



HURA news

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Loneliness and Isolation Affect Millions of Older Americans

*All the lonely people, where
do they all come from?*

*All the lonely people, where
do they all belong?*

—The Beatles, “Eleanor Rigby”

Loneliness affects 25% to 60% of older Americans and puts millions age 50 and over at risk of poor health from prolonged loneliness, according to Charlotte Yeh, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at AARP Services, Inc., whose work was reported in the January 18, 2017, *Harvard Gazette*.

She found in a survey of members of the AARP Medicare Supplement Plans that about 28% were lonely and about 9% were severely lonely. Their social isolation is more than being alone. It's the result of feeling detached physically or psychologically, or being disconnected from support groups of family, friends, and community. The AARP Foundation's "Connect 2 Affect" campaign [Connect2Affect.org] is based on the premise that when people connect, they affect each other's lives.

They found that there is an increased risk of death due to subjective feelings

of loneliness. Researchers predicted that loneliness has an equivalent risk factor to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, shortening one's lifespan by eight years. They reported that more than half of people age 75 and older live alone, frequently contributing to their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development, a 75-year longitudinal study of men, has found that loneliness is toxic. The more isolated people are, the less happy they are, and brain function declines as well as physical health. Loneliness and isolation are not the same thing, but how people perceive their experience of loneliness and whether or not they *feel* isolated is the issue.

Isolation in older adults is rarely caused by a single event. More often, it's the result of multiple causes, including poor physical and mental health and poorly designed or non-existent support communities. These include transportation challenges, such as lack of accessible and affordable transportation options following

Continued on page 6

COMING EVENTS

**March 28, Tuesday,
2:00-5:00 p.m. Reading and
Workshop on Korean Sijo
by Harvard poet**

David McCann, Korea
Foundation Professor of

Korean Literature,
Emeritus. For
more information,
contact Margaret
Carayannopoulos

at 781-820-7408, margaretc15@
comcast.net. Registration flyer
will be sent by email. See a
profile of Professor McCann
on page 5 in this issue. Phillips
Brooks House, Harvard Yard.



**May 10, Wednesday,
10:30-1:00 p.m. Mt. Auburn**



**Cemetery, Spring
Walking Tour and
Lunch.** See registra-
tion information on
page 7 in this issue.

**June 6, Tuesday, 8:00 p.m.
Boston Pops with Leslie
Odom, Jr.,** who portrayed
Aaron Burr in the hit Broadway
show *Hamilton*. Registration
information will be in the May/
June *HURA News* and by E-List.



Leslie Odom, Jr.

National Museum of African American History and Culture Opens in D.C.



Photo by Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC

On a bright, sunny Friday morning last September, HURA Board Member Jackie Benson Jones flew to Washington, D.C. to join friends for a weekend of festivities celebrating the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) on the National Mall. The air was thick with excitement as everyone gathered for musical performances, oral presentations, and evening concerts. After 13 years of planning, construction, and collecting, the museum's dedication and opening drew a crowd of nearly 30,000 visitors from across the country. It was a thrilling event by everyone's account.

The museum officially opened on Saturday, September 24, 2016, following a dedication ceremony that

included President Barack Obama, Chief Justice John Roberts, House Speaker Paul Ryan, Congressman John Lewis, and President George W. Bush. Built on five acres of the National Mall, the NMAAHC was authorized by Congress in 2003 as a federally owned museum and one of the 19 museums in the Smithsonian system. The museum is distinctive in two ways: its purpose and its structure. Its purpose, according to founding director Lonnie G. Bunch III, is for "this museum to tell the American story through the lens of African American history and culture. This is America's story, and this museum is for all Americans, not just for African Americans."

The building's structure is unique among museums in that it is not marble and it is not square. The

building is glass surrounded by aluminum-coated bronze in a tiered trapezoid design. Award-winning lead designer David Adjaye indicated that the tiered design depicts a Yoruba crown or corona—a reference to crowns characteristic of Yoruba art from West Africa. During the course of the day, depending on weather and light, the bronze bands can turn various shades of color. In the sunlight the crown appears golden while at dusk the color can change to mahogany or chestnut.

As its name indicates, the NMAAHC is actually two museums in one. Historical exhibits take up 60% of gallery space while cultural exhibits take up 40%. In total there are 85,000 square feet of exhibit space with 37,000 artifacts related to community, family, visual and performing arts, religion, civil rights, slavery, and segregation.

When Lonnie Bunch was hired as founding director in 2005, the museum did not own a single item. He started a program called “Saving African American Treasures,” which he modeled after the PBS program “Antiques Roadshow.” Professional conservationists traveled the country helping people preserve their family treasures and photographs. Bunch had two goals with this program. One was to create “buzz” about the museum, and the other was to encourage generosity. He was successful in this effort. Curators collected more than 35,000 objects, and most were donations.

A tour of the museum starts three

stories underground. The elevator operator will tell you that you are being dropped off into the 15th century. The lower two levels of the three-level history section focus on themes of slavery and integration

segregation section there are several stories about black entrepreneurship juxtaposed with exhibits of the white satin Ku Klux Klan hoods worn by folks who were determined to discourage and destroy black entrepreneurship. The third history level is called “1968 to Today”, where the multi-media information begins with the merging of politics and pop culture. Throughout the exhibits, but especially in those on slavery, the museum carefully articulates the skills of these workers and sheds new light on the contributions that slaves made to agriculture and industry through their innovation, creativity, and artisanship.

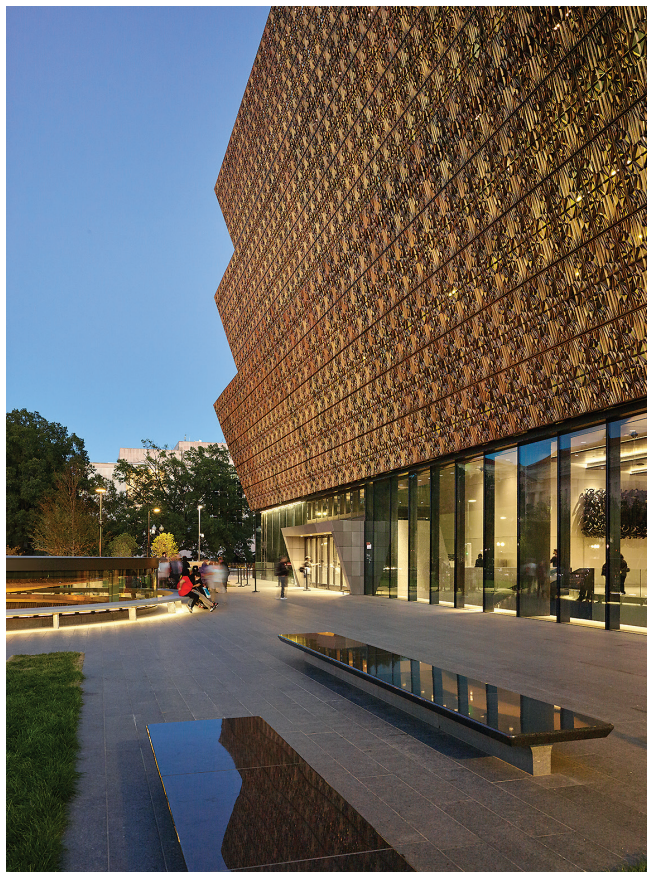
The upper levels of the museum celebrate the cultural contributions made by African Americans. Here galleries focus on sports, music, and the visual and performing arts. Each gallery has related memorabilia on display, including the red Cadillac convertible popularized by Chuck Berry when he sang his hit song “Go Daddy Go” and introduced rock and roll to the American public. The 350-seat Oprah Winfrey Theater on the concourse level showcases films, concerts, and conversations about the African American experience. The upper floors include education space and the Center for African American Media Arts. Here visitors

are able to research their family genealogy utilizing the Freedman’s Bureau records. A staff genealogist is available to assist.

A visit to the NMAAHC should be
Continued on page 5



Photos by Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC



until 1968. Visitors will see artifacts, including a reconstructed slave cabin from a plantation in South Carolina, and will also read information about the role black patriots played in the American Revolution. In the

Medicare Patients Get Validated Parking at HUHS

Harvard University Health Services now offers **parking validation** in the Smith Campus Center garage to Medicare patients, i.e. retirees. Parking validation is also offered in conjunction with the free valet parking service that is available.

Details about the policy and procedures:

90-minute maximum validation per parking pass. Validations should be obtained in the department in which the appointment occurred.

Visit must be during regular business hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Pharmacy only).

Visit must be for one of the following:

- Medical appointment (primary care or specialty)
- Behavioral health appointment
- Obtaining medical records
- Obtaining a flu shot
- Attending hypertension- or diabetes-related class
- Obtaining prescriptions at the HUHS Pharmacy (excludes over-the-counter items)

After Hours Urgent Care at the HUHS Law School Clinic, which has been relocated to Pound Hall, offers free parking at the 10 Everett Street Garage (Monday-Friday from 5:30 p.m.-11:00 p.m.) and at 22 Everett Street, the Perkins Lot (Monday-Friday from 11:00 p.m.-7:30 a.m. and all day on weekends and holidays).

University Health Services on the Move

Harvard Dental Service has moved to a brand new, state-of-the-art clinic at 114 Mt. Auburn Street, 7th floor. Call 617-495-2063 to schedule an appointment.

The HUHS Pharmacy also recently moved to a brand-new space on the first floor of HUHS in the Smith Campus Center. Visit the Pharmacy for convenient pick-up of prescriptions written by HUHS clinicians and discounts on over-the-counter items. Parking validation is not available for over-the-counter purchases.

Special Benefits (VERIP) Accounts and Pensions

HHR Benefits has responded to questions about a Special Benefit, known as a Very Early Retirement Incentive Package (VERIP) that some retirees received when they retired. Those who have not already taken this tax-deferred money and who are now at or approaching age 70 ½, have asked questions about how the IRS's Required Minimum Distribution may apply to this pre-tax money. HHR Benefits staff created a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ). It has been added to the FAQ section of the HURA Website, which may be found at www.HURA.Harvard.edu.

HURA can also send it by email or in print by regular mail if that is more helpful. Contact your editor at mch12938@comcast.net or 781-641-2942 to request a copy.

IRS Taxes Retirees' Imputed Income

HHR Benefits has sent letters to about 50 affected retirees who have registered domestic partners or ex-spouses covered on their retiree

medical plans. Harvard's contribution toward the coverage for such persons is considered by the IRS to be income to the retiree. And the retiree is responsible for paying taxes on the value of that "imputed income," just as active employees are. Call Benefits with questions at 617-496-4001.

Best College Destinations Include Boston/Cambridge

The American Institute for Economic Research has released the results of its survey of preferred College Destinations, 2017, which asked college students to rank the characteristics that are important in the college towns they have selected for study. Among the factors are college-educated population, diversity, city access, arts and entertainment, bars and restaurants, youth unemployment rate, labor force participation, innovation, and rent.

In the Major Metros areas, San Francisco came in first with Boston second, followed by Washington, DC, Minneapolis, Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, and Houston. Midsize Metros found Denver, CO first; Small Metro areas, Ann Arbor, MI; and College Towns, Boulder, CO.

The full report is at <https://www.aier.org/research/best-college-destinations-offer-diversity-access-and-city-lifestyles>, AIER Research Brief, 16 December 2016.

Ten Things That Will Soon Disappear Forever

The online *Kiplinger Today* newsletter (12/30/2016) listed those "Ten Things". There were few surprises (except they listed eleven): keys, dial-up modems, blackouts, online

Continued on page 8

Spring Program To Feature Poet David McCann

HURA's spring poetry program features readings and a discussion by Harvard poet David McCann, Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Literature, Emeritus; Associate of Currier House. March 28, 2:00-5:00 p.m., Phillips Brooks House living room.

Professor McCann received his B.A. from Amherst College, taught English for two years in Korea in the Peace Corps, and received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard. He has published twenty-four books: anthologies, studies on Korean literary culture, translations of the poets Sowol, Pak Chaesam, Kim Chi Ha, Ko Un,



Kim Namjo, and So Chongju, as well as four collections of his own poetry. His work in the field of Korean literature has been recognized

by the Manhae Prize in 2004 and the Korean Culture Order of Merit in 2006. His current work explores the performance functions of literature during periods of cultural confrontation, case-study functions of historical compilations, and other features of Korean literature and literary culture.

The class on writing Asian poetry that Professor McCann teaches at Harvard includes units on Chinese quatrains, Korean sijo, and Japanese haiku. Why, McCann wondered, couldn't the three-line Korean sijo that he loves enjoy the same widespread recognition as the three-line, 17-syllable haiku?

Museum of African American History and Culture Opens

Continued from page 3
a multi-day experience. There is too much to see to absorb it all in one visit, especially when so much information is being revealed to visitors for the very first time. One of the most memorable exhibits is the blue and yellow bi-plane that was flown by the Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military pilots. This fragile-looking training machine gives one a greater appreciation for their bravery. It is also exciting to see the magnificent gown of orange silk and black velvet worn by Marian Anderson when she sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. Barred from giving her concert in Constitution Hall by the segregationist

policies of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Anderson's open air concert on the Mall was attended by 75,000 people. The gown was donated by her nephew.

Touring this museum can be a spiritual and emotional journey for many people of African descent. Everyone attending took great pride in realizing that black history is

finally integrated into the bricks and mortar of American history.

Since the museum's opening last September more than 750,000 people have visited. Entry to the museum is free and timed entry passes can be secured online; however, the museum is booked through late spring. Passes for May 2017 were made available on February 1.

*Written by Donna Levy Wray
and Jackie Benson Jones*



Photo by Alan Karchmer/NMAAHC

Loneliness and Isolation Affect Millions

Continued from page 1

giving up their own cars. In some communities, support services are provided by volunteer-based ride programs, van services of local Councils on Aging and senior centers, and ride programs of city and town public transportation utilities.

Poor health and well-being that results from untreated hearing loss, mobility impairments, frailty, and poor mental health can be addressed by chronic disease management and falls prevention programs.

Life transitions and role loss or change resulting from leaving the workforce, loss of a partner or friend, or becoming a caregiver may be eased by support groups, the social programs of senior centers and clubs, and creative-artful aging programs.

Societal barriers may be present in the forms of ageism or lack of opportunities for older adults to engage and contribute. In some settings, these are addressed by intergenerational programs, lifelong learning, and community policies to support an older workforce.

The National Institute on Aging recommends that elderly people talk with their doctors about thoughts and feelings of being lonely or isolated; feeling sad, down, or blue; problems with memory or thinking; and problems with sleep or changes in sleep patterns. Discussing these may help the health professional assist in finding solutions. And in many communities, it is neighbors—you and I—who can make a difference by knocking on a door to ask “How are you doing? Can I get you anything? Can I take you grocery shopping?”

Brain Workouts Important for Healthy Aging

HealthDay, an online publication of the National Library of Medicine, reported recently the results of a Mayo Clinic study that showed “Busy Minds May Be Better at Fighting Dementia”. Computer use, crafting, social activities, and games all seem to boost brain health, even if you’re genetically predisposed toward dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

For their study, Mayo researchers followed more than 1,900 mentally healthy men and women participating in the Mayo Clinic Study of Aging for four years. Their average age when the study began was 77. During that period, more than 450 participants developed mild cognitive impairment—a slight but noticeable decline in memory and thinking skills that may be the first step toward developing dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

The study found that those who regularly engaged in certain mind-stimulating activities had a lower risk of memory and thinking troubles. Researchers saw this risk go down by:

- 30 percent with computer use
- 28 percent with crafting activities
- 23 percent with social activities
- 22 percent with playing games

People who performed these activities at least one to two times per week had less decline in memory and thinking skills than people who did these activities only two to three times per month or less.

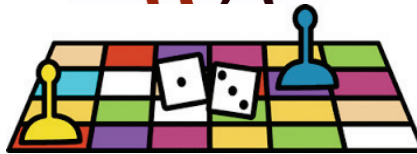
Reading books and newspapers regularly didn’t seem to confer the same benefits for thinking and memory, the study concluded.

Researchers suggested that crossword and sudoku puzzles probably are good brain exercises, as well. A good brain workout appears to require different levels of intellectual stimulation, such as thinking out problems in your mind and then manipulating objects to create the solution. These exercises need to involve not just looking at something, but the interaction with your vision and your hands and movement.

“Think of operating a computer, especially for an older person,” said one of the authors.

“It can be challenging. Things always go wrong, and you have to problem-solve to figure out why something didn’t work as it should have.”

The new study provides geriatric doctors with more evidence to convince patients that brain workouts are important for healthy aging. There is evidence now that if you stay mentally active, you will actually do much better than if you don’t.





A Spring Walking Tour & Lunch at Mount Auburn Cemetery

**Wednesday, May 10, 2017 • 10:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m.
580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge**

Join Curator Meg L. Winslow for a private tour of Mount Auburn Cemetery, a National Historic Landmark. It is one of the most significant designed landscapes in the country, known for its breathtaking horticultural beauty, its many historic associations, significant works of art, and the monuments of notable residents.

Lunch following the tour will be in historic Bigelow Chapel, a beautiful Gothic Revival structure that is the oldest building on the property. Meg will stay for lunch and continue her talk about the cemetery and the chapel.

The tour is approximately 1 mile over both paved and uneven terrain. Meet at the Visitor Center. Park on site. The cemetery can be reached by bus #71 or #73 from Harvard Square. Tours are held rain or shine, but in case of extreme weather, the alternate date will be May 17. For more details, visit the Mt. Auburn Cemetery website at www.mountauburn.org.



Registration deadline: May 3

Cost of tour and lunch: \$25 per person.

Checks will be deposited after the deadline.

No acknowledgement of registrations will be sent.

Send registration form with check payable to HURA to Ann Walter, 10 Beverly Rd., Arlington, MA 02474-1212.

Questions: Contact Ann Walter at 781-646-5398, ann.walter@verizon.net; or Beverly Sullivan at 781-646-8346, bevpeter@verizon.net.



----- CUT AND RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK -----

Member name (for name tag) _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Guest name (one) _____ Amount enclosed at \$25 per person: \$ _____

**Harvard University
Retirees Association**
124 Mt. Auburn Street
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Cambridge, MA 02138



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IN BRIEF

Continued from page 4
reader surveys, fast-food workers, the
clutch pedal, college text books with
grade and high school books close
behind, the agricultural plow, mail
collection boxes, the incandescent
bulb, and privacy.

If you are online, they said, you
had better assume that you already
have no privacy and act accordingly.
Every mouse click and keystroke
are tracked, logged, and potentially

analyzed and eventually used by
website product managers, market-
ers, hackers, and others. To access
most services, users have to opt-in
to lengthy terms and conditions
that allow their data to be crunched
by all sorts of actors, and the list of
tracking devices is about to boom.

The article was written by
David Muhlbaum, online editor at
Kiplinger, and John Miley, reporter.

National Institute on Aging's Elist for Caregivers

Caregivers can get helpful resources
delivered straight to their inboxes!
Sign up for the NIA for Caregivers list
at <https://www.nia.nih.gov/contact/>
subscribe and receive biweekly emails
with information and tips about:

- Alzheimer's caregiving
- Long-distance caregiving
- Caregiver health, and more

HURA is a tax-exempt 501 (c) 7 all-volunteer organization. Membership is open to benefits-eligible retirees of Harvard University and is complimentary until the renewal period the following June. Thereafter dues are \$20 annually.