," Glickman said. "The Americans with Disabilities Act, for instance, publishes recommendations everyone should know.

But the reality is that every disability is also uniquely personal, and every house presents challenges that must be fully understood if a solution is to work well."

On top of this, Glickman said, there are always code and budget issues, emerging technologies and, often, collaborative input from therapists, engineers and other specialists.

In the end, it is field experience that makes a mobility or access solution practical.

"This is an enormous societal issue, with a significant and growing practice literature that must be absorbed," he said. "Having said this, I find that the best solutions arise from effectively collaborating with someone facing challenges who's really passionate about making the most of their situation."

IF THERE'S ONE TREND that's well underway in Northern Virginia, it's that seniors are consistently deciding to age in place — even when a major retrofit is called for.

In McLean, for instance, a retired executive and his wife recently hired Glickman to develop a plan for installing a three-story

elevator in their 10,000-plus-square-foot house. "The owners are in their late 60s, and walking without assistance. The stairs have gradually become a chore, however, a situation that was unlikely to improve."

SEE DIVERSE NEEDS, PAGE 6

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Choosing a Home for the Golden Years

FROM PAGE 3

executive-level senior housing and health care experience, adds that if a person has had a stroke or another condition that affects mobility, living alone is challenging. "If you need assistance with dressing and bathing that would make it difficult for you to stay in your home alone," he said.

Safety issues, such as a risk of falling or medication management, are other reasons that one might not be safe living alone, said Carle. "If you fall and hit your head and nobody comes, you could die," he said. "There is also the medication issue. The average 75-year-old is on between seven to 12 medications each day. The number one cause of hospitalization in people over 75 is medication error. The number one cause of death due to injury in seniors is falls."

Not everyone who leaves their home does so willingly. Gail, who has no children or family in the area and asked that her last name be withheld, moved to Potomac Valley Nursing and Wellness Center in Rockville, Md., after her close friends and a social worker determined that she was not healthy enough to live alone. "I want to go back to my house," she said. "That is where I want to be."

Linda Gulyn, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, who teaches aging psychology, says that despite the amenities and services that make retirement communities a good fit for many people, a feeling of losing the ability to make decisions about one's life makes many seniors resistant to leaving their homes.

"I wanted to move into a community where there were people who had lifestyles that were similar to mine."

— Kathy Aust

"One of the biggest psychological issues faced by the older person is the feeling they are giving up control of their lives in so many ways and that can be depressing," she said. "Engage the older person in the process as much as possible and respect their choices, whether it is how to decorate their place or what to bring."

Andrew Carle said, "The very best strategy for a resistant parent is respite stay, which is essentially a short-term stay. The family goes on vacation and lets the senior stay at a retirement community for a week or two. It gives the senior a chance to meet the people, eat the food and participate in the activities. Usually after about a week or two the senior realizes that living alone in their home and watching television all day isn't all it is cracked up to be."

WHEN ONE DECIDES that living alone is no longer wise, there are plenty of options. Local retirement communities run the gamut from independent living where a person lives among fellow seniors, but does not need special care, to levels of assisted living. Assisted living facilities provide different levels of care for those who need help with small tasks such as medication administration, to those who need help with daily tasks such as getting dressed or taking a bath. Skilled nursing facilities, where residents have greater medical needs, are another option.

Some facilities such as The Fairfax in Alexandria, are actually continuing care retirement communities that enable residents to transition from in-



Jim Harkin, a resident of The Fairfax in Fort Belvoir, helped build, refurbish and maintain more than 20 birdhouses on the grounds, including homes for tree swallows and purple martins.

dependent living to nursing care in the same facility as conditions change.

"Independent living basically meets a person's social needs," said Carle. "Assisted

living is for people who have physical needs or limitations. I don't think of nursing homes as senior housing. It is long-term health care or for someone who is recover-



Retirement communities like Heritage Hunt Golf and Country Club in Northern Virginia offer seniors options for maintaining an active lifestyle such as indoor and outdoor pools, tennis and golf.

ing from an injury or who needs physical therapy."

Lynette Mitchell, director of marketing and community outreach at The Hermitage, explains that, "We have everything from people who are totally independent to people who need help bathing and dressing. We can deliver all of those services."

Debra Norberg, associate director of marketing at The Hermitage, said that in addition to amenities on campus, which include a game and fitness rooms, there is support throughout the facility.

"There is a community aspect," Norberg said. "If someone doesn't show up for a



John Mutchler



Peg Bixler



Dorothy Lavoie

meal, we notice. We work as a team to make sure we all know the residents, and if they don't show up for something, someone is going to check on them."

Activities as simple as a meal in the dining room can become an opportunity for socializing. "Some of these people were coming from situations where they were isolated," she said. "This is a new chapter in their lives. We try to pair people up and give them a buddy and we have activities every single day of the week."

Many assisted living facilities also offer mental health counseling services. "We have a social work component that deals with the psycho-social issues," said Norberg. "We can provide grief counseling and we have psychiatrists on staff."

"Fox Hill's... amenities, services and fascinating residents all combine to offer a distinctive retirement lifestyle that is both very

attractive and very accessible," said Julie Sabag, director of marketing at Fox Hill, in Bethesda, Md.

Westminster at Lake Ridge in Occoquan, Va., another continuing care retirement community, offers residents an array of activities that run the gamut from performing arts to gardening.

"We have the Westminstrels, a choir and the Westphalians, a drama group," said Carolyn Crosby, assistant administrator at Westminster. "We also have a resident garden, which the residents tend themselves. They grow vegetables and leave overflow produce for other residents to take."

SOME RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES, such as Great Falls Assisted Living in Reston, Brightview Senior Living in Great Falls and

SEE CHOOSING A HOME. PAGE 7

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Diverse Needs, Desires Drive Mobility Solutions

FROM PAGE 3

Since elevator access within the home's existing structure wasn't feasible, Glickman's plan calls for a 60-foot tower designed to house an elevator shaft — a substantial modification that will not be visible from the front facade.

Inside, the tower will connect a finished lower level, a study on the main level and a third floor sitting room. The owners are also considering an option to build-out the fourth floor as a guest room suite, a choice which will entail extending the tower another floor, finishing selected attic rooms and tying off the roof.

The execution is meant to be architecturally seamless, with the tower clad in brick to match the 25-year-old, original masonry. The new roof will then be tied into existing rafters, reframed and reslated.

Not surprisingly, professionals regarded this as a highly specialized assignment.

"There aren't lot of local contractors who could execute a project like this," said Andria Gregory of Area Access, Inc, the firm that will install the elevator inside the new shaft.

"The specifications are always exacting, so it's important to us to work with people who have a track record," Gregory said.

Gregory notes that Glickman's experience in mobility prescription puts him in a selective class. "He's among a handful of our preferred contractors in Northern Virginia," Gregory said. "It's critical to us that the project satisfies the client in every respect."

MEANWHILE, IN ARLINGTON, a mobility plan with incremental components has been implemented in the two-level ranch Jaime and Janice Marquez have occupied for 24 years.

Jaime, 59, who had polio as a child but



A McLean couple in their late-60s had Glickman design a 60-foot 4-level elevator tower on the home's right elevation. The tower will be re-clad in brick that matches the existing masonry and will not be visible from the front facade.

Details

Russ Glickman periodically offers workshops on accessibility solutions for seniors. Visit www.GlickmanDesignBuild.com or call 301-444-4663

walked without assistance for most of his adult life, started intermittently using crutches again about 10 years ago.

"This wasn't a surprise," Janice Marquez said. "The research shows that polio survivors can have increased mobility challenges as they age, so we wanted a wheel-chair friendly plan even though it's not a necessity right now."

The biggest obstacles: a curving, ruggedly-steep front walk that links up with a front stoop; standard-width interior halls and doorways that had proven restrictive; and a back deck inaccessible to Jaime Marquez from the ground.

"It had become difficult for Jaime to negotiate the house on crutches, so we're looking ahead," Janice Marquez said. "Initially, I wasn't sure if we should remain in this house, but I had read about Glickman and decided to get his feedback."

Compounding the "move vs. improve" question was the couple's mutual concern that an accessibility solution might make the house less functional for others, including two daughters away at college who are frequent visitors.

"I've seen accessibility modifications that become obstructive," Janice Marquez said. "I wanted to see if we could make changes that would enhance the property — functionally and aesthetically."

To improve front elevation access, Glickman and team removed the existing front walk, re-graded the front slope so that it rises at the rate of one inch per foot and introduced a "zero step" entry.

Inside, hallways have been widened from 36 inches to 48; doorways from 30 to 36 inches.

To facilitate Jaime Marquez's access between the rear deck and the yard, Glickman designed and constructed a wider, low-rise staircase that accommodates his crutches.

While focused and small-scale, the changes have dramatically improved Jaime Marquez's ability to move freely from driveway to front door and throughout the house. They've also bestowed an unexpected benefit.

"The interior now feels much more spacious," Janice Marquez said, "and the wider doorways allow more natural light."

Also, she notes, the new front walk adds considerable curb appeal. "Honestly," she said, "I wish the walk had been in place when I was still pushing the girls in their stroller. It's just a lot easier for everyone."



When Jaime Marquez began having difficulties getting from the house to the driveway, Glickman Design Build created a graduated front walk for the Arlington family. The new walk rises one inch per foot. The plan included replacing a front stoop with a "zero step" entry and widening interior doors and halls.



The original front walk — which included stairs in several places — was too steep for Jaime, who now requires crutches to get around the house.

OUT IN STERLING, the Saads, both in their mid-60s, asked Glickman for a plan that would make life easier for Mrs. Saad — who recently transitioned to a

wheel-chair — yet would preserve the home's resale value should the couple eventually decide to move to a retirement home.

"It's a three-level single-family home," Glickman said. "So we first looked at options for installing an elevator ... only to find that the space required would obstruct some of the bathroom accessibility benefits Mrs. Saad was seeking."

The couple's desire to stay in place for the near-term, however, soon inspired an alternative vision: convert the 2,000-square-

foot lower level into a four-room suite complete with accessible bath, kitchenette and other amenities.

To facilitate access to the new one-level living area, Glickman designed a lift that connects the first floor to the new suite. Top level bedrooms are now reserved for guests and storage.

To make it easier to see who has come to call, the home's front door has been equipped with a security camera linked to the couple's laptop.

"Our goal was to satisfy immediate needs while implementing a makeover that will add resale value," Glickman said. "In this sense, the house has simply been redefined as a traditional single family home that includes a full-size in-law suite. It's a very marketable improvement, yet meets all the present requirements."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOME FRONTS NEWS



Arlington seniors Jaime Marquez and Janice Shack-Marquez on their newly designed accessible front walk.

Choosing a Home for the Golden Years

FROM PAGE 5

Sunrise At Fox Hill in Bethesda, Md., also offer memory care services for those with illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Peg Bixler, an assisted living resident at The Hermitage, said her doctor advised her that she should not live alone anymore. "And I didn't want to be a burden to my children," Bixler, a retired oncology nurse, added. "I do miss my career and I miss traveling, but I've traveled all over the world."

Bixler says living in an assisted living community allows her to maintain an active lifestyle and avoid isolation and loneliness while still getting the help that she needs. She volunteers in the gift shop of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, and for the USO at Washington Reagan National Airport, greeting veterans and passing out flags.

"I'm busy 24 hours a day. I get out and walk every single day," said Bixler. "I do a lot of reading. You socialize at meals here. I go out when they go on the shopping trips, which gets you out and about."

Most importantly, said Bixler, she's still able to live in close proximity to her family, which includes a daughter who lives in Alexandria and a son who lives in Maryland.

She also has a son in Pennsylvania and a daughter in Maine.

While Bixler has remained near her family, relocating from a different state to be close to family as one ages is also a common choice. That was the case for 93-year-old Dorothy Lavoie, another resident of The Hermitage. "I don't have any children, but I am close to my niece" said Lavoie, a former nurse who served in World War II and the Korean War. "I was living in California, and my niece who lived here wanted me to live near her."

Another Hermitage resident, John Mutchler, a retired chemist who has a daughter in Arlington, and a twin sister in Alexandria, moved from New Jersey to Alexandria to be closer to his family. "It is no problem for me to visit with my family often, which is nice for me," he said. "I keep busy here. I am the chairman of the executive committee. I am also a member of the poetry group where we read poetry every week. I am a member of the current events group."

"It is a great way to retire and a great way to live," said Jarad Smith, director of marketing and sales at The Fairfax. "Clients want to be active, social and in a safe environment. As I walk around, I see residents play poker or bridge. We're on 60 acres. There are a lot of nature trails."



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX HILL

Retirement communities such as Bethesda's Fox Hill, a gated luxury retirement community for those aged 60 and above, offers independent living condominium ownership, as well as access to assisted living and memory care.

FROM PAGE 2

South County Senior Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Suite 325, Alexandria. Fairfax County is offering free Medicare Open Season workshops. Information at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/vicap.htm.

Can I Afford That? 1:30 p.m. at Alzheimer's Family Day Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Suite 210, Fairfax. Free educational program. A financial manager will lead the discussion on the cost of long term care, options available, and steps to prepare for future care needs. Call 703-204-4664 to RSVP.

NARFE Meeting. 7 p.m. Dinner meeting for Federal Employment Retirement and Benefits Presentation at Neighbor's Restaurant, 252 Cedar Lane, Vienna. There is a cost. Sponsored by NARFE Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton). If interested in attending, call 703-205-9041 or 703-938-7346 for reservations.

WEDNESDAYS/OCT. 16-NOV. 20

Chronic Disease Management. 10 a.m.-noon at The Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, 541 Marshall Road, S.W., Vienna. Free six-week chronic disease self-management program, held in partnership with Division of Adult and Aging Services/Fairfax Area Agency on Aging/ElderLink. Learn strategies to cope with concerns and develop personal goals. Caregivers and older adults with chronic conditions also welcome. Registration deadline: Oct. 11. Attendees must register at 703-281-0538. Contact Maureen Riddel, Shepherd's Center volunteer at 703-481-2371 or Casey Tarr, SCOV Health Advocate at 703-821-6838.

THURSDAY/OCT. 17

Annual Seniors Fair. 9 a.m.-noon at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital, 2501 Parkers Lane. Event will feature free health screenings, wellness information and more. Free massages

are also offered. Registration required. Call 1-855-694-6682 and press 2.




Medicare Open Season Workshop. 12:45 p.m. at Lorton Senior Center, 7722 Gunston Plaza, Lorton. Fairfax County is offering free Medicare Open Season workshops. Information and registration at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/vicap.htm or call 703-550-7195.

Vietnam Vets of America Chapter Meeting. 7:30 p.m., at Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane, Cedar Lane Shopping Center, Vienna. All veterans, friends and the general public are invited to hear Jack Connolly, Army veteran and career State Department Foreign Service officer, who will share his personal experiences of the battle of Vientiane, Laos in 1961, Saigon intrigue in 1968, and the assassination of an American ambassador to Lebanon in 1976. 703-255-0353 or www.vva227.org.

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