

The Westbrook Chatterbox

To paraphrase the Grateful Dead – “Lately it occurs to me, What a long, strange month it’s been.”

Never in my life have I had a month like this. Stay at home. No going out to eat. No going shopping. Doctor appointments over the phone. Can’t get my hair cut. Can’t go to the dentist because they are closed. All the normal daily activities are suspended. Things I’ve always taken for granted, I’m wishing for.

As the month has progressed, we have learned to do things differently...yet again. Activities are done via Zoom and with social distancing and then that stopped. And exercise and music was broadcasted over Channel 2. Meals were served to you and then they were delivered to your rooms.

And face masks. Oh the glorious facemasks.... Staff wears them all the time and you get to wear them when you are out of your room. We have been greatly blessed by several who have made both beautiful and colorful masks for us. It’s interesting to see the variety of sizes, shapes, colors and innovative ways that the masks are worn.

But in spite of all of these changes and trials, we have adapted and not let it get us down. You come out and play cards and games with your face masks on. Joan created the “Take a Walk” sheets for you and you have walked the halls for exercise and treats while wearing your masks.

And your families have delivered care packages for you. Some of you have been able to visit with your families via Zoom. Phone calls, video calls and Facetime are happening with a new regularity. We may be locked down but we are not truly isolated. We have so many ways to connect with the outside world without actually going anywhere. AND we have each other.

This has not been an easy month. But can I just say how proud I am of how you guys have stepped up and rolled with the punches. You’ve accepted the new guidelines with grace and have complied without grumbling. Because of this, we’re having a positive experience. We will look back on this time with astonishment and fond memories. Thank you for making what could be a difficult and unpleasant time more than bearable.

*Until Next Month,
Janelle*



The Story of Mother's Day

The earliest Mother's Day celebrations can be traced back to the spring celebrations of ancient Greece in honor of Rhea, the Mother of the Gods. During the 1600's, England celebrated a day called "*Mothering Sunday*". Celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Lent (the 40 day period leading up to Easter*), "*Mothering Sunday*" honored the mothers of England.

During this time many of the England's poor worked as servants for the wealthy. As most jobs were located far from their homes, the servants would live at the houses of their employers. On Mothering Sunday the servants would have the day off and were encouraged to return home and spend the day with their mothers. A special cake, called the *mothering cake*, was often brought along to provide a festive touch.

As Christianity spread throughout Europe the celebration changed to honor the "*Mother Church*" - the spiritual power that gave them life and protected them from harm. Over time the church festival blended with the Mothering Sunday celebration. People began honoring their mothers as well as the church.

In the United States Mother's Day was first suggested in 1872 by *Julia Ward Howe* (who wrote the words to the Battle hymn of the Republic) as a day dedicated to peace. Ms. Howe would hold organized Mother's Day meetings in Boston, Mass ever year.

In 1907 *Ana Jarvis*, from Philadelphia, began a campaign to establish a national Mother's Day. Ms. Jarvis persuaded her mother's church in Grafton, West Virginia to celebrate Mother's Day on the second anniversary of her mother's death, the 2nd Sunday of May. By the next year Mother's Day was also celebrated in Philadelphia.

Ms. Jarvis and her supporters began to write to ministers, businessman, and politicians in their quest to establish a national Mother's Day. It was successful as by 1911 Mother's Day was celebrated in almost every state. President Woodrow Wilson, in 1914, made the official announcement proclaiming Mother's Day as a national holiday that was to be held each year on the 2nd Sunday of May.

While many countries of the world celebrate their own Mother's Day at different times throughout the year, there are some countries such as Denmark, Finland, Italy, Turkey, Australia, and Belgium which also celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May.



Nature Notes from Martha



Good Morning....and a good one it is...

I have missed seeing all of my friends at Westbrook and finally thought of a way to connect with you. As you may or may not know, I live in the country....and about 150 feet from the back deck we have a 1/2 acre pond. The pond has an island in the middle and every year we have a pair of geese come to nest on the island. For the past 10 years we have also had a pair of wood ducks come to the pond. The geese we see daily but the wood ducks are very secretive and seldom seen. Our house was designed with the pond in mind. We have many windows across the back and it is my window into the beauty of nature.

I always go to the windows as soon as I get up to see what is happening today...

And every day is different. Last Thursday I looked out my window and saw the pair of Geese with 7 goslings, the Wood Duck pair, 6 Teal and the Big Blue Heron on the pond....what a sight! On the bird feeder I had Cardinals, Tufted Titmouse, 2 different woodpeckers, wild canaries (Goldfinch) and others. I felt like I was on a cruise to Birdland...and the very next day we watched the Geese take the goslings out of the pond to graze on the dam. Then they got back in water and feed along the bank. For the next hour they took the babies to every part of the pond and the different banks. The only bad part of watching the Geese is when they start taking the goslings across the road to another pond in the afternoons. It is a little ways over there and although they leave with 7 they may return with 6...but that is nature.

My morning at the window is my daily visit with God. I look at his handiwork and wonder how anyone could doubt His power and love.

Enjoy your day and I will see you soon, Martha



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"The staff really make the whole organization at Westbrook They really excel with the socialization and activities and they took care of everyone. You can tell that it's more than just a job to them." Becky W



Just a Bit of Humor...



If I were two-faced, would I be wearing this one? – Abraham Lincoln

The only mystery in life is why the kamikaze pilots wore helmets. – Al McGuire

At every party there are two kinds of people – those who want to go home and those who don't. The trouble is, they are usually married to each other. – Ann Landers

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first, and call whatever you hit the target. – Ashleigh Brilliant

Wine is constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy. – Benjamin Franklin

People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day. – A.A. Milne

Facebook just sound like a drag, in my day seeing pictures of peoples vacations was considered a punishment. – Betty White

As a child, my family's menu consisted of two choices: take it or leave it. – Buddy Hackett

If you want your children to listen, try talking softly to someone else. – Ann Landers

They say marriages are made in Heaven. But so is thunder and lightning. – Clint Eastwood

Laughing at our mistakes can lengthen our own life. Laughing at someone else's mistake can shorten it. – Cullen Hightower

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened. – Dr. Suess

A woman is like a tea bag – you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.



Son: "Mom can I get twenty bucks"
Mom: Does it look like I am made of money
Son: "Well isn't that what M.O.M stands for?"

Spring Fever Four high school boys afflicted with spring fever skipped morning classes. After lunch they reported to the teacher that they had a flat tire. Much to their relief she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a test today so take seats apart from one another and take out a piece of paper." Still smiling, she waited for them to sit down. Then she said: "First Question: Which tire was flat?"



Wonderful Thoughts about Mothers...

An ounce of mother is worth a ton of school. – Spanish Proverb

It is my opinion that the future good or bad conduct of a child entirely depends upon the mother – Napoleon I

Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children. – W.M. Thackeray

Men are what their mothers make them. – R.W. Emerson

The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. – W.R. Wallace

Grandma

I like to walk with Grandma,
Her steps are short like mine,
She doesn't say, "Now Hurry Up!"
She always takes her time.
I like to walk to Grandma,
Wee pebbles bright, a funny cloud,
Half hidden drops of dew.
Most people have to hurry.
They do not stop and see.
I'm glad that God made Grandma
Unrushed and young like me.



A Letter to My Mother...

Dear Mother –

I wrote this so that you will always know what you have meant to me through the years. You are truly the kind of Mom every child dreams of having. Your love, your kindness, your endless support and generosity know no bounds. You have not only been a precious Mother to me, but have been the most important role model anyone could ever have. The person I am today, is because of the guidance and example you have shown me with your unconditional love above all that. No matter how far I may go.... I will always need you. Thank you for the greatest gift I'll ever receive.... You!

What is a Grandmother?

A grandmother is a remarkable woman,
She's a wonderful combination of
warmth and kindness, laughter and love.
She overlooks our faults, encourages our dreams
And praises our every success.

A grandmother has the wisdom of a teacher,
The sincerity of a true friend and the
Tenderness of a mother.
She's someone we admire, respect and love very much.

A grandmother will always have a cherished
Place in our memories and in our hearts.
She's someone for who we want every happiness
In return for the joy she always brings.

A grandmother is all the dear and precious things in life....
When she's a grandmother like you.

When I Won the Lottery by Marina Rinehart

My name is Luz "Marina" Rinehart and I was born on the 14th of April, in Bogotá, Colombia. The story of my life, interestingly enough, began on April Fool's Day... I'm not fooling you. April 1, 2004, I became a Rinehart. Many children in foster care grow up without a family to call their own, but I was lucky enough to win the lottery and be placed with my forever home in America when I was eight years old. I am so thankful life was kind enough to give me a second chance of living life freely. It's such an amazing feeling to have people in my life to be grateful for. My birth mother, Mercedes, gave me a gift of life, when she decided she could no longer care for my two siblings and I. She chose to give us the opportunity for a better life by placing us in foster care with the hope of someday being adopted into a loving home. My parents, Jim & Debbie Rinehart, raised five children of their own while providing a home for foreign exchange students from around the world, before being blessed with the spirit of adoption. Adoption can be beautiful, amazing and life saving because that's what I've experienced.



My GMA is the heart and soul of my HUGE family. When my GMA passed away, it was heartbreaking. However, she left behind a legacy of love. I didn't realize at the time, but it was my GMA who inspired me to become a caregiver. During those times I would spend with my GMA at Oak Pointe, I would have those deep, meaningful conversations with her, and she would speak so highly of those who cared for her. Even witnessing the outpouring of love and support from the staff as they cared for my grandma as if she was their grandmother. It was that moment I realized I wanted to help people. I hope that in some small way, I might be able to inspire others as she did me. I will always be grateful for having a grandmother who taught me so much about love, forgiveness and acceptance. She inspired me to embark on a career in helping people. I am excited about what the future holds and hope I can make my grandma proud. And here I am now, a senior, awaiting graduation. Onward!

Positive Thinking Can Help You Age Well

There seems to be a lot of negativity in the world today – recent natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and pandemics, remind us of the fragility of life. And while we can't change what happens in the world, we do have control over our reactions to events. For instance, if you receive a diagnosis of a potentially life-threatening disease, instead of reacting with fear, take a step back and allow yourself to be grateful for everything you still have and seek out support from people who can help you deal with your state of being, both physically and emotionally. If we learn to recognize challenges as a way to learn and to grow, we are better able to deal with them and have a more positive response to them.

Numerous scientific studies have shown that negative attitudes can actually impact a person's health and well-being. A recent study from Yale showed that negative beliefs about aging may be linked to brain changes related to Alzheimer's disease – specifically, people who had more negative thoughts about aging had a significantly greater number of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles, two conditions associated with Alzheimer's.

Many of us have negative associations with growing older, yet research shows how important a positive attitude really is in improving quality of life. Another study from Yale University demonstrated that positive attitudes about aging could extend one's life by 7-1/2 years – a greater life-span gain than low cholesterol, low blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, or even from not smoking.

Repetitive thoughts – such as “Getting older is for the birds!” or “Old age comes with pain and suffering” – form neural pathways in the brain. The more you think them, the more ingrained they become in your psyche and your unconscious mind will continue playing these thoughts over and over until they become true.

Fortunately, you can “rewire” your brain by actively thinking positive thoughts and focusing your attention on the good things in your life. Positive thinking doesn't mean you are necessarily constantly happy or that you ignore life's unpleasantness – it simply means you approach life's challenges in a more positive and productive way.

Here are some ways you can help “reprogram” your brain into thinking more positively.

Be conscious of your thoughts: Your thoughts are very powerful. The first step to reprogram your brain is to be conscious of them. If you find yourself thinking “Life is hard,” notice what you're thinking and choose another thought to replace it. You may choose to shift your thoughts to “Life is hard and I continue to experience joy every day” or “Life is a blast and the challenges I face simply make me stronger.” If you change your thoughts, you can form new pathways in the brain which may, in turn, change your experience of life.

Start your day with gratitude: We've all heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Likewise, mornings are the most important time of day to work on creating a positive attitude, as it can set the tone for the entire day. Get up early enough that you can prepare for your day leisurely. Acknowledge the beauty of the day and all you have to be grateful for. When you start your day with gratitude, you've wired your brain to notice the good in your life.

Surround yourself with people and things that support a positive attitude: People can take on other people's energy without even being aware of it. If you find yourself feeling negative, find some positive people to hang out with. Read a book with a positive message or listen to music that inspires you.

Focus your attention on the good in your life: We all have something to be thankful for. Your job is simply to discover those things and acknowledge them. Once you start focusing on the good things in your life, you'll start attracting more and more things to be thankful for.