



Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

PEOPLE WHO ARE FORGETTING SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN



October 2025

OCTOBER

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MY IMPRESSIONS

By AL AAMODT

So, a couple of weeks ago, my buddy "Crash" (Craig McEwen) called and asked me to put my '40 Chevy in the Memory Café's first-ever car show. Crash shared with me he's having memory issues and has been involved with this group for a while now.



Of course, I said I would; I'd do pretty much anything for him. Besides, I was curious about this group, and what they do.

It was a bright, sunny afternoon—a beautiful day and lots of very nice cars. The only thing brighter was the wonderfully warm welcome from Deb Kaul, Maggie Ness and the staff from Memory Café. (Con't p. 7)

Hi Memory Cafe Friends,

At Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley, we are passionate about honoring the moments that truly matter. On this journey and in every life's journey, it's those meaningful moments that shape us. When we take the time to pause, reflect, and appreciate them, we often find peace, purpose, and connection along the way.

While reading a children's book on gratitude to my son, I was struck by this page that said:

"This day will never happen again. Everything is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Give thanks in this moment. And this moment. And this moment. And all your moments going forward."

Our team at Memory Cafe is deeply grateful for the moments we share with everyone who joins us, moments filled with smiles, laughter, and connection, as well as those marked by frustration, anger, or fear. It's through all of these moments that we build a community, one that surrounds us with support as we continue on this journey together.

This past week, we got to share the tremendously exciting news that we have received an incredible gift of a beautiful building and property to our memory loss community. This is a major milestone moment for Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley as it will help us continue to enhance and transform our work and in the lives of many impacted by memory loss.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us, past and present, with your time, energy, expertise, and financial contributions. We are especially grateful to the individuals and families who place their trust in us as they navigate the challenges of memory loss. Your belief in our mission is the reason we're here today, and we couldn't do this work without each and every one of you.

With gratitude,

Maggie Ness

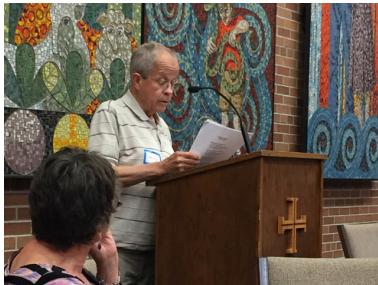


Remember Memory Cafe!

Our generous donors provided over 85% of our support last year! Please remember Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley with your 2025 year end gift. Thank you!

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to recognize the intrinsic beauty and value of individuals living with memory loss while inspiring in them and their loved ones hope, joy, and a sense of empowerment.

The Friend by Larry Nelson



Larry reading his poem, *The Friend*, after composing it at a Memory Cafe gathering June 2018.

*We walk in the sand this day
Remembering the love we have for a friend
And noting his quietness ahead
On the path.*

*The pace is slow
as he prepares to pause to look back...
Are they still on the trail?*

*Soon time has passed -
Now we walk together
There are smiles, there is rest, and we say
thanks for the treasure it is
to have and be a friend.*

*Small as this short moment is
Only we know how sweet it is -
When Grace comes with a friend.*

STILL HERE, STILL ME

Voices of Those Living With Memory Loss
By Larry Nelson

My Memory of “58102” – National Geographic **by Larry Nelson (1941-2022)** **Written June 2018**

If I recall correctly, it was sometime in 2009 that I opened our National Geographic magazine to the regular feature of picking a zip code somewhere in the United States. This time the zip code was 58102 – Fargo, North Dakota!

We had been living in San Diego for about 35 years by that time. I am a graduate of NDSU and my wife, Gail, was working at deLendrecie's on Main Avenue at the time we met in 1972. We have always had relatives living here and loved coming back for visits and NDSU Homecoming. The National Geographic article had a picture from inside the FargoDome showing many, many people filling sand bags. The article explained how the flood had brought the residents of Fargo-Moorhead together to help each other – to fill sand bags, loading and unloading them where they were needed, to help save properties – or at least to minimize the damage! Whole families had come to help, students from all the colleges in the area, young and old and many ethnicities! It made me very grateful and very proud to be from here. I brought the magazine to my workplace to show my co-workers this great demonstration of Midwestern culture of caring for each other.

Since 2012, we are once again living in the Fargo-Moorhead area. My wife and I are privileged to have new friends here at the Memory Cafe. A common problem has brought us together. And with God's help – and the help of our new friends, we will get through our challenges ahead with grace and joy. The shared experiences give us encouragement to face our health issues as they come. We thank God for all of you.

TESTIMONY, WHY MEMORY CAFE STILL MATTERS TO ME

by Gail Nelson, Larry's wife

Larry and I started attending Memory Café after meeting Deb Kaul at an information meeting about memory loss – held at the Hjemkomst in Moorhead (2016?). Larry was suspecting that he may be having memory issues. The neurological testing, however, was inconclusive but still showed some indications of memory problems. After we heard Deb's presentation about the hope there was for living a full, productive, and happy life – even with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's, we decided to check out Memory Café. We both loved it right from the start. The volunteers welcomed us and the other attendees were so friendly. We sang a song at the beginning of each meeting that said “Hello” to everyone who was there! It was quite an “ice-breaker”.... Just a silly song, but something that put everyone at ease. Each one of us heard our name sung out in welcome!



We attended every meeting – and I went to the Caregivers gathering at the Fryn' Pan on the 4th Wednesdays. We had a busy life before finding Memory Café. We were daily Mass-goers and attended several AA meetings weekly. Yet, we adjusted our schedule so as not to miss a single Memory Café meeting. We received so much information about memory loss—the various types, what might slow the progression: diet, exercise, creative crafts, music. And we learned about the challenges ahead. There were plenty of difficulties, frustration, anger, hallucinations, finding the right balance for medications. But through it all, we had Memory Café friends suggesting resources for help – from their own experiences. We were never alone. (con't p. 7)



FOR OUR HEALTH

Why Writing by Hand is Better for Your Brain (excerpted)

By Pamela B. Rutledge Ph.D., M.B.A.
Psychology Today, March 7, 2024

While slower than digital, writing by hand daily may help fight cognitive decline. While it seems most relevant to boomers and Gen X, we should all take note of the study by Van der Weel and Van der Meer (2024), too, who found writing by hand (rather than tapping away on your keyboard) increases brain connectivity. It may be time to consider deleting some of those list-making and journal apps from your phone and return to paper and notebooks.

There's lots of empirical evidence that writing has psychological benefits. Writing helps people process life's emotional ups and downs through sense-making—the greater the cognitive effort to find meaning (Ullrich & Lutgendorf, 2002), the greater appreciation of the benefits and improved mood. Meaning and positive emotions are central to well-being. However, I had never considered the physical act of handwriting as a brain health/healthy aging activity. The greater brain activity from handwriting compared to typing is thought to explain why handwritten notes are linked to increased learning among students (Van der Weel & Van der Meer, 2024).

Key points:

- Writing by hand instead of typing deepens content processing and supports emotional health.
- Regularly practicing handwriting may improve brain structure and function.

'THE GATHERING' SUPPORT GROUP



'The Gathering' is a support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss caused by aging or any medical reason. No diagnosis or reservation necessary. Mondays, 9-11am, Bethel.

"I am so grateful for this group! It reminds me that I am not alone in this journey." ~Deb

"Coming here on Monday mornings is the highlight of my week! I can't wait for Monday mornings to arrive!" ~Craig

"This group is so important to me. It fits me like a glove." ~Chuck



JUST FOR LAUGHS

STEVE FROSLIE AND FRIENDS



Steve and his lovely wife, Linda.

After a month of dieting I lost thirty days.

Did you hear about the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles who resigned on Tuesday? He tried to resign on Monday, but found he'd been standing in the wrong line.

Old age makes us great multi-taskers. Why, I can sneeze and pee at the same time!

"What are you so happy about?" a woman asked the 98 year-old man. "I broke a mirror," he replied. "But that means seven years of bad luck." "I know," he said, beaming. "Isn't that wonderful?"

What an automated society we live in. Have you ever noticed that when a traffic signal turns green, it automatically activates the horn of the car behind you?

I have a condition that makes it hard to go on a diet. It is called "I'm hungry".

"What position does your brother play on the football team?" Tom was asked. "I'm not real sure," the boy replied, "but I think he is one of the drawbacks."

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"'Going home' is a journey to the heart of who we are, a place where we can be ourselves and welcome the reality of our beauty and our pain. From this acceptance of ourselves, we can accept others as they are and we can see our common humanity."

~Jean Vanier





OCTOBER MEETING SCHEDULE

ALL MEMORY CAFE GATHERINGS ARE FREE.

NO RESERVATIONS OR DOCTOR ORDERS ARE REQUIRED.

NEWCOMERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

MONDAY SCHEDULE

Meet at Bethel Church (2702 30th Ave S. Fargo)

Oct. 6th - Music Therapy

Oct. 13th - 9-11am Morning Programs

9:00-9:30 - Fitness and Friends Exercise with Coach Jake
9:30-11:00 - Coffee and Conversation Support Groups (free respite care for your loved one provided by our well-trained volunteers)

9:30-11 - 'The Gathering' - Support group for individuals experiencing early stages of memory loss for any medical reason.

1-2:30pm, Caregiver Education: "Communication: Listening to the Silence" with Jane Millikan, Wood burning with Jerry, and Joyful Moments with Friends

Oct. 20th - 9-11 am - Morning programs as noted above. No afternoon programming

Oct. 27th - 9-11 am, Morning programs as noted above
11:30 - 'Dine and Dance', Mhd American Legion
6pm - **Young Onset Support Group**, Rustad Center, West Fargo 601 26th Ave E. West Fargo

Tuesday 'Dancing With Friends'

Date: October 7th, 14th, 21st - 1:00 - 2:00PM

Location: Courts Plus

Reservations: Desired, but not required

Call: 701.404.6712

Cost: FREE!

We are excited to offer additional fun and engaging opportunities to explore the world of dancing! We'll explore a variety of social dance styles such as the waltz, foxtrot, line dancing and more. No dancing experience or dance partner is necessary!

Dancing allows you to move your body, stimulate your mind and connect with others in a friendly environment. Come as you are and dance with your friends!

VOLUNTEER LUNCH AND LEARN

Topic: Communication Strategies

Monday, October 6th - 11:30 AM -12:30 PM, Bethel church

Lunch will be served so reservations are appreciated.

All volunteers are warmly encouraged to attend!

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

All meetings are held from 1-2:30 pm at various locations as noted below:

Oct. 1st - Music with the Golden Notes Band. Hope Lutheran Church, 2902 25th St S. Fargo

Oct. 8th - Education: 'Connecting the Caregiver Conference' Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

Oct. 15th - Fall Festival of Arts with the Plains Art Museum, Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

Oct. 22nd - Support Group Meetings:

9:30 -11 am - Moving Ahead: Life After Loss Support Group

1-2:30 pm - Caregiver Cafe. Both groups meet at the Memory Cafe office - 1122 1st Ave N. Fargo

Oct. 29th - 'Spooky Scams and How to Avoid Them' with Jeff Carney, Dark Horse IT. Hope Lutheran Church, South

'MOVING AHEAD: LIFE AFTER LOSS' SUPPORT GROUP

For widows/widowers who have lost their loved one from dementia. Oct. 22nd -9:30-11am, Memory Cafe office

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP

Oct. 27th - Rustad Center, 6-7:30pm 26th Ave E. West Fargo

Education: Assistive Technology and Home Safety, with Amber McCauley, Occupational Therapist, ND Assistive.

'THE GATHERING' SUPPORT GROUP

Support and education for individuals experiencing early stage memory loss or cognitive changes due to aging or any disease process. Mondays, 9:30 - 11 AM, Bethel church

'CLUB SANDWICH' SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, Oct. 9th 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Memory Cafe office

Support for caregivers who are caring for a loved one with memory loss while managing their own families, careers and responsibilities. See p. 6 for additional details.

SING FROM YOUR HEART CHORUS

Rehearsals are held every Thursday from 1 - 3pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 613 16th St. S. Fargo.

Newcomers with no singing experience are warmly welcomed.



A LAVISH GIFT!

MEMORY CAFE OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY NOW HAS A PERMANENT PLACE TO CALL HOME!

Address: 3910 25th St. S. Fargo

Memory Café of the Red River Valley is thrilled to announce that we have received a LAVISHLY GENEROUS gift: a fully donated building and land in south Fargo, securing a permanent home for not only our organization but our entire surrounding community. This incredible anonymous gift opens the door for us to serve YOU and the entire region in even more transformative ways.

While the building is in excellent condition, it still requires enhancements and expansion to fully serve our community. A public capital campaign to raise needed funds is being initiated in the near future.

Open House Photos



WORDS MATTER (excerpted)

Pathways To Well-being
Dementia Action Alliance

When advocate John-Richard Pagan was invited to participate at a forum at the National Academy of Sciences, he was pleased to be there. But one incident marred the day. "I didn't like that someone from the National Institute on Aging used the word demented in describing people living with dementia. I spoke up. 'How dare you use that word? I am not demented. I am living with dementia. It's a condition that affects my life but I'm still living.'

One recurring theme is that the words our culture uses to talk about dementia can greatly contribute to people's fears, sorrows, and despair. For John-Richard, the sting of being called "demented" is still with him. Words matter!

Another term we use is "care partner" rather than "caregiver." Individuals living with dementia are agents of their own lives for as long as possible. They are not mere recipients of care. They need support, not pity or control. They also continue to give to others. Relationships are reciprocal even as they change over time.

Family wellness
A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SANFORD HEALTH

In our continued effort to promote health and wellness for our participants, we have tentatively scheduled a tour and education session at Family Wellness on Tuesday, Oct. 28th at 11am. Word on the street suggests we may have two personal tour guides from 'The Gathering' join the staff to show us around and provide fitness tips! Stay tuned!

DO NOT WORRY

By Erv Inniger

Don't
worry

Embrace the present, don't obsess over the future. Einstein wisely noted, "I never think of the future. It comes soon enough." How often do we find ourselves lost in anxieties about what's to come, missing the beauty and opportunities of the present moment? The future remains unwritten, a tapestry of possibilities. Instead of being consumed by "what ifs," cultivate gratitude for what you have now and focus on building constructively, one day at a time. Matthew 6:34. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Love you.



Sing From Your Heart Chorus

By Deb McTaggart, Director

This is why we sing!



Recent research highlights the profound impact of dementia-friendly choruses on the well-being of those living with memory loss. Singing taps into parts of the brain related to music and emotions, which often remain intact even as dementia progresses.

Singing in a chorus gives the brain a great workout by engaging multiple functions at once. It also offers physical benefits, as it can improve breathing, increase oxygen levels, and encourage body movement. Emotionally, singing together boosts mood and energy by releasing "feel-good hormones" that help reduce stress and anxiety. The chorus also provides a strong sense of community, which helps to reduce the loneliness and isolation often associated with a dementia diagnosis.

Lastly, singing in a chorus provides a shared, social activity that can help to prompt recall. Even when other memories fade, deeply rooted musical memories often remain. The rhythm and melody of songs act as a bridge to recall lyrics and associated memories. The shared activity of singing together makes people feel successful and connected, creating moments of joy and purpose that last beyond the rehearsal time.

Mark your calendar for our fall concert, "Let the Light Shine!" on Saturday, November 22!

For more information, visit our website:
singfromyourheartchorus.org

Join Club Sandwich

A DEMENTIA CAREGIVING NETWORK



**Thursday, Oct. 9th
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Memory Cafe Office
1122 1st Ave N., Fargo
(park on 12th St.)**

When you join Club Sandwich, you are joining other adult children who are "Sandwich Generation Caregivers". Sandwich generation caregivers are caregivers who are caring for parents (or in-laws) with memory loss and managing their own families/relationships, careers and/or responsibilities.

CARE PARTNER CORNER

By Teryl Clausen, LSW (retired)

Care Partner Support Group Facilitator

Somewhere in the midst of the dementia journey with my husband, I remember feeling sad, and telling him "I feel like I'm losing you." He looked surprised and answered "I'm right here." Yes, he was sitting right next to me. What I was experiencing was ambiguous loss, which in the context of dementia is used to describe grief due to the loss of a person's cognitive abilities, personality, and sense of self while they are still physically present. An example of ambiguous loss is a spouse who no longer recognizes their partner or engages in meaningful conversation.



Ambiguous loss can feel lonely, stressful, and confusing in part because it lacks closure. Ambiguous loss can lead to a range of emotions, including sadness, depression, anxiety, and feelings of hopelessness. Care partners also can experience anticipatory grief, which comes from watching their loved one slip away step by step and knowing they can't stop the decline. This can begin long before their loved one is actually gone. Anticipatory grief can cause the care partner to become depressed which can lead to withdrawal from others. Other symptoms may include difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite and difficulty concentrating.

It is important for family and friends of the caregiver to look for signs of either of these types of grief as it seems to make no sense to grieve for a person who is still alive. The care partner may need extra support and understanding people to listen to them as they process their feelings and emotions. They might also benefit from a grief counselor, a support group, or mental health professional. A doctor may be able to help with symptoms such as sleep, mood, and appetite changes. Prioritizing physical and mental well-being is important as is acknowledging and validating their feelings.

Like the dementia journey, the grief journey before and after death is different for each person but the need for support and understanding from others remains the same.



September 29
-THROUGH-
December 2

The Caring Catalog is an online giving platform powered by the FM Area Foundation to help connect community members with local nonprofits.

When giving through the Caring Catalog, you can make multiple gifts in one transaction. All gifts are tax-deductible. They accept:

- Online donations
- Checks made out to the FM Area Foundation, with the nonprofit you want to support in the memo line
- Gifts of stock (Please contact FMAF at 701.234.0756 and ask for Patty Mastel or Lexi Oestreich)



MY IMPRESSIONS (con't from p.1)

As Crash and I walked among the Corvettes, 60s muscle cars and street rods, he told me about how the Memory Café has helped him deal with his memory issues—some pretty personal stuff. I was impressed...and more curious. So, I told him, I'd like to join him, if possible, at one of his regular Monday sessions.

That didn't take long. A couple of days later, he called and said I was welcome to join in.

That Monday, as I walked into the unfamiliar surroundings, (to me) that are Bethel Church, Crash was waiting for me. I truly didn't know what to expect, as we headed toward the room where the group gets together.

But there was Deb, with her smile and warm welcome. I thought I'd sit outside the squared circle that is the group, but she insisted I be a part of it.

The men and women there were people I didn't know, except of course for Crash, Deb and Deb Dawson. I knew Deb-D, professionally through her efforts helping orphaned girls in Africa. It was fascinating for me, to hear and see, first-hand, what these folks had to say.

The issue of the day was driving with memory loss---or not. Think about it. Consider what your life would be like if you suddenly lost that freedom---to get in the car and go some place---anyplace.

One man spoke of a “close call” he’d experienced while driving in recent days. It clearly shook him. Another mourned the loss of riding his motorcycle. And there is a woman who seemed rightfully distressed about the “elephant in the room” question---“what happens when I can no longer drive”.

I saw one man, wiping his eyes.

What I saw and heard from this dozen or so men and women, truly was enlightening and inspiring.

They aren’t running from their malady. They are proactively facing it—head on and the reality of what may well be around that next curve.

They are honest with themselves and each other.

They are courageous.

And clearly, they, like my dear friend Crash, are grateful to have people to share their exceptionally personal stories, concerns and an occasional good laugh....at this place called Memory Café.

MEMORY STRATEGY: ENGAGE!

Avoiding Isolation and Loneliness
www.alzheimers.org.uk



In 2024, a meta-analysis of 600,000 individuals from multiple NIA-funded population-based studies found that those feeling lonely were associated with a 31% increased risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease and a 15% increase in cognitive impairment (non-dementia memory/thinking decline).

Social isolation is related to someone’s marital status as married people often have more social contact with others than single people. As studies show, lifelong single people are more likely to develop dementia than those who are married. Widowed people are also slightly more likely to develop dementia.

Social contact is significantly increased in married people, and there are other factors that may reduce the dementia risk for married people. Married people are more likely to be healthier and have more education.

Even when accounting for these factors, social isolation is shown to increase dementia risk. There is also known to be a strong connection between high social contact later in life and memory and thinking skills.

It is not known why social isolation increases dementia risk, but one study showed how it was linked to a host of other health and social factors. Lonely people are more likely to drink heavily, smoke, not exercise and be overweight and have heart problems all of which increase dementia risk.

TESTIMONY (con't from p. 2)

I always hoped there would be a meeting that Larry could attend in the early stages of his disease where he could talk with others with the same problem – without me around. A place for him to open up about what he was going through with others who would understand – because they were there, too. Now that has come to pass in Memory Café with the Monday morning sessions of several groups meeting – and something for everyone—care receiver and caregiver as well as any that may suspect a memory issue (no diagnosis required!).

I am so very grateful for Memory Café. What a gift God provided for Larry and me. Though Larry passed three years ago I occasionally attend the weekly meetings and especially appreciate the educational updates. Our lives were – and still are enriched by the people we meet here and the memories we share. The generosity of the volunteers, staff and Board members to provide these services without any charge to the attendees, inspires me.

I will continue to support Memory Café in every way I am able. I hope every person who lives with memory loss will find Memory Café with the hope and love that Larry and I found here.

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Memory Cafe of the Red River

Valley

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EXCELS at creating moments of JOY!
Thank you for supporting our mission!**



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