# Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

***Changing The Way We Think About Memory Loss***

***May, 2021***

## May /June Meeting Schedule

***Subject to Change**

**May 4th - Dancing With Elephants book review- Zoom**

**May 18th - Caregiver's Panel discussion -Zoom**

**June 1st -1-2:30 pm - In person Social! Urban Plains Picnic Shelter B- 3080 51st St. S. Fargo**

**June 21st - 1-2:30 pm - In person Social! Urban Plains Picnic Shelter B - 3080 51st St. S. Fargo**

## In This Issue


- Some Things Never Change - Deb Kaul
- *This Day* by Mark Bratlie
- "Still Here, Still Me" - "What's the Up Side to Having Alzheimer's disease?" - Richard Taylor, PH.D
- For Our Health - Daytime R&R -Dr. Sanjay Gupta
- Just For Laughs- Steve Froslie
- Building Skills and Community
- Tribute to Crystal Van Maasdam - Curtis Van Maasdam
- Love Partners - Janet Olson
- The Value of Giving - Katharine Hepburn


### Mission Statement

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with memory loss and their loved ones through socialization, education, the creative arts, community service and community engagement.

Hi Memory Cafe!

It happened again. I saw someone at the YMCA who I haven't seen since before the pandemic started. "Hey Ann!" I said enthusiastically to my long lost friend. "Wow, it's so good to see you! It's been a LONG year, hasn't it?"

(Long pause)" Umm, yes, it sure has been. (Pause) Umm, how have you been?" Several uncomfortable seconds tick by. "Oh wait...Deb?! Is that you? Oh wow! I didn't even recognize you at first!

Yep, it's me alright. Deb Kaul with my mask and Covid revealed silver hair!

How about you? Have you undergone any significant changes over the past fourteen months? Among our fabulous team of volunteers Karen is now an 'au natural silver headed beauty, Puffi is sporting a matching set of new knees, Sharon and Shirley are modeling even kinder and gentler smiles, Gerry, our Mr. McFeely Speedy Delivery serviceman is speedier than ever, and believe it or not, Brad and Dan have lost even more of the rooftops atop their heads (see page three for proof).

But some personal features will never be altered. "Yes, your hair color has changed but your smile sure hasn't, Deb!" a friend recently suggested. I suspect no matter what changes you've experienced during Covid your sweet smiles remain unchanged too. I can't wait to see those smiles in person again very soon!

Warmly,
~Deb Kaul

"I went to my high school reunion over the weekend. Some of my classmates changed so much that they didn't even recognize me."

**The Memory Cafe gang is getting back together again IN PERSON on Tuesday, June 1st 1-2:30pm!**

**Address:**
**Urban Plains Park, Shelter B**
**3080 51st St. S**
**Fargo, ND**
**Directly east of the Scheels Arena**
**Refreshments will be served!**

*Spring Has Sprung!!*

*This Day* beautifully captures the essence of mindfulness; noticing and appreciating the holy moments and sacred places of our lives.

**This Day**
by
Mark Bratlie

Sun shines on nature's face
Wind whispers bough to bough
Air fills with nectar's fragrance
Present day finds harmony

*This is a sacred place*
*This is a holy time*

Strangers meet upon a walk
Kind words exchanged as gifts
Smiles take the place of sun
Earth's brightness shows increase

Children laughing with abandon
Fleeting moments throb with life
Human spirits fill with lightness
Weary tension dissipates

Arms reach out to touch another
Touch extends to warm embrace
Love says it all in silence
A pair transforms itself to one

Past and future are released
Present gently fills with joy
Nothing further is desired
Each moment is itself complete

*Welcome to a sacred place*
*Welcome to a holy time*

## Member Updates

- Dick Estes sends his greetings and warm wishes from his new home in North Carolina!
- Jeff Knoll, aka "Grandpa Jeff" is the proud grandfather for his first grandchild, Reuben Jay! "When I have him in my presence there is NOBODY else!", declares the delighted grandpa!
- Carol and Jim L recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary! Wow, congratulations Jim and Carol!
- A belated Happy Birthday greeting to Beverly C. who turned a spry 89 years old on April 18th!!

## "Still Here, Still Me"
## Voices of Persons Living With Cognitive Disabilities

### *What's the Up Side to Having Alzheimer's Disease?*

*Alzheimer's from the INSIDE OUT*

By Richard Taylor, PH.D

*Richard Taylor, PH.D was a psychologist who wrote eloquently about his experiences living with Alzheimer's disease. He always began his videos and presentations with: "Hello. My name is Richard, and I have dementia, probably of the Alzheimer's type." He was a founding member of Dementia Action International and a powerful advocate for improving the lives of individuals living with dementia. He passed away in 2015 due to cancer.*

What's the up side? Nothing that I can think of, right off the bat, but here are some thoughts on how my life has changed since I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

I talk more often and longer on the phone with my out-of-town family members.

We talk more about what is going on inside us rather than around us.

We get together for more than weddings, funerals, and an occasional Christmas.

I have discovered in my brother and myself a resonance of thought and feeling that I only sensed prior to the diagnosis. My spouse and I have developed a new level and intensity of closeness, an intimacy about our life as husband and wife. One of my children retired early from the Air Force and moved to Houston to help his mother and me. Along with my son and daughter-in-law came my two grandchildren. Instead of seeing them four times a year, I see them four or more times a day!

I started to write again in my Simple Abundance Gratitude Journal (list four things each day for which you feel gratitude and do not repeat them again on your list). I take longer walks with my dog, Annie. We talk more, or at least I do.

I am a better teacher. I care about and try to show it to all my students, even the ones who do not care back. I initiate more email contact, and I promptly answer all who write me. I am planning on a long-postponed rafting trip down the Grand Canyon, and I would like to take a Windjammer cruise (where passengers are a part of the crew on a large schooner).

I spend more time feeling and thinking about what is going on inside of me. Sometimes, this is good; most times, it is not. I am more in touch with *me.*

*(continued on page 6)*

## For Our Health
### Daytime R & R

Dr. Sanjay Gupta

Excerpted from *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age*

Sleep is a rejuvenating activity that the body demands, but there is a difference between sleep and rest. We need both and must include other activities of rest and relaxation into our waking lives in order to stay sharp. Our mental well-being in general depends on this too--and we know that greater mental well-being is associated with reduced dementia risks. We also know the opposite is true: Conditions like certain types of anxiety and depression can be warning signs for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. So combating these by reducing stress and building mental resilience is important.

Here are some R&R ideas to consider in the name of mental well-being and building a more resilient brain:

- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Deep breathing
- Forest bathing (spending time in nature)
- Volunteering in your community
- Expressing gratitude - consider keeping a journal
- Practicing the art of forgiveness
- Looking for things that make you laugh
- Taking breaks from social media and email
- Finding another hour in your day at least once a week to do whatever you'd like. If you want to "create" an extra hour in your day, be very strict with your time spent looking at a screen.
- Establishing a system of rewards throughout the day. Simply pick a task---hopefully your most important one of the day---and set your timer for twenty-five minutes. Work solely on that task with no distractions until the timer rings. Then take a five-minute break and repeat as necessary.
- Avoiding multi-tasking --our brains don't like it!
- Identifying your marbles (your top priorities) and sand (lesser priorities) and plan accordingly.
- Decluttering your life
- Setting aside fifteen minutes each day for yourself.
- Allowing yourself to daydream.
- Asking for help from a professional if you're having problems.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor."

~ thich nhat hanh, Stepping into Freedom: Rules of Monastic Practice for Novices

## Just For Laughs!

Content Provided by Steve Froslie

Little Ole answered the knock at the door and then went to his dad. "Dad, dere is somevon at da door tew collect donations for a swimming pool."
To which Ole replied, "Vell, den give him a glass ov water."

Sign seen during a conference: For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the first floor. "

I killed two birds with one stone by giving up my New Year's resolutions for Lent.

I was the best door-to-door security alarms salesman for several years running. The trick was to just leave a brochure on the kitchen table if there was nobody home.

I went to see my doctor about my short-term memory problems. He made me pay in advance.

The man who created autocorrect has died. Restaurant in peace.

As I get older and remember all the people I've lost along the way, Ii think to myself, "Maybe a career as a tour guide wasn't for me."

### Paying Honor to the Bald and Beautiful

"They don't put marble countertops on cheap furniture."
~Dan C. volunteer and board member

"God only created so many perfect heads. The rest He covered with hair."
~Brad M. volunteer

# Building Skills and Community

## April 6th
## How Does Your Garden Grow?

Everyone who attended this zoom meeting left feeling energized to get their hands into some fresh soil and sow their seeds! Don Kinzler, NDSU Extension Horticulturist offered an inspiring presentation covering a wide range of gardening topics. Thank you Don! Tune into Don's spring and summer radio broadcasts if you'd like to spend more time learning from him!

**"Successful Gardening"** on KQLX AgNews AM 890 every Thursday at 11:05am
**"Lawn and Garden Radio"** on WDAY AM 970 every Wednesday at 2:30pm on the Jay Thomas Show

## May 4th
## Learning to Dance With Our Elephants

We are anticipating a lively discussion and some special guests as we explore the book, *Dancing With Elephants, Mindfulness Training For Those Living With Dementia, Chronic Illness or an Aging Brain* by Jarem Sawastsky. Craig Johnson, Memory Cafe board member and Adult Discipleship Pastor from Bethel Church: Dr. Ted Kleiman, retired physician and Memory Cafe participant: and Brenda Weiler, Yoga/meditation instructor from Ecce Yoga will join us as we examine the notion of building community, practicing mindfulness, and finding joy in the midst of painful circumstances and suffering in our lives.

## April 20th
## Your Hobbies and Your Health Connection
### Emily Brooks, Mrs. ND International

We were honored to welcome a very busy Emily Brooks to Memory Cafe in April. Emily shared her passion for developing and expressing the creativity we ALL possess through our hobbies. Possible health benefits of hobbies include: distracting us from the stress in our lives, providing meaning and purpose to our lives, opening opportunities to make new friends and engaging in fun socialization events, increasing our ability to deal with hardships, and possibly even providing additional income! We also enjoyed reminiscing about PINBALL! Turns out we have some former pinball champions in our Memory Cafe midst!

## May 18th
## Care Partner Panel Discussion

*The Caregiver's Guide to Dementia, Practical Advice for Caring for Yourself and Your Loved One* by Gail Weatherill, RN, CAEd will be our focus on May 18th. Jan Jones, Janet Olson (see page 6 for Janet and Rick's story), and Brenda Weiler from Ecce Yoga will help lead us through this discussion and guided practice of self-compassion and loving kindness to ourselves.

## Looking for a New Hobby? Birding Anyone?

There is a new and rather amazing internet tool for learning the probability of birds likely to be found currently within your ZIP code area.
Go to **michaelfogleman.com/birds**, enter your ZIP code and hit update.
You will be given the probability of a species having been reported there during the chosen month.
You can click on a species to find out where best to find it during the selected month, a very cool service indeed. This works for any ZIP code in the U.S.
This service was created by Michael Fogleman, a North Carolina birder who used historical data of sightings reported to the listing service eBird, a service of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
For instance, on March 23 for ZIP 55391, there was a predicted 26% chance of seeing a hooded merganser within 10 minutes of my ZIP boundaries. In February my chance was 0.4%.
~Jim Williams, New York Times

## Introducing Sanford Health/UND Behavioral Health Bridge

The Behavioral Health Bridge is powered by a partnership between Sanford Health and the University of North Dakota. The purpose of the Behavioral Health Bridge is to provide information on common behavioral health conditions and launch virtual behavioral health treatments to address the current needs of people in our community.
The content on this webpage is a first step in providing reliable, valid, and useful information about various elements of behavioral health. Information about behavioral health is constantly changing and developing so please check this site regularly for new information and helpful resources.
**www.behavioralhealthbridge.org**

## HeartSprings Class Registration Deadline Extended

The deadline for registering for *Drums Alive!, T'ai Chi Chih,* and *Movement for Finding Ease has been extended to May 1st. Please call HeartSprings at 701-261-3142 or visit their website* ***heartspringscenter.org*** *to register.*

# Building Skills and Community

## Tribute to Crystal Van Maasdam
by Curtis Van Maasdam

Crystal Van Maasdam, was more than my wife, as cliché as it sounds, she was my best friend, my reason for living, my everything on this earth. At age 54, we got the diagnosis of early onset dementia. My world felt shattered as I tried, but so often failed to comprehend that I would lose the person that meant more to me than life itself.

Like many of us in this situation, I tried to absorb what I could from different books or classes so I could be more prepared as inevitable caregiver. Most dealt with tangible things like physical care and preparing your house for diminishing abilities. At the beginning that was fine, but there was so much more I was unprepared for. It was a roller coaster event of issues. For me the ones that I could easiest manage were the ones that just took work to do, like feeding, bathing, dressing and so on. The ones that were the most difficult were emotional, to see the person that I loved slipping away and the loneliness that ensued.

The emotional loss, I was not able to prepare for nearly enough. To compound the loneliness of the effect the disease dealt us, was the loss and isolation that happened from what I thought would be a support system. Friends of ours no longer called or came to visit. Church family avoided us, neighbors and so on. Only a very few people decided to be part of our life through this pain. Although I do understand, when people don't know what to say, most say nothing. If you don't know what to do around someone in this condition, the easiest thing is not be around them.

That was so painful, but thanks to my faith in God, I knew I was not alone, even when it felt like that. Having those few people who didn't avoid us, was a life saving blessing. Make no mistake, the loneliness was still crushing. If you have a true support system that won't abandon you as you go through this, you have much to be grateful for. Hold on to them.

**How do I answer my dad with dementia when he talks about his mom and dad being alive? Do I go along with it or tell him they have passed away?**

Enter into his reality and enjoy it. He doesn't need to be "orientated." Thank God the days are gone when people with dementia were tortured by their loved ones who were trying to "reorientate" them to some current reality.

If dad spends most of his time in 1959, sit with him. Ask him questions he didn't have time to answer before. Ask about people long dead, but alive to him and appreciate the opportunity to celebrate your heritage. His parents are alive to him. So learn more about your grandparents and family heritage. If he tells the same story over and over again, appreciate it as if it's music, and you keep coming back to the beautiful refrain.

Embrace the time you have together, don't waste it by correcting him. It will only agitate him and cause him to mistrust you.

This is an opportunity to communicate with him in a respectful and mutually satisfying manner.

*~Excerpt from a facebook post from Alex, Steve and Linda Froslie's granddaughter.*

## Love and Kindness
Submitted by Ginny Leon

Love and kindness are never wasted.
They always make a difference.
They bless the one who receives them
And bless you, the giver.

## Care Partners Consider this....
by Jolene Brackey

Your siblings, friends, co-workers may not always be your best teachers when figuring out what will work and what won't work with your loved one. Keep trying different things until you get a better response from your loved one who is living with dementia. Look at their face. Your experience in that moment will teach you. Short term memory loss is a blessing. When you make a mistake you get a do-over in a few minutes! Mistakes teach you what not to do. Be gentle with yourself.

**In every MOMENT you are doing the best you know how to do.**

## "Love Partners"
## By Janet Olson

My husband Rick and I have been married forty years and have four children and five grandchildren. Like most middle aged couples we were looking forward to retirement and the promise of traveling and spending lots of time with those precious grandchildren. Unbeknownst to us, events leading up to June 16, 2017, were slowly changing our lives and disrupting those future dreams.

It all started in 2014 when we started noticing problems with Rick's health. He was having some trouble walking. We started going to doctors who ordered a variety of therapies. In August of 2014 Mayo clinic diagnosed Rick with Hereditary Spastic Paraparesis.

Several years later, on June 16, 2017 we were arriving at our daughter's home in Sioux Falls for a visit when Rick suffered a major stroke which affected the right parietal and occipital lobes of his brain. Luckily - or perhaps it was a blessing, we were very close to Sanford Hospital so he was treated immediately. Exactly five months to the date later he was discharged from the hospital and able to come home to our family farm. Since that time four years ago his recovery and stability have been a journey. While he has lost a lot of his mobility, independence and voice, he still has his humor and amazing spirit.

At the time of his stroke I was working part time as an Occupational Therapist. I retired in 2017 and have been at home with Rick since then. I am often asked, "Are you his caregiver?" I feel that term makes me seem more of a nurse and less of a wife. "Caregiver" doesn't convey how much love Rick gives to me. So I prefer the term "Love Giver" or "Love Partner."

Rick and I are continually reading to find ways to navigate this journey with wisdom, humor, and gratefulness. Our most recent inspirational book is *Dancing With Elephants* by Jarem Sawatsky which was given to us by Memory Cafe. On page 17 the author speaks about suffering... *"Suffering is real and must be faced head-on. But suffering alone is not enough. On the other side of suffering can be joy--and also more suffering. We must learn to dance with both."*

So Rick and I continue to learn how to dance with our elephants with tears, joy and gratitude.

I am looking forward to meeting you and participating in the discussion of *Dancing With Elephants* during Memory Cafe on May 4th!

## What's the Upside to Having Alzheimer's disease?

(continued from page 2)

I have learned to recognize the difference between sympathy and empathy, and I have learned how to accept both of them. I don't care as much how well the Chicago Bears are doing this season. Formerly, a loss on their part on Sunday would produce a dour mood in yours truly for most of Monday.

You might say I have a deeper appreciation of what I should and should not respond to emotionally.

I give more of myself and most times expect nothing in return. Is this the "up side," or is this how I should have lived in the first place? In either case, these responses to the disease feel good.

Still, I couldn't really say, as some others with Alzheimer's do, that I am glad that I know that I have Alzheimer's, glad that I got the diagnosis early.

## Mark Your Calendars!

*Redefining Memory Loss*, Memory Cafe's annual Caregiver's Conference has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 7th, 2022 at the Holiday Inn in Fargo. We're thrilled to announce Erin Bonitto, M.S., A.D.C., founder and lead coach of Gemini-Consulting will be our keynote speaker.

The Greatest Gift
Submitted by Ginny Leon

The greatest gift you can give someone is
Your time
Your attention
Your love
Your concern

## The Value of Giving

by Katharine Hepburn
Submitted by Steve Froslie

"Once when I was a teenager, my father and I were standing in line to buy tickets for the circus. Finally, there was only one other family between us and the ticket counter. This family made a big impression on me.

There were eight children, all probably under the age of 12. The way they were dressed, you could tell they didn't have a lot of money, but their clothes were neat and clean.

The children were well-behaved, all of them standing in line, two-by-two behind their parents, holding hands. They were excitedly jabbering about the clowns, animals, and all the acts they would be seeing that night. By their excitement you could sense they had never been to the circus before. It would be a highlight of their lives.

The father and mother were at the head of the pack standing proud as could be. The mother was holding her husband's hand, looking up at him as if to say, "You're my knight in shining armor." He was smiling and enjoying seeing his family happy.

The ticket lady asked the man how many tickets he wanted? He proudly responded, "I'd like to buy eight children's tickets and two adult tickets, so I can take my family to the circus." The ticket lady stated the price.

The man's wife let go of his hand, her head dropped, the man's lip began to quiver. Then he leaned a little closer and asked, "How much did you say?" The ticket lady again stated the price.

The man didn't have enough money. How was he supposed to turn and tell his eight kids that he didn't have enough money to take them to the circus?

Seeing what was going on, my dad reached into his pocket, pulled out a $20 bill, and then dropped it on the ground. (We were not wealthy in any sense of the word!) My father bent down, picked up the $20 bill, tapped the man on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, sir, this fell out of your pocket."

The man understood what was going on. He wasn't begging for a handout but certainly appreciated the help in a desperate, heartbreaking and embarrassing situation.

He looked straight into my dad's eyes, took my dad's hand in both of his, squeezed tightly onto the $20 bill, and with his lip quivering and a tear streaming down his cheek, he replied; "Thank you, thank you, sir. This really means a lot to me and my family."

My father and I went back to our car and drove home. The $20 that my dad gave away is what we were going to buy our own tickets with.

Although we didn't get to see the circus that night, we both felt a joy inside us that was far greater than seeing the circus could ever provide.

That day I learnt the value to Give.

The Giver is bigger than the Receiver. If you want to be large, larger than life, learn to Give. Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get - only with what you are expecting to give - which is everything.

The importance of giving, blessing others can never be over emphasized because there's always joy in giving. Learn to make someone happy by acts of giving."

~ Katharine Hepburn

memory cafe

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