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Determined artist learns to play the pipes

Heather Foote was undaunted when she took up a difficult instrument

By Hannah Black

It’s early evening, and the sunset is breaking through thick clouds. An unmistakable sound of bagpipe music fills the nearly empty parking lot — reedy and mournful.

Near the front of the band, a woman cradles the leather bag and blows steadily into the pipes. As the group finishes its walk around the periphery of the parking lot, Heather Foote takes her place among the musicians.

Foote, 78, a retired registered nurse, is a member of the Boone County Fire Protection District Pipes and Drums band. She describes herself as “an expressive person,” and playing the bagpipes is not her only creative talent. She has been a professional sculptor for nearly 40 years, and the sculpture of children at Columbia’s Ronald McDonald House is her work.

Foote says she always loved the sound of bagpipes, but she didn’t learn to play until she discovered a class 18 years ago at the Fire District’s headquarters in Columbia. “I worked like a dog to learn to play the pipes,” she said. “I just really was not going to quit.”

Playing the bagpipes well is a challenge. Foote said, because the fingering is so difficult. Before anyone can even think about playing the instrument, they must spend eight to 12 months mastering what is called a practice chanter.

The chanter is a woodwind instrument bagpipers use to learn the fingering for a melody. Bagpipers typically memorize the notes in a piece of music to make the playing easier.

“When you get to the bagpipes, you have to blow the bag up, and it’ll just wear you to a frazzle if you’re trying to figure out what note to play,” she said.

Foote has developed enough proficiency from rehearsals, performances and intensive bagpipe camps to become a teacher. She now gives lessons to beginners every week before the band’s Tuesday evening practice. Her current group started in February.

She teaches students how to read sheet music, which often includes grace notes — percussive sounds created by tapping one’s fingers on the chanter as air flows through the pipes. As homework, she assigns scales and simple songs like “Amazing Grace” to practice at home — 20 minutes every day, she hopes. She advises her students to tap a foot to stay on beat.

During a recent lesson, Foote demonstrated correct fingering technique. A bagpipe player must hold the fingers flat so they can lift and move them easily to avoid “crossing noises,” when notes don’t progress or transfer cleanly. “Crossing noises are the bane of the bagpiper,” Foote said.

She teaches in the hope her students will stick with it and eventually join the Fire District’s pipes and drums. The band, currently at an all-time high of 16 members, frequently performs in parades, including Columbia’s Memorial Day, Veterans Day and homecoming parades, as well as the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Rolla. They also play during funerals, weddings and graduations.

One of Foote’s former students is Craig Roberts, a professor of plant sciences at MU, who learned to play six years ago. Roberts described piping trips with Foote when he could listen to her stories.

Bagpiping isn’t in Foote’s family, but she has Scottish ancestors. Her maiden name, Graham, is a Scottish clan. The instrument she plays, the Great Highland bagpipes, originated in Scotland.

The tartan kilt she wears for personal performances is of the Graham Clan, and her clan crest is displayed on her glengarry cap and on her belt buckle.

Her heritage also includes a combat surgeon-turned-White House physician: her father, Wallace Graham. In 1945, Graham became the personal physician for President Harry Truman and his wife.

Graham was a colonel at the time and had
Fingers covering the bagpipe holes, Heather Foote demonstrates movements and notes to her students in the noncompetitive Boone County Fire Protection District band. Foote said she encourages her students to close their eyes and feel the beat.

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Heather Foote conducts the tempo while Reshora Mobley, left, Peggy Shorr and Sarah Bullard practice bagpipes in the non-competitive Boone County Fire Protection District band. Foote started working with the group in January.

“I also feel that art and the healing arts are complementary. Both are activated by the human spirit to help to heal mentally and physically,” Foote wrote in the sculpture’s dedication notes in 2014.

She is a past president of the Columbia Art League, where some of her art has been displayed. Originally a painter, she decided the practice was “too calm.”

Foote said she finds herself “unwittingly” doing something new every 10 years or so. As a child, she and her brother played the accordion, even performing once for President Truman.

As an adult, she played the classical guitar. She has learned various martial arts over the years, frequently attends dance classes and took professional ice skating lessons at one time.

Sculpting and playing the bagpipes are the two things that stuck.

“You just keep pursuing and working at what you love,” Foote said. “It worked out, and here I am — a sculptor, and I play the bagpipes.”

served in World War II. His daughter was just 5 years old when the family moved to Washing-

ton, D.C., and the family lived there until she was 13.

Foote has also left her mark on Columbia’s art scene. A self-taught sculptor, Foote created the sculpture of four children that stands in front of the Ronald McDonald House. The sculpture features four children: two seem to be climbing either side of a short brick wall, a third touches another’s hand and the fourth peeks through a “window” in the wall.
Ways to help loved ones make smart decisions

By Elza Goodlow

The thought of assisted living is kind of scary. Someone else taking care of a loved one may make you feel uncomfortable. While every situation is different, there are basic preparations that can be made for the future in order to avoid complications.

HELPFUL SERVICES

Under the Older Americans Act of 1965, the government is legally required to provide services to support the well-being of everyone 60 and older. In Columbia, the Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging provides such services. Donna Wobbe works for the agency and works with the ombudsman program.

The ombudsman program is a free and confidential service that helps provide care for loved ones in a variety of situations. The program provides information on care facilities in the area and can assist people in making decisions on long-term care.

FINDING LONG-TERM CARE

There are key steps to take when it comes to finding long-term care for loved ones. Wobbe stressed the importance of knowing the specific care the loved one may need as his or her age advances. She also advised being familiar with the range of options available.

“If their own home is no longer an option, knowing what needs will have to be met will be key to finding the appropriate place, which could range from lowest level of assistance to full-skilled nursing care,” Wobbe said.

Options for assisted living vary greatly. Depending on the kind of assistance needed, a loved one still may be able to live at home with some help. However, circumstances may require a move to full-time assisted living care. When it comes time to finding the right option, the ombudsman programs offer free resources about all options available.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

It’s important to communicate with loved ones when it comes to long-term care, Wobbe said. Place yourself in the situation, talk to the family member and get advice from a trusted source on the options. Have these conversations early, Wobbe said, to set up a plan for the future.

“Having important conversations while your loved one has the capacity to make their own choices is very important, and the sooner the better,” Wobbe said. “Trust between loved ones makes transitions easier when the person in need of a move has been involved in the decision-making all along.”

Wobbe also advised completing a health care directive while the parties are mentally fit. A health care directive is a legally binding document that provides instructions for what to do should someone become incapacitated. This document governs transitions to the chosen care option. It also designates a decision-maker for those unable to decide matters on their own.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

There is no uniform answer for resolving assisted-living questions. Everyone’s situation is different, Wobbe said. Personalization is key.

“Finding a long-term care home that would be the least restrictive environment and able to meet all needs is important, but also keep the person in mind,” she said. “What was their own home environment like? What activities did they enjoy? These answers are helpful for the best placement option.”

The goal is to meet the needs of loved ones while also letting them live their best life. Be informed and plan ahead.

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Tech Solutions

Teaching STEM with old computers

David Hopkins helps others learn skills to fix their digital devices

By Hannah Black

If it has a motherboard and a processor, David Hopkins likes to tinker with it.
Quick to smile, Hopkins, 59, has been an educator for 27 years, first teaching math and now computer science. He has been teaching classes related to technology since 2002.

At the Boonslick Technical Education Center in Boonville, Hopkins teaches computer repair, networking and video game design to high school students.

Computer repair is one of his favorite things to demonstrate in a classroom, he said. He develops his lessons around donated computers that may or may not work correctly, or even boot up. This way his students can learn by doing, and he said he often learns a thing or two himself.

"Every donated computer is a learning opportunity, a puzzle to be solved," he said.

Before taking the job in Boonville, Hopkins taught high school students at the Columbia Area Career Center. One was Andrew Krall, now a junior at MU studying computer science. Krall spoke excitedly about how much fun it was to have Hopkins as a teacher and his commitment to keeping students engaged.

Krall recalled a particularly memorable day when the class was asked to turn on a computer to see if it was working, then take it apart. After putting it all back together, the final test was turning the computer back on to see if it still worked.

"If I hadn't taken his class, I honestly don't think I would have the passion for it that I have now," Krall said.

Hopkins still teaches a class called "Cybersecurity for the Mildly Paranoid" to a mainly older audience at the Columbia Area Career Center.

"A lot of people will just throw up their hands and say there's no way to be safe" on the internet, he said. In an age of hacks and security breaches, he wants the cybersecurity course to help older people feel more secure online.

Hopkins helped pioneer what is now the computer science branch of Project Lead The Way, a nonprofit organization that helps build science, technology, engineering and math — or STEM — curriculum for elementary, middle and high schools across the country. He worked as a computer science master teacher for the program.

Originally from Neosho, Hopkins moved up to mid-Missouri in 1998 while his wife attended law school. His technology career began at North Callaway High School in Kingdom City, where he taught his students on computers that ran on Windows 98. He later taught similar courses at Southern Boone School District in Ashland. Hopkins said the most rewarding aspect of being a computer science educator is the privilege to teach popular classes to students, who often return to them. Sometimes a student will take a class of his for three years in a row.

"As a math teacher, I always knew the answer — the challenge was to explain it," Hopkins said. "Fixing computers is always an adventure — what’s wrong with it, can it be fixed? I get to develop true problem solving skills with my students and, we work together to find solutions."

David Hopkins explains how different parts of a computer work while student Llona Weiss follows along with a handout on Feb. 7 at the Columbia Area Career Center. Hopkins offered the class to teach students how to repair their computers on their own using simple and inexpensive fixes.

"Fixing computers is always an adventure — what’s wrong with it, can it be fixed? I get to develop true problem-solving skills with my students, and we work together to find solutions."

David Hopkins
Computer science teacher

He also recently returned to school himself. Last year, he earned a cybersecurity certificate from Bellevue University, not only to make himself more employable, but to earn a certificate that would help him as an educator.

Project Lead The Way has created a new cybersecurity program, and he’s been chosen as one of 15 master teachers to train instructors nationwide to teach the material.

"The beauty of technology is there is always something new to learn," Hopkins said.
ABOVE: David Hopkins speaks with his students during a DIY computer repairs class on Feb. 7 at the Columbia Area Career Center. Hopkins teaches full time at Boonslick Technical Innovation Center.

RIGHT: Jerry Bangs, left, and Llona Weiss, right, watch as David Hopkins describes different parts of a computer. Hopkins said he enjoys teaching adults because it’s a nice change of pace.
Not many would pass up a trip to the Vatican, but Rochelle Parker did. Every year a group of dedicated organists plan a trip to play the great pipe organs of Europe. Parker has joined them four times.

But when the group went to Rome last year to play the organ at the Vatican, Parker had to miss it. As a physician at University Hospital, she couldn’t get away.

After she missed the trip, Parker decided she was not going to let work keep her from touching the keyboard of a famous organ. She switched to part-time hours in an outpatient care clinic.

Every Sunday, Parker serves as the organist at Calvary Episcopal Church, and is also the associate organist at the Missouri United Methodist Church. For a change of pace, she accompanies musicals at Maplewood Barn and the Columbia Entertainment Company.

“If you stick with it, no matter what your level ends up being, it will give you joy and spiritual lift.”

ROCHELLE PARKER
Physician and organist
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When Kay Goddard's father was looking for a way to attract non-wine drinkers to the family winery in Lahoma, Oklahoma, he came up with a novel idea: Sell pickles made from family recipes.

The business became Papa Hart’s Pickles. Though the winery since has closed, the pickle business is going strong in Columbia, now owned and run by Kay, 67, and her husband, Bill, 68.

The two have sold Papa Hart’s products in Missouri since 2009, now on the shelves of 40 retailers in Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa, Tennessee and Louisiana. In Columbia, Papa Hart’s can be found at all three Hy-Vee locations, Lucky’s Market and Ms. Kim's Fish & Chicken Shack.

The company was named after Kay's father, whose first name was Hart, and the first pickle variety bears the company name, Papa Hart’s Pickles.

“When you bite into it, you've got a nice, crisp crunch,” Bill Goddard said. “It's sweet, and you can taste the garlic; at the end there's a little red pepper bite.”

The family business also sells Grandma Linda’s Dill Pickles and Katie Marie’s Cowboy Candy Jalapeños.

Grandma Linda was Hart’s mother, and the dill pickle recipe was hers. Katie Marie’s are candied jalapeño peppers, marketed under a nickname Kay’s grandfather gave her.

All of the company recipes originated within the family, but the Goddards don’t actually make or pack the pickles themselves — their packer is located in Mustang, Oklahoma. They sell 3,000 to 4,000 cases of pickles and jalapeños a year, with 12 jars to a case.

Peddling pickles and jalapeños is a side gig for the Goddards, who don't take a paycheck. Bill is retired from sales and management, and although Kay is officially retired as well, she still teaches special education part-time at Southern Boone Primary School in Ashland.

But “the family thing” is what makes it all so enjoyable, Kay Goddard said. She considers the friends they've made through the pickle business over the years as family, too. That includes vendors who attend the same festivals, customers who return again and again, and familiar voices who place orders over the phone but stick around for a longer conversation.

“We have so many people that we've met because of the pickles,” Kay said.

The Goddards' son, Blake, lives in Kansas City and considers himself the Kansas distributor for Papa Hart’s. The family business is an opportunity to spend quality time with his parents, he said, something he often missed as a kid.

“We were always busy and on-the-go, and this gives us a little more time to just be us,” he said.

The retail side of the business is a family affair from beginning to end. The company name and the recipes come from Kay's side. The Goddard children help their parents prepare for festivals when they can. At last year’s Hartsburg Pumpkin Festi-
The Goddards take their pickles and jalapeños to seven or eight festivals each year. Their busiest time is in the fall, from the end of September to the beginning of December when they hit a festival almost every weekend. Their main objective is getting people to taste their products. “The pickle does the selling,” Bill said. “I’ve got to get them to slow down to try it.”

One of Papa Hart’s most successful festivals year after year is the Santa-Cali-Gon Days Festival, a Labor Day weekend celebration in Independence, Missouri, that commemorates the origin of the Santa Fe, California and Oregon trails in the city.

The Goddards say they hear from many customers that Papa Hart’s is the only reason they attend a particular festival in the first place. Even so, marathon selling sessions like Santa-Cali-Gon, which require at least an hour of setup and long days in the heat or rain, are “grueling.”

“The push now is trying to go more toward retail instead of us going to festivals and selling out of our home,” Kay Goddard said.

Jars of Papa Hart’s Pickles and Katie Marie’s Cowboy Candy Jalapeños sit on a table in Bill and Kay Goddard’s home in Columbia. The Goddards also sell the pickles at fairs and festivals.
PLANNING

What to know before transitioning to senior living

By Hannah Black

Broaching the topic of moving someone into senior living isn’t easy. But when aging parents or relatives are no longer able to effectively care for themselves, it may become necessary.

Family members should ask themselves why the senior should transition and what that person isn’t getting that a senior living facility would provide, said Donna Wobbe, long-term care ombudsman director at the Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging.

After a decision is made to have a loved one transition to senior living, here are a few things to keep in mind.

KEEP THEM IN THE LOOP

Family members should have the conversation while the aging person is still in good health and can have significant input, such as what kind of facility he or she would like to move to and under what circumstances.

A long term care ombudsman, who advocates for all residents in long term care facilities in the community, can help families become well-informed about their options.

In the transition to senior living, it’s important that the control of the person being moved is not taken away, Wobbe said. Have a discussion with an aging parent or relative early on to find out what his or her wishes are.

“Keep it real and honest,” Wobbe said. “Keep the family member in the loop because the choices are really theirs.” This includes not talking about the person like he or she isn’t in the room when making decisions for them, she said.

Because living situation changes can make someone feel a loss of control, A Place for Mom’s Senior Living Blog emphasizes putting as much control as possible into the hands of the person transitioning.

Unfortunately, many families do not have conversations about transitioning before a person’s mental condition has deteriorated to the point where the person can no longer be part of the decision, Wobbe said. In this case, an ombudsman would help the family get the right resources for its situation and make sure a doctor is involved in choosing where to move the person.

GET ORGANIZED

Before someone transitions to long term care or senior living, make sure important paperwork is in order including an advance directive, power of attorney for medical decisions. Changes in your paperwork can be made as long as you have the capacity to make clear choices for yourself, including transferring power of attorney.

Someone giving up power of attorney should carefully consider who he or she is transferring it to, Wobbe said. This includes working together to decide what personal belongings to take to the new residence, Wobbe said. It’s important to be realistic about how much space will be available in the new place so pack accordingly and pack together.

PICK THE RIGHT PLACE

Wobbe said there are three main things to consider when choosing a senior living facility:

1. What is the person’s level of need? In some cases, the care may be short term, such as going to rehab after breaking a hip, or home health care. In other cases, moving to a long term care facility is necessary to meet a person’s needs. This can range from needing periodic help with mobility to around-the-clock care for someone with dementia.

2. What are the likes and dislikes? It’s important to keep the decision “person-centered,” Wobbe said. Meeting the physical and mental needs of a senior might be the first consideration when choosing a facility, but that person also has emotional and personal needs that should be considered.

3. Is it affordable? Being realistic should be a constant throughout the conversation about transitioning to senior living. Wobbe said one thing to keep in mind is that financial assistance is sometimes available if the senior or his or her spouse is a veteran.

An ombudsman would provide you with a list of place in the community for you to choose from. You can also use websites such as A Place for Mom and SeniorHousingNet to find senior living options.
Confused about Medicare? Understand coverage choices

By Naomi Klinge

Signing up for Medicare could take only 15 minutes, but a bit of planning ahead can make sure you receive the coverage that’s best for you.

Tracey Wetzel, lead trainer at the CLAIM program, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program for Missouri, laid out how to prepare for enrollment in Medicare.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Medicare, you must be 65 or older or declared disabled by the Social Security Administration. There is a seven-month window to sign up: three months before your 65th birthday, the month of your birthday and three months after your birthday.

There could be a two- to three-month delay to receive benefits if you sign up after your birthday month; this could leave you without health insurance for that period, so Wetzel recommends signing up before your birth month. Missing the seven-month window altogether could have serious, costly consequences down the road.

You must also have worked for at least 10 years and be a citizen or a green card holder for at least five years to be eligible. A marriage of at least 10 years allows you to draw from your spouse’s work record. So, if you haven’t worked at least 10 years but a long-time spouse has, you may still be eligible.

Assistance programs are available for low-income individuals to help with costs of Medicare. Be sure to check with a health insurance adviser to see if you are eligible to receive these benefits because the cutoff for assistance is above the federal poverty line. Eligibility can change, so check in once a year.

THE BASICS

Payment for Medicare can vary depending on coverage. There is no cost for Medicare Part A, which helps cover inpatient care at hospitals, skilled nursing home costs, hospice care and home health care. Part A is tax-withheld as a percentage of income. Part A has deductibles and cost sharing as services are used.

Part B of Medicare helps cover outpatient care, medical equipment and a number of preventative services. If you receive Social Security checks, Part B payments are automatic. Otherwise, payments can be automatically withdrawn from a bank account with Medicare Easy Pay.

Those enrolled in Medicare who continue to work can accept Part A benefits without signing up for Part B benefits, but Wetzel recommends speaking to a health insurance adviser before doing so.

If the insurance coverage through work does not meet certain qualifications and you miss the seven-month window to enroll, Part B costs could be increased by 10 percent for every full year enrollment is delayed. The penalty could last as long as Medicare is used.

MORE COVERAGE

Besides the original Part A and Part B coverage, Medicare Advantage plans and supplemental plans are available, usually for an extra cost.

Medicare Advantage plans include all the Part A and Part B benefits, may include prescription drug coverage and are run by private insurance companies. These allow more protection with a yearly limit for out-of-pocket costs. Extra benefits and services may also be offered.

Prescription drug coverage may be better for those who regularly take prescriptions. These plans help cover the cost of medication.

Other plans cater to different necessities, such as traveling. A Medicare Advantage plan is specific to select locations, so those who plan to travel might consider a supplemental plan. Otherwise, a Medicare Advantage plan will cover emergencies.

Talk to a health insurance adviser for more information about available plans.

HEADS UP

New Medicare cards are being mailed this year. They no longer contain a Social Security number but have new Medicare numbers instead to help keep Social Security numbers secure.

The new card will come in the mail automatically between June 2018 and April 2019. If anyone tries to offer a new card early or calls about the card, it is likely a scam. Only those new to Medicare will get the new cards early.
Mark Haim began his activist career in 1964 as a high school student in Plainview, New York. He was president of the Teenage Democrats at his high school and worked on political campaigns for “a bunch of candidates people have never heard of.”

When he enrolled in Stony Brook University in 1967, he had developed into an anti-war activist and spent his years as an undergraduate protesting the Vietnam War.

“I was a supporter for LBJ in 1964 and later discovered that the war he led us into was not something I wanted to support,” Haim said. “So, I became an anti-war activist and was active in the movement in college and have been ever since.”

Today, Haim, 68, is director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks, an organization that promotes peace, climate action and sustainable living. As director, Haim organizes speeches, assembles rallies and promotes peace in Columbia.

Peaceworks helps stage demonstrations, such as the Solidarity March in January, and staffs the Peace Nook, a book store that acts as a resource center for Columbia.

“The Peace Nook itself is an integral part of what we do because the products we sell are products that advance the concerns we have,” Haim said.

Items in the store range from books to bumper stickers that support the Peaceworks message. All are made without employing child labor and come from fair trade sources. The book section has a strong multicultural emphasis, as well as sections on sexuality and sustainable building practices.

The store is staffed almost entirely by volunteers. Maggie Schopp is a student at Moberly Area Community College and gives her time to work at Peace Nook.

“I knew a lot about Peaceworks and knew it was something I wanted to be a part of. I think it is cool meeting people who care about important stuff,” Schopp said.

Haim became involved with Peaceworks in 1982. After spending three years as a volunteer, he took over as director in 1985. The group was launched as an anti-nuclear arms group and advocated for the disarmament of nuclear weapons around the world. The group has since expanded its focus to combating climate change and advocating for environmental sustainability. As Haim states, the group is focused on existential threats.

Haim’s main tools for tackling these
issues are education and advocacy. He has been involved in many projects to promote the message of Peaceworks and has given presentations on eco-friendly practices, such as sustainable building, recycling and eco-friendly diets.

Haim said of Peaceworks’ recent achievements, getting Columbia City Council to agree to pursue a climate action plan is the biggest. Peaceworks supports this process heavily and hopes to have Columbia carbon neutral by the year 2050.

Every Wednesday, the group holds peace demonstrations on the corner of Providence and Broadway in Columbia. Those participating hold signs encouraging passing drivers to honk to show support for the messages.

When it comes down to what keeps him going, ‘Haim gave a simple response.

“The reason we do this is because we care,” Haim said.

“I would say this is the case for all activists, responding to great suffering and peril.”

MARK HAIM
Director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks

“The reason we do this is because we care... I would say this is the case for all activists, responding to great suffering and peril.”

MARK HAIM
Director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks

Mark Haim holds a sign advocating for peace at the corner of Walnut and Eighth streets on Feb. 6. In the aftermath of 9/11, Haim noticed passersby reacting negatively to their protest, but he has noticed a shift in the past few years.

“Through education and advocacy. He has been involved in many projects to promote the message of Peaceworks and has given presentations on eco-friendly practices, such as sustainable building, recycling and eco-friendly diets.

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MARK HAIM
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