

# What do statistics say about seniors?

## ON AGING



RENEE MAHLER

**Q.** I am a student taking a class about the aging of America. Please help settle a discussion the class was having concerning the most common causes of death among seniors. We also wondered if you would come and speak to our class.

**A.** According to statistics from the U. S. Department of Health, the leading causes of death, for older persons, are heart disease, cancer, stroke and Alzheimer's Disease.

I am very flattered that you would like me to talk with your class. I would be very happy to do so if we can coordinate our schedules. Please have your instructor call me and leave his or her name and telephone number. I will return the call as soon as possible.

**Q.** My husband and I are getting a divorce. I am very concerned of how I am going to tell the news to my 84-year-old mother. Do you have any suggestions?

**A.** You must tell your mother about the impending divorce as soon as possible. Older people have often faced many losses in their lives and are quite resilient. Your mother should be reassured, however, that the divorce will not affect your or her grandchildren's or great-grandchildren's relationship with her. Don't make your mother take sides. If she has always liked your soon-to-be-ex-husband and has enjoyed a good relationship, she cannot just turn it off. On the other hand, if she never cared for your husband, she might be thrilled about the news. Your mother will probably

worry about you. Let her. She is also entitled to be concerned about you. Should the situation become severe and you think she is depressed, seeking professional advice, regardless of the person's age, is always a good idea.

**Q.** My husband is becoming more and more confused. I am afraid now to leave him alone in the house and would like to hire someone to stay with him while I go out on my errands. We have Blue Cross, Medicare and another special insurance policy that he was able to take out when he was working. Will any of these companies pay for the help I want?

**A.** Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Medicare will not pay for the type of custodial care in the home your husband requires. I am not familiar with the other insurance policy you mentioned and I suggest that you read the policy very carefully. If you still do not find the answers you need, then it would be best to call your insurance agent or the company that wrote the policy. You did not mention long-term care insurance, however. If you have a long-term care or nursing home policy, it may pay for in-home custodial care. You could always call a home-health-care agency. These agencies are listed in the yellow pages of your telephone book, or call the Alzheimer's Association at (248) 557-8277. The association works with people who have all types of dementia and often can supply people with the respite help they need.

*On Aging columnist Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. To leave a message for Mahler, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1869. Send questions to her at The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.*

## Vulcano-Prater

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vulcano of Troy announce the engagement of their daughter, Carmelina Maria, to Erik Scott Prater, son of Curtis and Audrey Prater of Warren.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Troy Athens High School and Michigan State University. She is employed by Uten Schoola.

Her fiancé is a graduate of Warren Fitzgerald High School and Michigan State University. He is attending law school at Wayne State University. An August wedding is planned at San Francisco Church in Sterling Heights.



## Landgraff-Koury

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Landgraff of Bloomfield Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Gretchen LaBarge, to Leo Michael Koury, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elias Koury of Westlake, Ohio.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of the University of Michigan. She is store manager at Banana Republic in Novi.

Her fiancé is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Case-Western Reserve School of Law. He will be employed at Arter and Hadden law firm in Cleveland.

A November wedding is planned at the Academy of the



## Peters-Sheets

James and Judith Peters of Bloomfield Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Erika Frances, to Matthew David Sheets of Columbus, Ohio.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Michigan State University. She is employed at Ameritech Corp. in Cleveland.

Her fiancé is a graduate of Michigan State University and Case-Western Reserve. He is employed with National City Corp. of Cleveland. An October wedding is planned.



## McAlister-Zelazny

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. McAlister of Orion Township announce the engagement of their daughter, Kara Marie McAlister, to Daniel Thomas Zelazny, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Donald Zelazny of Troy.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Michigan State University and Western Michigan University.

Her fiancé is a graduate of Michigan State University. An August wedding is planned.



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