

our life

A Tai Chi class in Golden Valley offers various health benefits.

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Fitness
January Issue

Nordic Walking for seniors is new in Fridley this year

BY SUE WEBBER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Fridley senior citizens will have an opportunity to exercise with poles this spring, even after the snow is gone.

“Nordic Walking [with special poles] is a relatively new concept for seniors,” said Connie Thompson, Fridley’s senior program coordinator.

Linda Lemke, known as “The Nordic Walking Queen,” came to Fridley in October 2015 to train three coordinators to be group leaders. At a preview event in November, and some interested seniors got a chance to try Nordic Walking.

Lemke notes that Nordic Walking poles are different from those used for hiking and cross-country skiing. “These poles are designed to be used for a specific activity,” Lemke said.

“In the spring, we’ll start a group and we’ll be going gangbusters,” Thompson said, adding that Lemke will return in the spring to conduct some three-day clinics. “We have 10 sets of poles, and we’re hoping to meet weekly,” Thompson said. “We’ll be looking for a group leader.”

The poles are a boon for people who have leg and back issues, Thompson said. “You can walk faster and have a better workout with less effort,” she said. “It’s an all-body workout. I’m sold on it. It’s resistance training. You’re pushing against the poles.”

Poles, which are made of titanium and are perfectly balanced, cost about \$150 a set, Thompson said.



Fridley coordinators who have received training with Nordic Walking poles are, from left: Kris Morin, Christina-Michelle Kramer, Connie Thompson and Pat Fiala. (Submitted photo)

Lemke said she started Nordic Walking in 2002, when she was working at Hoigaard’s. Lemke was director of the firm’s Outdoor Women program from 2006-2014.

“We had a lot of intro classes because it was new and no one knew about it,” she said. “A man in one of the classes asked me if I was the queen of Nordic Walking, and I said, “Yes, I’m going to lead you all into the kingdom of fitness.”

She’s had the nickname ever since.

Although the adjustable poles are being purchased with a focus on senior citizens, it is anticipated that as the program gets going, they will be used by people of all ages.

“In Europe, they have huge after-school Nordic Walking programs,” Lemke said. “Not all kids or adults participate in sports, but they want to be active. This activity is fun and a perfect

way to get fit.”

Lemke, who is 64 and has been a fitness walker for 30 years, said Nordic Walking is a benefit for people of all ages.

“I can’t tell you what a joy it is to share the poles,” Lemke said. “It makes a difference in lifestyle and quality of life. I see so many people who desperately need to move, to become healthier and fit.”

The poles help with increased balance and posture, she said. “They have a lifting effect, so there’s less stress on the lower joints,” Lemke said. “You are pressing and creating resistance against the ground. It helps with bone and heart health, and higher calorie burn and strengthens your core muscles.

The activity is even more fun when shared with others, Lemke said. “Poles encourage the creation of a group,” she said. “There’s less isolation. You’re talking and actively engaged. Your whole body is in rhythm. It’s very relaxing and a way to dump stress.”

She said Nordic Walking “adds an upper body workout that engages your back, shoulders, arms and core muscles. You have the potential of working 90 percent of your body’s muscle groups while Nordic Walking. It’s less stressful to your joints, burns more calories, increases your oxygen consumption and your heart rate, adds stability and balance, and relaxes your mind while increasing your coordination.”

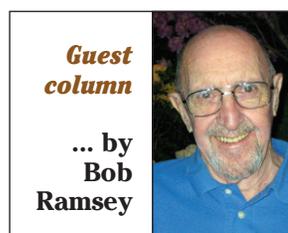
NORDIC WALKING - TO PAGE 3

Vital aging is an out-of-body experience

Like pubescent teenagers, older adults become increasingly concerned about what's going on within their bodies — for good reason. Some of what happens to aging bodies is serious stuff.

I've mentioned before that aging is like going to medical school. You discover body parts you didn't know you had and experience ailments you never heard of before.

That's why seniors often joke that their conversations are mostly "organ recitals" — each person commenting on what organs had recently been rebuilt, repaired, removed or radiated. I belong to a men's group



**Guest
column**

**... by
Bob
Ramsey**

where if you haven't had open-heart surgery, a hip replacement or treatment for prostate cancer, you're pretty much left out of the discussion.

Of course, some of these medical musings are healthy — even therapeutic. But too much is counterproductive or worse. Concern is OK. Obsession isn't. We all know older folks who are totally preoccupied with

their pet pains or malady-of-the-month to the exclusion of everything else. They become defined by their physical problems and limitations, and consumed by their latest aches and illnesses.

Unfortunately, constantly dwelling on your bad health and lamenting your limitations only makes things worse. It drags you down physically and mentally and drives others away. It seems that no one likes to be around a whiner.

The good news is that there is life beyond your body. Older adults, who accept their health conditions, deal with them and, then, look beyond

“Constantly dwelling on your bad health and lamenting your limitations only makes things worse.”

themselves to what's going on in the rest of the world, live better lives. As Bono, the legendary lead singer for the band U2, observed, “My body is a nuisance.” Nuisances can be ignored or overcome.

In every community, there are older adults who suffer pain and physical loss, but still continue to

be active, involved and engaged in outside activities and causes that promote the common good. In fact, the greatest warriors for a cure for many diseases are those wounded by the disease themselves. Those who help out the most are often those who hurt the most as well.

I'm reminded of my quadriplegic niece who rose above her limitation to enjoy a successful career, teaching students with special needs. You probably have equally powerful examples from your own life experience.

The more that older adults are immersed in the outside world, the less time they have for self-

absorption and personal “pity parties.” Self-pity is self-defeating. That's why those who live beyond their bodies are healthier and happier than their body-bound counterparts. As it turns out, getting outside your body is good for what's inside your body.

Who knew? Vital aging is an out-of-body experience!

Bob Ramsey, a St. Louis Park resident, is a lifelong educator, freelance writer and advocate for “vital aging.” He can be reached at 952-922-9558 or by e-mail at jorammini@comcast.net.



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Nordic Walking

FROM PAGE 1

Groups continue walking through the winter, Lemke said, noting that an activity group walks each Saturday morning at Ridgedale and another in the Eden Prairie Mall.

“The trick is finding a place where the rubber tips of the poles will grip the ground,” Lemke said.

Lemke, a Twin Cities native who retired last year from Hoegaarden’s, is part of the last family to leave Green Acre Hobby Farm near Carlson Towers in Minnetonka. “We literally sold the family farm there and we moved to Cold Spring,” she said. “Most of my life was spent on Parkers Lake Road. We moved there in 1954, when I was 2. I spent my whole life there, on the house on seven acres.”

She has a bachelor’s degree in recreation from the University of Utah and also is a Certified Alpine Instructor. After attending college in Utah, she said she moved back to “the [Green Acres Hobby Farm] compound” in 1981. She has three children and one grandchild.



Linda Lemke is known as “The Nordic Walking Queen.” (Submitted photo)

Golden Valley Tai Chi classes offer balance, gentle discipline

BY SUE WEBBER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In Marie Mathay’s lifetime, she’s been a professional actor in TV, movies, theater and radio commercials.

Now, the Golden Valley woman is a teacher.

“I’ve practiced Tai Chi on and off for more than 30 years,” Mathay said. “I first took a Tai Chi class in 1982 and absolutely fell in love with it. I loved the discipline and focus and softness of the moves. The flow of the moves is like dance. I felt strong, calm and centered. It keeps me strong, limber and balanced.”

She’s been hooked on it every since. After becoming certified in 2010, Mathay has taught 12 Tai Chi classes each week, all over the Twin Cities area. She has two classes at Brookview Community Center in Golden Valley each week on Tuesday.

Her students are enthusiastic about their teacher, as well as what they’re learning from her.

“It’s kind of calming and relaxing,” Linda Tremere said. “It’s a good way to start the day. It exercises your mind, too.”

Juanita Costa said she finds Tai Chi good for her posture. “It makes you think about your posture and makes you aware of how you move and carry yourself through the rest of the day,” she said. “It’s a lovely class, so gentle. Even if you have balance issues, there’s nothing too fast or quick.”

Rose Dobney, too, talked about how gentle Tai Chi is. “It’s good if you have mobility issues,” she said.

There’s a lot of thinking and “brain stuff” involved, too, according to a class member who preferred not to be named. She says she gets up and does Tai Chi when she wakes up in the middle



Tai Chi at Brookview Community Center in Golden Valley is taught by Marie Mathay (front row, middle). (Submitted photo)

of the night and can’t get back to sleep.

Mary Hambidge calls Tai Chi “moving meditation,” and appreciates that the class doesn’t require special workout clothing.

“Tai Chi is far more difficult than it looks,” Hambidge said.

“It gets both sides of your brain working. Your arms and legs are doing different things at different times. But in terms of general well being, it can’t be beat.”

Mathay’s Monday afternoon class at Calvary Cooperative in Golden Valley is open to non-residents, as well as people who live in the building, she said.

Mathay doesn’t consider herself a pro. “We’re all beginners,” she said. “There’s no such thing as a pro. I practice every day. I’m no expert. I still take workshops and classes. It’s a lifelong practice. You’re never done.”

The Tai Chi form she teaches is Sun style, and it’s been endorsed

by the Arthritis Foundation, according to Mathay. “It’s great for joint pain relief,” she said. “But the number one reason people study Tai Chi is to improve their balance. It helps with strength, flexibility, better posture, and helps to reduce stress.”

The majority of her students are people in their 50s and up, though she has one student in her 20s. “Some people have been with me for four years,” Mathay said.

She works with people who have a variety of challenges, including Parkinson’s disease. “I’m also working with a group of people who are living with Alzheimer’s disease,” she said.

One of the students in her Tuesday night class in northeast Minneapolis is a male rock musician, Mathay said, noting that Tai Chi traditionally was a male practice.

TAI CHI - TO PAGE 5

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Hearing Loss and Dementia Linked in Study

Seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing, a study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests. The findings, the researchers say, could lead to new ways to combat dementia, a condition that affects millions of people world-wide and carries heavy societal burdens.

Although the reason for the link between the two conditions is unknown, the investigators suggest that a common pathology may underlie both or that the strain of decoding sounds over the years may overwhelm the brains of

people with hearing loss, leaving them more vulnerable to dementia. They also speculate that hearing loss could lead to dementia by making individuals more socially isolated, a known risk factor for dementia and other cognitive disorders.

Whatever the cause, the scientists report, their finding may offer a starting point for interventions — even as simple as hearing aids — that could delay or prevent dementia by improving patients' hearing.

"Researchers have looked at what affects hearing loss, but few have looked at how hearing loss affects cognitive brain

function," says study leader Franklin, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Otolaryngology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "There hasn't been much crosstalk between otologists and geriatricians, so it's been unclear whether hearing loss and dementia are related."

To make the connection, Lin and his colleagues used data from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study on Aging (BLSA). The BLSA, initiated by the National Institute on Aging in 1958, has tracked various health factors in thousands of men and women over decades.

The new study, published in the February Archives of Neu-

rology, focused on 639 people whose hearing and cognitive abilities were tested as part of the BLSA between 1990 and 1994. While about a quarter of the volunteers had some hearing loss at the start of the study, none had dementia.

These volunteers were then closely followed with repeat examinations every one to two years, and by 2008, 58 of them had developed dementia.

The researchers found that study participants with hearing loss at the beginning of the study were significantly more likely to develop dementia by the end. Compared with volunteers with normal hearing, those with mild, moder-

ate, and severe hearing loss had twofold, threefold, and fivefold, respectively, the risk of developing dementia over time. The more hearing loss they had, the higher their likelihood of developing the memory-robbing disease.

Even after the researchers took into account other factors that are associated with risk of dementia, including diabetes, high blood pressure, age, sex and race, Lin explains, hearing loss and dementia were still strongly connected. "A lot of people ignore hearing loss because it's such as low and insidious process as we age," Lin says. "Even if people feel as if they are not affected,

we're showing that it may well be a more serious problem." Warning signs of hearing loss include difficulty hearing in noisy situations, like restaurants, trouble understanding women's and children's voices, needing to ask people to repeat themselves, problems hearing on the telephone and having to turn the radio and television louder. If you suspect there may be a problem, it is recommended that you get your hearing tested.

The research was supported by the intramural research program of the National Institute on Aging

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Tai Chi

FROM PAGE 3

“At one time, women were not even allowed to learn it,” she said. “It wasn’t until the late 1800s or early 1900s that women were allowed into class. People all over the world now enjoy this original ancient Chinese

exercise. It’s a lot like the practice of yoga. They have similar roots.”

She also teaches Yang style Qi Gong, another ancient Chinese exercise form. “You don’t have to memorize the choreography,” she said. “You just show up and follow the leader. It’s the reason people in China get together in parks. They’ve been doing it for centuries.”

The exercises can be done at any level. “If you are

seated, you can modify the movement,” Mathay said.

“There is such depth and richness and history to these movements,” she said. “There’s always something to discover.”

There is an added benefit, too. “I’ve watched people show up for class and become friends; there’s such great camaraderie,” Mathay said. “It’s lovely.”

A native of Seattle, Mathay has lived in Minnesota for 24 years. She has a 23-year-old daughter.

Former math teacher has been running for 61 years

BY SUE WEBBER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At the beginning of December 2015, Rick Kleyman said he had just completed 56 days without running.

The 75-year-old Plymouth resident is still recovering from a cracked hip he suffered in the Twin Cities Marathon on Oct. 4, 2015. It was his 41st marathon, and he says it will be his last.

“In a marathon, the last mile usually is the fastest,” Kleyman said. “This time with a quarter mile to go, I fell going down Cathedral Hill. I was going too fast, and I cracked my hip.”

Injury aside, he has continued walking with a walker each day while he has been healing from his injury, as much as two to four miles a day. And he had done four trial runs of 80 yards in one day. “That’s the most I’ve run since Oct. 4,” Kleyman said.

A retired Armstrong High School math teacher and coach, Kleyman has been a runner every day since he formally began cross-country as a sophomore at North High School in 1955. He ran in track and cross-country while he was a student at the University of Minnesota.

“I never stopped running, but I got smarter,” Kleyman said, adding that he ran his best times during his late 30s and early 40s. “I’ve been running for 61 years,” he said.

His favorite race is also the one in which he posted his fastest time: 2:38:47 in the 1982 Twin Cities Marathon, when he was 42 years old.

He has been coaching for 49 years. “Once I started coaching, I really studied the sport,” Kleyman said.

His first marathon was in 1970.

“I ran every day of the week until I hurt my hip,” said Kleyman, who ran at a variety of locales, always on grass or a soft surface, if possible. “Blacktop is not made for us to run on,” he said.



Rick Kleyman (wearing number 704) came in fourth in his age category in a race at Millikin University in Illinois when he was 64 years old. (Submitted photo)

Kleyman’s career in education began in 1967, at Sandburg Junior High School in Golden Valley. He then coached for two years at Cooper High School, before moving to Armstrong High School, where he taught for 32 years and coached for 33 years. He retired from Robbinsdale Area School District 281 in 1999, but still wanted to coach.

After retirement, he did some assistant coaching at Armstrong, was assistant girls track coach at Wayzata High School for seven years, and then spent six years as an assistant coach at Providence Academy in Plymouth. And he has been teaching classes at North Hennepin Community College.

When he and his wife go to Florida

in January and February, he runs there every day. “I have running friends there, too,” Kleyman said.

During the winter months when he’s in Minnesota, Kleyman visits the YMCA several times a week, and he enjoys golfing several times a week, either in Minnesota or Florida. “I just want to feel good while I’m alive,” he said.

He’s accomplished that so far. “The last time I took a sick day at Armstrong was in 1972,” he said. “I’ve never missed a class at the community college.”

He maintains contact with many former runners, and sees a lot of runners who got their start under his watchful eye in high school. “That makes me feel so good,” Kleyman said.

He and his wife, Judith, have two children and two grandchildren, ages 8 and 11. “My son and his wife both run in college,” Kleyman said. “I coached both of them in high school.”

An online blog titled “Running Minnesota” recapped an interview with Kleyman in 2010. He said then that when road racing started in the early 1960s, “a big race had about 50 runners.”

“I would finish about 25th or so,” Kleyman said. “The first big race was Getting In Gear, which started at the old Prudential Building off Highway 12 (now Interstate 394). Dayton’s and the Minneapolis Star really promoted that race and a couple thousand came out for it. I think I finished about 25th again — the same guys beat me as always. After that race people got the bug and things grew from there.

“The next biggest thing was when girls started running track and cross country in high school then college. Then the growth in running really grew.”

Asked in the blog interview about some of the key lessons Kleyman tried to teach the high school runners he coached, he said, “Enjoy your running every day, never exhaust yourself in races or training. Make running a part of your life always for fitness, friendship, and great health — even if you never race.”

“In 2009, at the age of 69, I ran 2007 miles and ran 335 of 365 days,” he said in the blog, adding that the week he turned 70, he ran 76 miles.

In addition to local running events, races and marathons have taken Kleyman all over the country: the U.S. National meet in Eugene, Oregon, in 2003; the Twin Cities Marathon; the World Masters Seniors track meet in Buffalo, N.Y., in 1995. All races are by five-year age groups.

Age doesn't stop seniors from being active in Richfield, Edina

BY SUE WEBBER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Next time you're winded from exercising, stop and consider Pat Marble of Richfield.

At 103 years old, Marble is at the Richfield Community Center four days a week. She exercises there, she volunteers, and she's a member of a quilting group.

"I enjoy it; it keeps me moving," Marble said. "I'm up and going, let's put it that way. My family sees to it that I am. I do take a nice two-hour nap every afternoon, though."

But she finds time to work on stained glass projects. During 2015, she won third prize for one of the 13 lamps she made. Her lamps are on Facebook, she said.

Though she says she doesn't do too much baking anymore, Marble spent some time in December mixing up the dough for Christmas cookies her daughter would later bake.

A native of Indiana, Marble moved to northern Minnesota in 1944, after World War II. She and her husband raised three children and ran a resort in Northome, a small town between Bemidji and International Falls. Ten grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren now round out the family.

"I used to brag about my grandchildren, telling people my grandchildren did this and they did that," Marble said. "Now it's turned around." The grandchildren are bragging about her now, she said.

Indeed, grandson Craig Wiklund tells about his grandmother's sailing on Lake Pepin, target-shooting at the age of 100, making rhubarb pies, embroidering more than 100 dishes as gifts for guests at her 100th birthday party, and creating more than 22 stained glass lamps in the past two years for children, great-grandchildren and friends.

Marble has checked out on quarterly tests as being as fit as an 80-year-old, according to Cheryl Dragotis, recreation program supervisor for the Richfield senior program.

Marble participates in the twice-weekly Silver Sneakers Flex Exercise class, Dragotis said.

"She's an amazing person," Dragotis said. "She's got her memory and all her



Target practice at the age of 100? Just another activity for Pat Marble. (Submitted photo)

mental faculties. She's a lovely person."

Marble also volunteers in the dining facility and joins a quilting group on Thursdays, Dragotis said.

Many other 80- and 90-year-olds take part in Richfield's classes, according to Dragotis. Men as well as women participate, she said.

"They're very able to exercise because they continue to do it," Dragotis said.

An estimated 40 senior citizens take part in Richfield's Monday and Friday Silver Sneakers classes, and another 36 are registered in the water exercise class that meets three times a week at the middle school.

"It helps them stay active and gives them a chance to be social," Dragotis said.

98-year-old is active in Edina

In Edina, Phyllis Waldsmith climbs onto a Metro Mobility vehicle three times a week and goes to the Edina Senior Center to exercise.

Not too unusual, except that the Edina woman is 98 years old. She says she's been exercising all her life.

"I work at it," said Waldsmith, an 18-year resident of Edina who is enrolled in the Silver Sneakers ABC program for agility, balance and core work, and also in the "Sit Fit" class twice a week.

"Our family was always interested in sports," Waldsmith said. "I walked a lot."

She grew up on a farm in Illinois with six siblings, and worked as a lab tech for a while. "Then I went back to school and became a teacher for mentally retarded children," she said. "I really enjoyed it."

Following retirement at age 62, Waldsmith kept busy with crafts, she said.

Donna Tilsner, recreation supervisor



Phyllis Waldsmith, 98, of Edina, works with Christy Zilka, the instructor for the ABC class at the Edina Senior Center. (Submitted photo)

at the Edina Senior Center, said about 60 senior citizens are enrolled in exercise classes. "We will offer cross country ski, snow shoe, Nordic walking, we have golf and tennis in the summer and new in 2016 will offer a putting course league," Tilsner said.

However, she added, "We don't see many like Phyllis. She is so good!"

Table tennis, bocce ball, Wii bowling in Bloomington

Bloomington's offerings for people 50 and older now include mat yoga, chair yoga, Zumba gold, and Zumba toning classes will be added, according to Tracy Smith, administrative coordinator for Bloomington's Human Services division. Classes are conducted at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. S.

"We're looking at adding additional classes," Smith said. "People get interested in something and bring ideas forward. We really try to fill the gap not served by fitness or Community Education. We try not to duplicate what's already going on."

The low-impact aerobics classes are always popular, and bring many people back for 15 or 20 years, she said. Baby boomers favor Zumba and yoga classes.

While the Bloomington classes are meant for people 50 and older, they are open to adults with disabilities at any age, she said.

In addition to stretch, toning, bone-building resistance classes with light weights and aerobics, wellness and fitness offerings also include stress management and balance classes Smith said.

But the city also offers some recreation-based classes, including table tennis, bocce ball and a Wii bowling league. A walking club meets at indoor malls during the winter and at parks in the summer time.

"The low-impact classes are a big part of their week for many seniors," Smith said. "The classes are offered at Creekside, and they also have a noon meal for older adults. Exercising and then having a hot meal gives them an opportunity to socialize."

During 2015, Smith said, about 2,000 duplicated participants took advantage of senior citizen programs in Bloomington. "I expect that number to increase quite a bit next year," she said.

Eagan couple establishes post-retirement exercise plan

Veteran teacher still enjoys classes

BY SUE WEBBER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Retirees Marilyn and Rick Bach of Eagan have developed a comfortable way to incorporate exercise and fitness into their routine.

They have found classes they enjoy at Lifetime Fitness in Eagan, enough to fill a time slot each weekday, if they're inclined: Mondays and Fridays are strength, light cardio, flexibility and balance workout; yoga is on Tuesdays; Zumba is on Wednesdays; and Thursday is strength training with weights.

"Monday, Wednesday and Friday are low-impact Foundations classes for all ages," Marilyn said.

On Saturdays and Sundays, the Bachs spend an hour each day walking four or five laps at the Mall of America, the equivalent of three miles.

"In the summer, I either walk or golf four days a week; it keeps my weight down," said Rick, who retired from his sales job with Shaw Industries in 2014.

Marilyn retired in 2012, after 40 years in nursing. When she retired, she was working in staff development at Fairview-University of Minnesota Hospitals. Post-retirement, she is continuing to volunteer monthly on a heritage project at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing's alumni society.

"It gives me purpose," Marilyn said. "I like being on a team and working with smart-minded professional women."

The exercise, too, gives her purpose. "As a nurse, I was always moving and walking," Marilyn said. "I like movement. When I was working, I used to go to classes on my day off, or on the weekend."

The Bachs are travel buffs, anticipating a third trip



Joyce Misukanis has been teaching exercise classes for 36 years. (Submitted photo)

to Europe, and additional time in Florida during the winter.

"Travel is one of things that trips our trigger," Rick said.

A native of St. Louis Park, Rick grew up playing basketball, which he continued as a student at Luther College, in Decorah, Iowa. Marilyn grew up in West St. Paul and graduated from the University of Minnesota. They have two grown sons.

The instructor at Friday's exercise class at Lifetime Fitness in Eagan is Joyce Misukanis, who has been teaching classes for 36 years, 20 of them at Lifetime.

"I'm blessed to have a lot of energy," said Misukanis, who also has had a job in accounts receivable for the last 15 years at Honsa Lighting Sales & Service in Eagan.

"After my fourth baby was born, I went to the YMCA to get back in shape," Misukanis said. "After I was there for several months, they asked me to teach a fitness class. I loved it so much, I kept it up."

The work was part-time while her children were young, two to four classes a week, she said. Then she progressed to being a full-time director.

"You have to have training," she said. "There are many workshops, including CPR training certification."

Following 16 years at the YMCA, Misukanis began working at Lifetime, beginning with weight loss management classes. For many years, she taught three days a week. Now she teaches just one Friday morning class.

"I enjoy it tremendously," Misukanis said. "The men and women in the classes are wonderful. Seniors are very strong and consistent. Some of the people I met at the beginning are still there. We grew up together. I enjoy them so much."

She has seen many seniors profit from the exercise. "Some people have lost weight, been able to get off medications or stop smoking," she said. "Some have come back to classes after open-heart surgery and find that their recovery is faster with exercise. It's good for the brain, too. There are wonderful, wonderful success stories."

According to Misukanis, "It's not just exercise, it's a lifestyle. It includes good nutrition and getting hold of your stress."

She has high praise, too, for the staff people with whom she has worked.

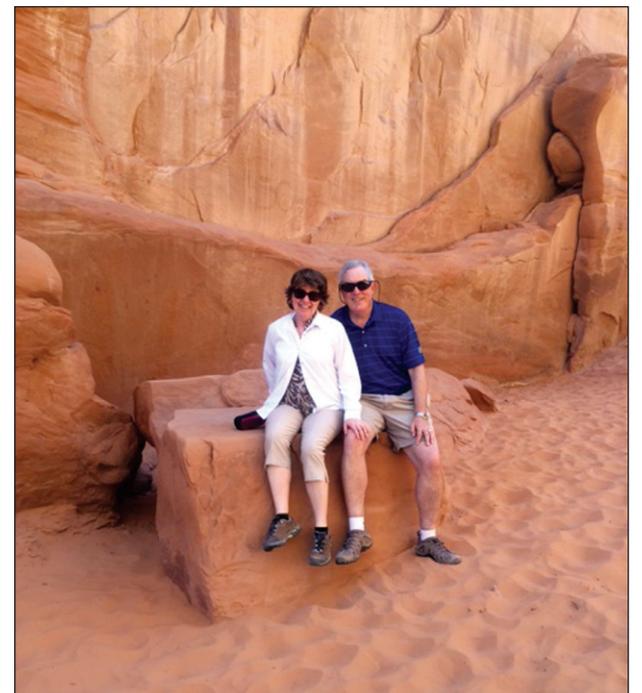
A native of St. Paul, Misukanis is a graduate of St. Agnes High School. Now a widow, she has four children, four grandsons and a granddaughter.

She may have inherited her penchant for fitness and health. Her father, now 90 years old, played racquetball for 50 years, until he gave it up at age 82, she said.

Even though she's passed the 70-year mark herself, Misukanis isn't ready to quit teaching. "I'm very, very healthy, and I'm grateful for that," she said. "I try to keep busy. I like to encourage people to maintain a good lifestyle. My motto is 'just keep moving.'"



Marilyn and Rick Bach of Eagan enjoy traveling, including a trip to Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. (Submitted photo)



A trip to Arches National Park in Utah included hiking time for Marilyn and Rick Bach of Eagan. (Submitted photo)



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