

Suburban Life



F1C

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A secret to remembering things: be organized

By Sue Mason
staff writer

Sandy Bauman may joke about forgetting why she was at Schoolcraft College's Waterman Campus Center, but she was dead serious when she said she was "convinced the mind is a muscle that can get better when used."

Bauman was at the college Jan. 31 to kick off the Women's Resource Center's sold-out winter luncheon se-

ries, entertaining her audience with funny quips, jokes and stories, all aimed at helping them remember the things they want to remember.

"The secret to remembering is organizing your life," she said. "Get into a habit so that you can be on autopilot and still find everything. Structuring your environment is one way of helping your memory, and don't live with someone then it might work."

Affiliated with the ElderMed pro-

gram at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, Bauman puts a lot of credence in the "healthy mind, healthy body" philosophy. Good nutrition and physical and mental activity can go a long way in preserving the mind and making the older years happier.

"The memory is a good indication of body health. If something is interfering with that health, the memory is the first thing to go," she said. The mind receives information from the senses — hearing and seeing. The brain picks out the important information and then dumps the rest, storing the former as long- or short-term memories.

SOME MEMORIES, according to Bauman, can only be recalled with a queue. A case in point, she said, is chlorofluorocarbon. People may not know what it is, but the sound of an aerosol can is enough to recall that the chemical compound is making a hole in the earth's ozone layer.

Likewise, the mention of a round-top radio of the 1930-40s elicited recollections of radio shows like "The Shadow" and "Amos and Andy" from the audience.

"What is happening now is that we're bothered more by distractions, so you have to pay more attention," Bauman said. "It can take longer to learn things. I once heard a nun say, 'I have a photographic memory, but I no longer get first day service.'"

Medical problems like hardening of the arteries, hypoglycemia and anemia can affect the function of the brain by not providing enough energy. And dehydration can also have an impact. Water, Bauman said, carries messages to the brain.

The human body excretes more water than it takes in, one reason why people need to drink eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day. But, Bauman noted, "drinking coffee would not be confused with drinking water."

"If you call coffee water, then fill

up your bathtub and take a bath in it," she said.

NOT GETTING enough of the right food can also affect the memory. If Bauman had her druthers, she would toss out white bread and replace it with whole grains and fruit, "the keys that open the cell's doors to let glucose in."

And even inactivity can cause memory loss because not enough blood is moving through the body.

"Bill Cosby says that the reason we forget is because our memory is stored in our fanny," Bauman told the audience. "You decided to get something from the refrigerator. You get up and walk to it, but by the time you get there, you've forgotten why you're there, so you go back and sit down. Then your fanny squashes and shoots the memory up to your brain."

"So you need to sweat yourself on the fanny to remember."

Self-inflicted pain aside, Bauman said people can improve their memories by associating new information with previous knowledge. A case in point, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

While anyone under the age of 10, knows their names — Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello and Michelangelo — for non-TNTers the way to remember that they are all named after famous Renaissance artists.

"YOU GO to the brain peg that says artist and hang a turtle on it," Bauman said.

Other ways of improving your memory is by saying things out loud and writing them down, Bauman said. Flash cards, rhymes and poetry, even going through the alphabet to remember a name came help.

"Your memory is organized alphabetically," Bauman said. "That's why when you do a crossword puzzle and have the end of a word, you have a hard time getting it. Words are organized by the beginning letter, not

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— Sandy Bauman

the ending letter."

Can't remember where you parked your car at the shopping mall? Bauman says it's all in paying attention.

"It's all in paying attention when you park your car," she said. "Observer your surroundings like you're playing 'Columbo' or 'Murder She Wrote.'"

And the first thing to do when you forget, she said, is to relax.

"Take a deep breath. Why? So you're not so tense and to get oxygen to your brain... then ask someone for help," Bauman said. "When you

forget something and see that that's OK, then you see people who have the same faults. It makes you like yourself better and like them better."

"Normal memory loss is not remembering where you put your shoes. Alzheimer's disease is when you don't remember you wear shoes."

Bauman also provided the audience with nine memory exercises, noting that "when you were born the average life expectancy of a woman was 58, now it's 78."

"You've been given and extra 20 years of life, so don't waste it."

Test your memory

So, you say you forgot where you put your memory. Huh? Well, here's nine memory exercises to tackle, courtesy of Sandy Bauman of Botsford General Hospital's ElderMed program.

(1) Write the name of a fruit beginning with the letter P.

(2) Write the name of a country beginning with the letter E.

(3) Write the name of a vegetable ending in the letter Y.

(4) Write the name of a state ending in the letter I.

(5) Where were you when John F. Kennedy was shot?

(6) Who was your second grade teacher?

(7) What is the capital of Montana?

(8) Name one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

(9) Make a picture, rhyme or other way for someone to remember your name.

Sandy Bauman, affiliated with the ElderMed program at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, puts a lot of credence in the "healthy mind, healthy body" philosophy.

Volunteer gathers praise for lifetime of dedication

By Louise Okrutsky
staff writer

February is turning into Jean Fox recognition month.

In acknowledgement of a lifelong commitment to her community, Fox, a former mayor of Farmington Hills and an active historic preservationist, was given the United Way of Southeastern Michigan's Heart of Gold Award last week.

She was nominated for the award by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, which she serves as vice-president. Fox is among eight volunteers who received the award this year.

It cites her involvement in what amounts to a laundry list of organizations including the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, the Farmington Area Naturalists and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. A former Farmington Hills city council member, she's been active in city politics since the late 1970's.

Perhaps more surprising to Fox than receiving the Heart of Gold Award on Feb. 11 were the accolades she collected three days earlier in Detroit during a meeting of the Rosa L. Gragg Educational and Civic Club. The group met in the Detroit Association Women's Club Building, a turn-of-the-century house on the edge of Detroit's cultural center which serves as a gathering place for black women's clubs.

As part of the group's observance of February as Black History Month, Fox was scheduled to speak on the suburban links to the underground railroad.

She was also honored by the Detroit City Council's Maryann Mahaffey, a representative of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young and State Representative Jackie Vaughn.

"I'm delighted to learn we've worked together in the past and will do it again," said Mahaffey, stressing the underground railroad's city-suburban connections.

Fox was surprised by the honors. "I just thought I'd go down there and do my underground railroad thing," she said.



Jean Fox, former Farmington Hills mayor and longtime volunteer in historic and civic organizations, was honored with the Heart of Gold Award.

the 19th-century watercolorist.

"She interviewed children and grandchildren of people involved in the underground railroad," Fox said.

"Well, well, well, isn't that interesting," was Fox's reaction to the information. "Little bits and pieces would come forward."

It would have to come out in bits and pieces because the underground railroad was a conspiracy, its silence was fueled by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which legalized the return of runaway slaves. People harboring fugitive slaves were punished by harsh fines.

"Ninety percent of Americans didn't know about it at the time," Fox told the club members earlier this month. Avery's memoirs mention one man who was convinced the railroad was false, not fact.

Years after the Civil War, some educators broke their silence. Levi Coffin, whose existence first became known to Fox through an old WPA guide to Indiana, operated a station

of the railroad in Fountain City.

For 20 years before the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Coffin kept records of the fugitive slaves who passed through his station on their way to Niagara Falls and eventually, Canada. When the law was passed, Coffin destroyed the evidence in his records.

After the Civil War, he wrote down what he remembered. "And he remembered plenty," Fox said.

For Fox, the underground railroad represents the good that can come about when black and white work together.

"It was a great cooperative effort. If they can do it before the Civil War, they can do it now. When we work together, all things are possible to men of good will," she said.

Many Quakers were involved in the operation of the railroad. At that time, Farmington was a strong Quaker community. Fox believes that Nathan Poner, son of one of the

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