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## Brooklyn



Botanic Garden

## JULY

### How do you feel about old age?

One member resents old age because it feels like pieces of her are falling apart, which they actually are, like knees, one shoulder, even though she's lucky not to have any serious ailments. And another said she has trouble remembering, so she worries less because she forgets to worry. Missing friends and getting together more often was expressed by others, but that may change if we get a grip on this Covid problem. Conversely, another member is happy just hunkering down, doing much less than before, but is satisfied with what she does do. One member has been taking Prevagen for about a year and thinks it has helped her brain stay on top of things.

## Lincoln Square



Lincoln Center

## MAY

### Decluttering

We spoke about several categories of “stuff” that we tend to have too much of. In general, a good idea is to look at your apartment every five years as if you were moving and get rid of what you would not take with you.

*Some ways to think about your wardrobe –*

- Eliminate what you haven't worn in a year
- Try on all your clothes – if something doesn't fit, get rid of it.
- If you don't feel good wearing an item, give it away.
- Put clothing in yes, no and maybe piles – get rid of no's right away
- Review what you have before you shop for new items

### *What can you do with what you are discarding?*

- Give to organizations that prepare women who are returning to the workplace and need outfits (e.g., Bottomless Closet, Dress for Success)
- Sell on consignment – online or in person
- Give to charities – Salvation Army, Housing Works, City Opera Thrift Shop
- Photos can be digitized. There are services that will do this for you. All photos that are on your smart phone are backed up in the cloud. (We all agreed that we need a better understanding of what the “cloud” is and what it does for us; we’ll see if TTN might be able to arrange a program on the subject.)
- For surplus electronic cable, connectors and remotes, a good suggestion was to try them out on your current equipment and discard if they are no longer usable.

## **JUNE**

### **The Pros and Cons of Eating Organic**

Several related articles were circulated and the film *Seaspiracy* was recommended.

Members of the group had mixed feelings about eating organic foods.

Some felt that if they were younger, and if they had young children, it would make more of a difference over their lifetime if they ate organic so they would do so. Most felt that what is most important is that they eat “healthy” – lots of fruits and vegetables, little or no red meat.

Some recommended ways to clean fruits and vegetables before eating, whatever their source.

There was concern about knowing what “organic” really means in specific cases. Are there real standards? Organic food is usually more expensive, and often it has to be purchased in quantities that are too large for a single-person household, in which most of us live.

## **JULY**

### **The Roads Not Taken**

What decisions did you make where you felt that your life would have been very different (and better) if you had decided otherwise.

We felt that in most cases you couldn’t really know if a decision had been good or bad (buying an apartment was perhaps one exception) and that many decisions – e.g., become a teacher or social worker or similar – were culturally driven. What’s been important to most was being open to changing paths over the years when an alternative route seemed to offer greater satisfaction and happiness (career choice, spouse).

## Midtown East -Day



Citicorp

**JUNE**

### Group Functioning

A member reminded us of some of the fundamentals of the Caring Collaborative. The primary purpose is for members to have resources to help them with medical issues. It's up to each member to ask for help when she needs it, either from the Neighborhood Group or from the broader membership via the coordinator. All interactions are confidential, and you should only agree to help according to your capabilities and comfort level.

The benefit of the Neighborhood Group is that you get to build relationships with people to call on when you need help. There was agreement that our group has been very successful in this respect. The member noted that members of some Neighborhood Groups form health-buddy systems, and some people in our group might want to do that. Examples of what buddies might do include checking in with each other, being available in the event of an emergency, and maintaining a list of the buddy's friends and family outside of TTN who might want to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

## Murray Hill/Kips Bay



Kips Bay towers

**MAY**

**Assertiveness, including speaking up to ask for things we need and saying “no” to unwanted requests or commitments.**

Members varied in their ease with assertiveness, and some situations were generally more difficult than others. Several of us reported asking for time to decide when faced with a difficult request or unappealing invitation.

We sometimes accept invitations from friends for the good of the friendship. For some members, it's challenging to ask doctors or other medical professionals for additional help or different procedures, or to request a change of doctors. Everyone agreed about the difficulty of dealing with contractors and other building workers and the need for high and continuing levels of assertiveness when interacting with them.

## **MAY**

### **TTN activities and groups: those we've participated in during Covid and those we're looking forward to resuming.**

During the past year, we enjoyed Zoom events given by the NYC Chapters and others, including group discussions on various topics and lectures on memory, and dealing with osteoporosis. One member said she has found the ongoing yoga for arthritis very helpful and supportive.

We're looking forward to participating in many SIGs and NYC Chapter events which were suspended during Covid, including restaurant dining, dance, opera, films, the yearly cabaret, annual TTN dinner, and tours to art galleries and other sites around the city. Several members mentioned the Third Thursday Lectures which they had enjoyed in the past but which haven't been given for several years. We hope this lecture series can be restarted, perhaps on Zoom to eliminate the costs of renting a venue.

We're grateful for warmer weather and opportunities to resume meeting friends and begin attending some cultural activities such as outdoor concerts.

## **JUNE**

### **How to get the most from a doctor visit, including what questions to ask during a yearly exam and which preventive tests and procedures are most useful.**

Several members make question lists before seeing their primary care doctors, and one prepares a document of test results and visits to specialists. Another member asks about alternative treatments when new procedures are recommended. Most of us get routine mammography and bone density tests as well as other tests necessitated by individual health conditions.

Most members prioritize the hospital affiliations of our doctors, and many view NYU as the best. NYU's online MyChart information system was praised for making it easier for doctors to obtain and share information with each other. One concern was the lengthy waiting lists for appointments and getting referrals to new doctors, possibly caused by the pandemic.

Most of us have doctors who accept Medicare and don't notice any difference between participating and non-participating doctors. One member observed that her doctors accepting Medicare are often in larger group practices with more support staff.

We also talked briefly about other sources of medical information, and members varied widely in how often they researched medical topics online. Websites mentioned as helpful were WebMD, the Mayo Clinic, and the Cleveland Clinic. One member found YouTube videos useful for hip-stretching exercises and acupuncture techniques to reduce sinus congestion.

## **Second Meeting**

### **News and entertainment media**

How we keep on top of available TV channels, streaming options, podcasts, etc. and choose what to watch or listen to. Several sources of programming information were mentioned: "What to Watch" in the Friday *NY Times*, "new releases" listings on Netflix and Amazon prime, program grids on cable TV, e-mails about upcoming programs from streaming services and various organizations, and *TV Guide* magazine.

The group also shared the many programs, series, and films we recently enjoyed. A few are *Dancing Queens*, *A Private War*, *Lupin*, *Miss Sloan*, *Hack*, *Virgin River*, *A Good German*, *Kim's Convenience*, *Final Account*, *A Place to Call Home*, *Call My Agent*, *My Octopus Teacher*, and *The View*. Some reruns we like are *Big Bang Theory*, *Bosch*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Columbo*, *Schitt's Creek*, and *What's My Line?*.

We're enthusiastic about the city's reopening and having more cultural and social activities available.

## **JULY**

### **Decluttering**

Most members had decluttered in the past and/or are planning to declutter in the near future. It was noted that several senior centers have on-going decluttering workshops, and The Lenox Hill Senior Center's workshop was very helpful to one member during major decluttering after retirement.

Many of us experience decluttering as a difficult and emotional process and have issues with procrastination. Paperwork is a particular problem, especially banking, tax, and other financial records. Using a home shredder for these documents can be time-consuming, and a few members pay by the pound for shredding at local UPS stores.

Letting go of books and clothing can also be challenging. One member has switched to e-books and has dramatically reduced her collection of print books. Some of us give clothing we no longer wear to the staff in our buildings and others to one of the several thrift stores in the neighborhood.

Sometimes the goal is organizing those items we wish to keep. A major project for one member is organizing her collection of family photos and letters to create a family history for her younger relatives.

Those members who had previously decluttered reported that the results were very positive: letting go of outdated items created more space. They also felt freed from the daily burden of dealing with too much stuff.

## **AUGUST**

### **Money**

What it means and symbolizes in our lives, and whether the meaning of money has changed for us over the years. Everyone agreed that having enough money to live comfortably and afford some luxuries is essential for us during retirement. We are grateful that we can pursue our interests, contribute to charities, and, for some of us, help our families. Several members mentioned that being self-supporting has always been a high priority.

Some members are active investors and enjoy following the markets and making their own investment decisions. Others rely more on investment advisors and take a more long-term approach with mutual funds.

### **Queens**



The Unisphere

## **MAY**

**With the ever-changing CDC Guidelines on masks, social distancing, indoor dining, etc. our feelings and comfort levels with regard to these changes.**

Since all in our group are fully vaccinated, some have started to feel comfortable enough to dine & play Mahjongg indoors. Two of our members went to the movies and one went back to the gym for the first time in 15 months. Most of us are just ready to get back to some kind of normal life. While many of us have been taking the subway into Manhattan for medical appointments, we are now going in for museum visits and meals with friends. It helps that the spring weather is cooperating.

A few of our members have been very concerned about the rise in crime and the number of homeless people in their neighborhood. They have attended virtual meetings with local politicians and Police department representatives. One of them has not been very satisfied with the answers they've gotten and the lack of a clear solution.



We've also started to share information about the platforms of the current candidates for Mayor and Queens Borough President since the Democratic Primary is just a month away.

We all had a copy of an article in the May 2021 AARP Bulletin titled "60 Ways to Live Longer Stronger Better" and discussed some of the unhealthy habits we developed over the past 14 months and what we would do to reset our priorities.

## **JUNE/JULY**

### **A list of doctors that we used and recommended**

Many of these were local Queens & Nassau County doctors who are generally not included in the Caring Collaborative's MIX. Since that time some of these doctors have retired or moved on and others have taken their place. This list has proved very valuable for our members and we are currently updating our list.



## Riverdale



Raoul Wallenberg Forest

## JUNE/JULY

### Group Functioning

We are a new CC neighborhood group and are still feeling our way. We have a lovely group of now, 10 women, and while we're still meeting remotely, we seem to get along very well and feel comfortable sharing. We have some wonderful leaders who rotate on a monthly basis, and one of us regularly handles communications with the group. Some of us have met in smaller groups on our own establishing stronger connections. While most of us have returned to some of our pre-Covid cultural and social pursuits, we're not fully "back to normal" yet. We also have not given much thought to how we will meet in the future, remote, in-person, hybrid, but now with masks again being recommended, we will continue with remote.

Some topics we discussed in the past few months are:

- **Good advice we have received.**
- **Childhood memories.**
- **What we have lost and what we have found during the Covid months.**

## Upper Eastside 6



Agata & Valentina

## JUNE/JULY

A recent Washington Post article about **senior housing options** ignited lively discussion.

(The writer, in his mid-60s, started considering a possible future move to a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) and ultimately made a deposit.) Most of us want to remain in our homes as long as possible, with assistance if/when necessary; some are exploring other options. We were surprised to learn that NYC has no CCRCs, though

one will open soon in Riverdale. Numerous “independent living” options for seniors in NYC offer assisted living services, some provide memory care, but none provide skilled nursing. Options in or near NYC can be very expensive, so looking in other areas provides more options.

We noted that TTN has a new special interest group on CCRCs that will get and share information on the subject and visit some nearby. Three of our members have joined the group and will provide updates.

Two movies about retirement homes were recommended: *Quartet* (2012), with Maggie Smith, about a home for former musicians (available to rent on Amazon); and *Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont* (2005), about a widow who enters a retirement hotel in London (free on YouTube). A new movie about a retirement community called *Queen Bees* was also mentioned (the NY Times review is titled “Mean Girls on Social Security”).

Three members recently attended a free, 6-week workshop, hosted by DOROT, on “Aging Alone Together: Building a Community of Solo Agers.” The workshop dealt with topics like building and nourishing a social network, housing options and other types of life planning. Those who attended found it worthwhile and noted that it will be offered again this fall.

## Upper West Side 1



Fairway Market

## **MAY**

### **Home safety**

One of us nominated the topic of safety in our homes because of a recent traumatic experience with her voice coach. The first sign of trouble came when her teacher failed to appear for a Zoom session with a friend. When she didn’t show up for her session, either, alarm bells went off. When she went to her nearby address, she had to get in to the building, speak with a neighbor who happened to know who had an extra set of keys, and enlist that person to open the door. When they entered the apartment they heard the vocal coach whimper, “I can’t get up.” After having tripped and broken a variety of bones, this very large woman had been lying in her back room, her calls for help unheard, for some 5 hours.

A call to 911 yielded an EMT team who had no luck in picking her up onto a stretcher. Finally, the fire department had to come with a special scooper mechanism to lift her. She required several surgeries and is now in rehabilitation services; when she is released, she will need a home health care attendant.

So many aspects of this situation were harrowing: the complications of getting in to help her, her isolation and helplessness over a long period of time, the extreme consequences of a simple fall. We all felt the story should give pause.

Of course, we discussed this very issue at length a few years ago in response to “the woman who fell in the bathroom but couldn’t be heard” story from Lincoln Towers. Since then, one of us takes her cell phone with her in a baggie when she bathes. We agreed that we shouldn’t have area rugs to trip on. Do we all have a trusted neighbor to whom we can give a set of keys? Monster mats and a grab bar are de rigueur. And way back when, we filled out those health record forms that are supposed to be posted on the refrigerator for emergency responders. Remember those?

Our focus this time around was again on the perennial “button” question: Is it worth it to have some kind of medical alert device in case of emergency? One of us pays \$25/mo to have such a button in her apartment. It alerts her children if there is an issue, but you can also set it to 911.

Another feels strongly that her Apple Watch, a series 4, 40MM model, does everything needed in a situation like this: its watch OS 5 “brings revolutionary health capabilities, including a new accelerometer and gyroscope which are able to detect hard falls. The Apple Watch sends the user an alert after a fall which can be dismissed or used to initiate a call to emergency services. If Apple Watch senses immobility for 60- seconds after the notification, it will automatically call emergency services and send a message along with the user’s location to emergency contacts; some models of the Apple Watch also have an electrical heart rate sensor that can take an ECG to monitor a-fib and will send that report to a medical provider.” (Apple site).

Some members were reluctant to invest in Apple Watch and later, someone shared the following site with reviews of alternative devices:

“Hi all, my “research” has turned up this article from Consumer Affairs, which I think offers a good overview of medical alert watches. (Be sure to read their disclaimer at the bottom.)

<https://www.consumeraffairs.com/medical-alert-systems/best-medical-alert-watches.html>

One of the FAQ questions ask about their advantages over an Apple watch--I thought their answer was helpful. Like other medical alert devices, there is a monthly fee, but I think it might be worth it for their additional features.”

She also wondered if we couldn't use our buddy system for regular check-ins with each other. Some were skeptical that a daily call would solve anything since one can fall 30 minutes after such a call. The group didn't act on this suggestion, perhaps preferring it be left to individual discretion. Not everyone wants to receive a daily call.

### **Second homes – the pluses and minuses**

One of us said the parks of NY are her second home. Another has a house upstate that she was happy to use during the pandemic and someone else has a condo in Vermont that's a family favorite. One member finally sold her studio in Sheepshead Bay and is considering a replacement somewhere, she knows not where. She would like to join a community of some kind, should probably be thinking about building in late-life care, but really would like to stay in a place with palm trees and a vibrant music scene for part of each year. Bilingual/bicultural would be a huge plus. Miami? Our member who spends a few months in Florida every winter offered to share her expertise on this difficult but fascinating city. (Joke told in Havana: When will the US give Guantanamo back to Cuba? When Cuba gives Miami back to the United States.) One member is rethinking her remote Adirondack space, imagining something closer to NY or to her children – but where?

## **JUNE**

### **Something you always wanted to do, and if you didn't, why not?**

One of us would like to ride a bike, perhaps through Ireland, but she voiced concern that she'd be too likely to break an arm. She loves meeting people in all the places she travels, and she remains in touch with some of them.

Another member gave up bicycling a few years ago, promising her family not to continue. She also reflected on why she hadn't left her husband; it wasn't realistically possible. Other than her marriage she felt that she had had a good life and a good experience in her years of teaching.

One member of the group traveled cross-country many years ago, and would like to do that again, more than any other travel, but this time at a more leisurely pace, having the time to see more.

A member who never married said she would have liked to have been married. She doesn't want to do online dating. She has a fantasy that she will meet someone when she goes into a senior living situation.

Another said that she wants community and a partner with whom she can share experiences – perhaps travel through Africa.

## Upper West Side 4



### JUNE

Soldiers and Sailors Monument

#### Health

The importance of taking a colonoscopy and the importance of using suntan lotion. Several members have had surgery and gotten "zapped" to take out problematic areas. Remember to put suntan lotion all the way to your hairline and best to wear a hat.

#### Observations

Two members physically returned to NYC from Florida. They had been zooming from FL for all our monthly zoom meetings. We asked them what they observed on returning to NYC. Observations: Good to see younger people, loved the different smells, loved the different styles (no one wears gold cowboy boots in FL) and amazed at the array of different food in supermarkets. Who knew that Fairway sells goat meat now? Things not missed in NYC: helicopters, dirt bikes and sirens.

#### Places to go:

Our group plans to take a walk-through Riverside Park to see the sculptures. We talked about Little Island on West 13th Street and how you have to get a ticket online to go. Other places to visit: Fort Tryon Park and walking over the Brooklyn Bridge.

### JULY

#### Further observations

Our group talked about the weather (hot and humid), the noise (helicopters) safety (motorized scooters on sidewalks and going the wrong way in bike lanes) and of course, covid.

It was noted that you can now go to Canada if you are fully vaccinated but no one planned on doing that.

One member was lucky enough to score tickets to Shakespeare in the Park and noted that no one was wearing masks. It was outdoors of course.

Members worried about crime rising. One member almost had her pocketbook stolen from her hand as she got on a bus at 79th and Broadway but she hung on to it. (Note to

everyone: have only the bare essentials in your pocketbook, keep your keys in your pocket and consider a cross carry bag.)

We sent our best wishes to one member who was not on the Zoom meeting and is rehabbing in Westchester. Three members had spoken to her

On a positive note, one member said how much she enjoyed having Instacart do food shopping for her rather than going to the store herself, even if they did drop her Chobani yogurt...and yes, she got a credit.

### **West Side Afternoon**



NY Historical Society

## **MAY, JUNE, JULY**

### **Our members shared information at the meetings about:**

- Their experience with various specialist MDs and therapists with offices on the Upper West Side. Some members are still reluctant to travel by subway, and appreciate being able to walk to some of their appointments.
- Upcoming medical procedures, including the need for a masked fellow group member to come and escort them home.
- New things to do in our local parks, especially the summer art installation throughout Riverside Park called *Re-Growth: A celebration of Art, Riverside Park, and the New York Spirit*. It has its own App with photos, artist info, and a map of all the art locations: <https://app.mobilecause.com/e/qZw-4A?vid=koa6s>  
This year's Shakespeare in the Park - *The Merry Wives of Windsor* - through September 18<sup>th</sup>, was also recommended, especially since a digital lottery has replaced waiting in line:  
<https://publictheater.org/productions/season/2021/sitp/merry-wives/>  
*Re-Start Stages* at Damrosch Park and Lincoln Center Plaza, particularly the concerts and dance performances with a socially distanced audience.  
<https://www.lincolncenter.org/lincoln-center-at-home/series/restart-stages>
- Local museum exhibits, and the best times to visit. To avoid crowds, it is always better to arrive when the museum opens, but the "pay what you wish" admission times are generally later in the day. The *NY Historical Society* has PWYW on Friday from 6 to 8pm, enough time to see the Katherine Graham exhibit: <https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/cover-story-katharine-graham-ceo>

The *Museum of Arts and Design (MAD)* offers \$9 discounted admission on Thursdays from 4 to 7pm and a variety of interesting exhibits that will run until the end of the year. <https://madmuseum.org/visit>

- Members are enjoying local restaurants again, although primarily by sitting outdoors. **Telio** on Broadway at 92<sup>nd</sup> street has a singer during dinner hours, and good home style Greek and Italian food. <https://www.teliorestaurant.com/> **Nice Matin** has an extensive lunch menu and it is easy to get an outside table at that time.