



# The Westbrook Chatterbox

Happy March!

It will be interesting to see what March has in store for us. If February is anything to go by, I'm afraid we're in for many more ups and downs in temperature as well as more snow. In like a lion and out like a lamb may or may not fit this year.

Here at Westbrook, we have a full calendar of activities. One activity that I'd like to call your attention to is the Wii Bowling. We will be starting our bowling leagues this month. We will have practice and fun bowling on Thursdays. We will have league bowling on Tuesday afternoon, the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>. These scores will be kept in a notebook and yes, there will be a monthly prize for the winning team.

You will notice a self-check page in this Chatterbox. Since the onset of Covid, we have all been made aware of the importance of our health – physically and mentally. This self-check form is a tool that you can use to determine how you are feeling. Once a week, you ask yourself the questions on the form and then write your answers. This will help you to realize if there are areas that need more of your attention. After all, we want you to be the best you possible.

"Dad" jokes have become quite the thing. A "Dad" joke is a wholesome joke of the type said to be told by fathers with a punchline that is often an obvious or predictable pun or play on words and usually judged to be endearingly corny or unfunny. You will discover a page full of "dad" jokes in this newsletter. They are corny, silly and many of them are groaners. I hope you enjoy the chuckles that come from reading these jokes.

Time change Sunday is March 12<sup>th</sup>. We spring forward. Rumor had it that we would not be falling back in the fall. However, the House of Representatives has not passed the bill yet even though the Senate did. So as of right now, we will fall back on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

St. Patrick's Day is March 17<sup>th</sup>. We will be celebrating with a happy hour. Catherine Bohm will be playing some lively Irish jigs and other such songs. We will have green beer as well as a couple of other drinks. Please plan on wearing all the green that you have available. It will be a fun time!!

Until Next Month,  
Janelle

## **The meaning behind the shamrock**

When talking about Ireland and its culture and symbolism, many different images come to mind. Affectionately known as the Emerald Isle, Ireland is perhaps best known for its bright green hue. Irish flags and even harps are symbolic of the nation, but there is perhaps one symbol that most widely represents the country: the shamrock.

A shamrock, by definition, is a young sprig of clover. However, plant experts actually have said that shamrocks are a distinct species of the clover plant, believed to be the white clover. The word "shamrock" is derived from the Irish "seamróg," which translates as "young clover." Over the centuries, this diminutive plant has come to symbolize Ireland and many things Irish. The shamrock also is a popular symbol of St. Patrick's Day.

The shamrock and Irish culture are so intertwined thanks to Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick. Legends attest to St. Patrick using the three petals of the shamrock to illustrate the mysteries of the Holy Trinity to the Celtic pagans. Each leaf represented the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The shamrock of Ireland has three leaves, not four as many people believe. The number three had significance in Ireland long before St. Patrick began to convert the masses. According to Blarney.com, the number three was believed to have magical properties and was a recurring theme in Celtic folklore. Because the Celts were familiar with the shamrock, it became easy to convert their knowledge of the shamrock to the magic of the trinity. The three leaves are also said to stand for faith, hope and love.

The four-leaf clover is a separate entity and a rarity. That is why the fourth leaf is deemed to be "lucky." But that lucky clover is not the traditional Irish symbol.

Thanks to their connection with Ireland, shamrocks are often gifted by the Prime Minister (Taoiseach) to the President of the United States in the White House each St. Patrick's Day. They are presented in a special Waterford crystal bowl featuring shamrocks in the design. This practice started in 1952.

Shamrocks also can be seen on Irish clothing designs, the Erin go Bragh flag and the uniforms of several Irish sports teams. Of course they also are seen during St. Patrick's Day celebrations. The shamrock and Ireland will always be linked.

Metro Editorial Library

## **The History of the Four-Leaf Clover**

The leprechaun has become one of the most beloved Irish symbols of St. Patrick's Day, due to the mythological associations with good luck. Leprechauns have been a popular fairy-like figure in Irish folklore for centuries, although up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were believed to wear red and not the green color they are so typically associated with today.

Leprechauns are believed to carry both sacks of gold and a four-leaf clover, both of which are symbolic of luck and prosperity. They are also said to be guardians of the treasures rumored to be left by the Vikings toward the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of the rainbow, there is said to be a four-leaf clover garden where the leprechauns hide their gold. Therefore the rainbow is also an important symbol associated with the four-leaf clover.

Just For Grins and Giggles

What do you call a pig in a wagon? Pulled Pork

Why are ice arenas corners rounded? Cause the ice will melt at ninety degrees

What do they call pastors in Germany? German Shepherds

I have a lot of jokes about unemployment but none of them work.

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

I was drinking at a bar so I took a bus home. That may not seem like a big deal to you but I have never driven a bus before.

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

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

They say I don't listen or something like that.

Forget the dogs, who let the idiots out?

The nice part about living in a small town is that when I don't know what I'm doing, somebody else does.

I'm not rude, I just say what everyone else is thinking.

Don't take life too seriously. It's not like you're going to get out alive.

You may not have lost all your marbles but there is definitely a hole in the bag.

At my age, "getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in for.

When I get old, I don't want people thinking, "what a sweet little old lady". I want them saying, "Oh, CRAP! What is she up to now?"

I'm sorry what I said before I had my coffee.,

We've been friends for so long, I can't remember which one of us is the bad influence.

Prayer is the best way to meet the Lord. But messing with my daughter is faster.

My boss told me to have a good day, so I went home.

You're living proof that wisdom doesn't always come with old age.

If I say I will do it, I will do it! No need to remind me every six months.

I meant to behave but there were too many other options.

Wine is to women as duct tape is to men...It fixes everything.

Some days my life is just a tent away from a circus.

Accept that someday you are the pigeon and some days you are the statue.

Old age...it's all in your head until it gets into your joints.

An apple a day will keep anyone away if you throw it hard enough.

I was spontaneous once....it didn't go as planned.

Telling a woman to calm down works about as well as baptizing a cat.

Aging has slowed me down but it hasn't shut me up.

A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.

I'm not short, I'm just more down-to-earth than other people.

My luck is like a bald guy who just won a comb.

I want to be a caterpillar. Eat a lot, sleep for a while and wake up beautiful.

If you shook the family tree, how many nuts would fall out?

Mr Roger's did not adequately prepare me for the people in my neighborhood

I wish I could drop my body off at the gym and pick it up when it's ready.

Sometimes I open my mouth and my mother comes out.

Math teachers have problems

Some people are such treasures that you just want to bury them.

### **Featured Resident – Virginia Eckhart**

Virginia was born in Sterling, IL, to Clarence and Viola Wolf. She was the third of four children. She had a sister ten years older than her and a sister two years younger as well as a brother five years older than her. Her dad owned his own house building business. He built the family home in Sterling.

Growing up, Virginia and her younger sister, Lora Lea, loved to play house. They had an uncle who was a dwarf. His name was Uncle Arch. He had a kitchen that was scaled for him and they girls loved playing house in it. They also liked to play jump rope and throwing the ball over the house to see if they could catch it.

Virginia enjoyed school. She really enjoyed home economics and math. She graduated from Sterling High School in 1949.

After high school, Virginia got a good job at ComEd, a utility company. She went to work at ComEd as a clerk and she was also a secretary to Mr. McGuinn, the boss. There were four older ladies already working there but Virginia won them over by being helpful to them as well.

Virginia met John Eckhart at work. He asked her to the formal Christmas Ball. She was worried if she could afford a formal but she did. They married a few short months later on May 24, 1953. Virginia had to quit her job due to a company policy.

The couple rented an apartment in Sterling. John continued to work at ComEd and Virginia stayed home. They welcomed their first daughter, Deb, in 1954. The family relocated to Dixon, IL, and welcomed their second daughter, Janet, in 1957.

Virginia remained home with the girls until they were both in school. She then got a job as a bookkeeper for First Federal Savings and Loan. They had uniforms to wear at that time and Virginia got to ride on a Fourth of July parade float one year.

While the girls were young, John and Virginia played cards most Friday nights. They went on picnics and Virginia was in a quilting club. Every Sunday they went to Grandma Wolf's house for a big family dinner. The adults played cards and the cousins ran wild. Then they had a big dinner complete with homemade bread.

As the girls reached high school, John and Virginia started doing some bus tours. They continued taking these trips after the girls were grown. Over the years, they went to Nashville several times and to the Ozarks. They rented a cabin in Wisconsin for two weeks every year for a decade. They met up with the same people even. They went on a Caribbean cruise and Virginia spent the entire first day sick. But was able to enjoy the excursions.

Virginia changed jobs in 1972. She went to work as a bookkeeper for Kline's Department Store. She retired from there in 1985. John retired later the same year.

John and Virginia helped Deb and Janet, both single parents, with their daughters, Melissa and Kate respectively. They still played cards and did bus tours.

In 2013, Deb passed away from cancer. In 2014, Virginia's great grandson, Carter, was diagnosed with leukemia. He was seven years old. He is now sixteen and in full remission.

John passed away from complications from a stroke. They had been married for sixty-seven years.

Janet moved in with Virginia and they remained in Dixon, IL, until November of 2022.

With her daughter, Kate and family, living in Liberty, Janet decided she would like to live closer to them. Kate started asking around about senior living options for Virginia. She heard of Westbrook from several clients.

Virginia moved into Westbrook in November of 2022. She loves the food and the fact that she doesn't have to fix it. She enjoys all the people and has made a lot of new friends. She loves all the activities especially Bingo and the music programs. Virginia enjoys embroidery, word searches and playing solitaire as well as double solitaire.

Besides Janet, Virginia has two granddaughters, Melissa (Matt Mitchell) and Kate (Joel Falcone). She also has five great grandchildren; Carter, Claire, Lucy, Hank and Gus.

When asked about a life lesson she has learned, she stated, "You have to be a nice person and treat everyone with kindness. It will get you a long ways and make you a lot of friends."

# MARCH

*Love makes our friends a little dearer.  
Joy makes our hearts a little lighter.  
Faith makes our paths a little clearer.  
Hope makes our lives a little brighter.  
Peace brings us all a little nearer.*



May you always be blessed  
With walls for the wind  
A roof for the rain  
A warm cup of tea by the fire  
Laughter to cheer you  
Those you love near you  
And all your heart might desire.

Just a Reminder  
Nothing is as easy as it looks. Everything takes longer than you expect and if anything can go wrong, it will at the worst possible moment. Do not resent growing old. Many are denied the privilege.

An Irishman is struggling to find a parking spot. "Lord", he prayed. "I can't stand this. If you open a space up for me, I swear I'll give up the Guinness and go to mass every Sunday." Suddenly, the clouds part and the sun shines on an empty parking spot. Without hesitation, the Irishman says, "Never mind, I found one!"

May love and laughter light your days  
May good and faithful friends be yours wherever you may roam  
May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures  
May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours!

Through all the frozen winter, my nose has grown most lonely  
For lovely, lovely colored smells that come in springtime only.  
The purple smell of lilacs, the yellow smell that blows  
Across the air of meadows where bright forsythia grows.  
The tall pink smell of peach trees, the low white smell of clover,  
And everywhere the great green smell of grass the whole world over.



March roars in like a lion so fierce,  
The wind so cold it seems to pierce  
The month rolls on and spring draw near  
And March out like a lamb so dear.



# Caring for Your Mental Health

## Overview

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act, make choices, and relate to others. Mental health is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to your overall health and quality of life. Self-care can play a role in maintaining your mental health and help support your treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness.

## About Self-Care

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. Even small acts of self-care in your daily life can have a big impact.

Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

- ◆ **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged if you can't do 30 minutes at one time.
- ◆ **Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.** A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus throughout the day. Also, limit caffeinated beverages such as soft drinks or coffee.
- ◆ **Make sleep a priority.** Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep. Blue light from devices and screens can make it harder to fall asleep, so reduce blue light exposure from your phone or computer before bedtime.
- ◆ **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore relaxation or wellness programs or apps, which may incorporate meditation, muscle relaxation, or breathing exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.
- ◆ **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done now and what can wait. Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you start to feel like you're taking on too much. Try to be mindful of what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- ◆ **Practice gratitude.** Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for. Be specific. Write them down at night, or replay them in your mind.
- ◆ **Focus on positivity.** Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.
- ◆ **Stay connected.** Reach out to your friends or family members who can provide emotional support and practical help.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. In addition, although self-care is not a cure for mental illnesses, understanding what causes or triggers your mild symptoms and what coping techniques work for you can help manage your mental health.

## When to Seek Professional Help

Seek professional help if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more, such as:

- ◆ Difficulty sleeping
- ◆ Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- ◆ Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- ◆ Inability to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- ◆ Don't wait until your symptoms are overwhelming. Talk about your concerns with your primary care provider, who can refer you to a mental health professional if needed.

From National Institute for Mental Health website