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Prime Times

NEWSLETTER OF COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY'S OFFICE OF LIFESPAN STUDIES

SPRING 2010

TIED TO A PECAN TREE

By: Bridgette Johnson

I am sitting here doing my best to come up with a funny story to tell and for the life of me, I can't think of one that's decent enough to share. You know how that goes....All good, I mean great, stories have that special little secret that can't be told. And, it's that secret that serves as the punch line. Well, for the purpose of this article, I will let down my guard. I will tell the story for the sake of the story. And, good for me, it's not a story about me, but someone I loved dearly and have always kept close to my heart.

For her sake, I'm changing her name to "Sally." Sally was the grandmother of two of my dearest friends. She helped raise me. She fed me during the summertime. She let me climb her pecan trees in her yard. I was allowed to pick the pink azaleas from her bushes, and she made the best biscuits, which she left out on the table all day long underneath a "dishrag." Those biscuits were the flattest I had ever seen, but flat equaled fantastic, especially with a slap of butter and a smothering with homemade maple syrup.

Sally's sister Carrie visited quite often. She was a bit younger than

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CCU CENTER FOR MILITARY AND VETERANS STUDIES PRESERVES PERSONAL MEMOIRS OF AMERICAN VETERANS

By Rod Gragg

Director, The Center for Military and Veterans Studies, Coastal Carolina University

Ninety year-old Mike Fitch blinked back tears when he recalled the American bodies that littered Omaha Beach on D-Day. On June 6, 1944, Fitch landed in the second wave of U.S. troops on "Bloody Omaha's" Charlie Sector, which was one of the deadliest places any American soldier could be on D-Day. When the ramp of his landing craft came down, Fitch and the troops inside were sprayed with



searing machinegun fire from the German positions atop the bluff ahead. With soldiers falling all around him, he managed to take cover behind an iron obstacle the Germans had mounted on the beach.

"You didn't have much cover behind there," he recalled, "You could hear bullets ricocheting, you didn't know which way that ricocheting was going." After

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THE BUZZ ON ENERGY DRINKS

By Sharon Thompson, Ed.D., CHES, Professor of Health Promotion, Coastal Carolina University

Visit any grocery or drug store and you will notice a new type of beverage emerging – energy drinks. These beverage names would also be fitting for action movie titles: *Monster Energy*, *Red Bull*, *Full Throttle*, *Rockstar*, *Fury* and *No Fear*, to name a few. The graphics and marketing messages on the drink cans lead one to believe these drinks will do more than quench thirst. What

do these beverages have in common? They all offer high amounts of sugar (with the exception of "diet" versions), exotic ingredients, vitamins and caffeine in amounts that might be dangerous. How healthy are these products? Will they improve our health and well-being?

Energy drinks fall into the category

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long minutes under deadly fire, he made a dash for cover beneath the bluff rising from the beach, but the numerous bodies on the beach made it hard to run. "You had to step over the bodies – like playing hopscotch," he said, "and just try to work your way through as fast as you could." Somehow, he reached cover, and after four harrowing hours, he made it off Omaha Beach. He survived the Normandy campaign and almost a year of combat in Europe.

Today, Mike Fitch lives in Conway, and recently recorded an oral history account of his service in World War II – including the deadly drama he endured on Omaha Beach. Preserving his memoirs and those of American veterans of all eras is one of our principal missions at the Center for Military and Veterans Studies at Coastal Carolina University.

Our mission here at the Veterans Center is to encourage appreciation for the veterans among us and the sacrifices so many have made on our behalf and preserving a record of their service through memoirs, photographs and documents and partnering with the Library of Congress means that our local veterans' experiences can become part of the Library's permanent holdings and be available to historians, researchers and the general public.

We are located in the University's Foundation Center on U.S. 501 on the University's east campus. This new center records and preserves veterans' interviews, and accepts donations of memoirs, documents and photographs – all of which are cataloged and preserved in each veteran's name at the Library of Congress and other archival repositories. The Center for Military and Veterans Studies is associated with the University's successful new ROTC program.

One of our principal sponsors of the center's activities is Crescent Bank, which is headquartered in Myrtle Beach. Quoting M. J. Huggins III, president of Crescent Bank, "We are pleased to be a principal activity sponsor for the new CCU Center for Military and Veterans' Studies, as veterans are a vital part of the fabric of America, and there are many here along the Grand Strand. It is our honor to be a part of this

new endeavor and we look forward to supporting it for years to come."

The bank sponsors one of the center's key public outreach projects – "Military Memoirs," a half-hour television program which features interviews with veterans of all eras. The program airs daily at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Educational Channel 12, which is featured on Time-Warner Cable and HTC Cable.

The Center for Military and Veterans Studies follows established Library of Congress standards and we work with local veterans to record interviews, and collect memoirs, documents and photographs relating to the veterans' military service. Donated materials and recorded oral histories are forwarded to the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. There, a collection is established in the name of each veteran in the permanent holdings of the Library of Congress. Eventually, each collection will be available for study by scholars, genealogists, researchers and the general public.

Monica Mohnidra, senior liaison specialist with the Library of Congress says, "The Veterans History Project's mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans," "It is only through the dedicated volunteer efforts of and collaboration with institutions such as the Center for Military and Veterans Studies that the Veterans History Project is able to collect, record, and preserve these important histories for generations to come."

Veterans who wish to donate documents, photographs and memoirs, or be interviewed for the Veterans History Project, may contact us at the new CCU center at 843-234-3431.

PT NOTE: Rod Gragg, in addition to being director of the Center is also an adjunct professor of history at Coastal Carolina University. He can be reached at 843-234-3431 or by e-mail at rgragg@coastal.edu.



ALLOCATING INVESTMENT ASSETS WITH EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS

By Norman F. Whiteley

The past 18 months have been difficult for investors. Ever since the beginning of this economic rollercoaster, investors have struggled with the dilemma of “what to do.” Some made the mistake of surrendering to fear, locking in their losses near the bottom and switching to cash. All face the dilemma of what to do for the future. Will the stock market head up or down in 2010? Will inflation rear its ugly head...spiking interest rates and depressing bond values? Unfortunately, no one knows the answers. These factors are risks inherent in investing and managing risk is the key to investment success. Fortunately, experience has shown that these risks can be effectively managed by careful planning and asset allocation. So, how do we plan our investment strategy for a likely continuation of the turbulence this year and beyond?

The first step in developing your plan is to establish a time horizon and objectives. Even if you’ve done it before, each year the time horizon and objectives should be reviewed and adjusted if necessary. From that exercise it should be possible to divide the assets into three categories...those that can be invested long term (10 years or more), intermediate term (3 to 9 years) and short-term (1 to 3 years). Once that allocation has been determined, the kinds of investments can then be considered.

Events of the past few years have taught us that investing in individual stocks can be hazardous. Companies once thought to be solid have suddenly collapsed due to risk taking that even their greed-blinded management apparently did not fully comprehend. Diversification is a way to manage company risk but analyzing enough stocks to build a diversified portfolio takes a lot of work and expertise. Simply investing in stocks based on recommendations from your broker rarely yields satisfactory long-term performance for most investors. Yet, stocks are important in providing the long-term returns necessary for satisfactory investment growth. The “blossoming” of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) in recent years, however, gives an attractive alternative to use in planning and executing an investment strategy. These are funds that can be treated just like stocks, yet they relieve the investor of the burden of selecting and monitoring individual stocks. The ETFs allow the focus to be placed on investing in the right sectors and asset categories. Not only do they provide diversification across investment sectors, they provide the transparency, tax efficiency, liquidity and low cost that allows a better concentration on the important task of analyzing and controlling asset allocation. These funds, which are

now available in hundreds of varieties, can also be used as a convenient way to invest in fixed income investments like bonds, both taxable and municipal, and other debt instruments.

Stock ETFs should be primarily allocated to the long-term investment asset pool, extending 10 years or more. The investor may choose a broadly diversified whole-market ETF supplemented with a growth component that could include a small capitalization stock ETF, an international ETF and an emerging market ETF. The amounts of each can be rebalanced each year based on economic conditions. Some investors may choose to replace or supplement some of these choices with specific sector ETFs like commodities or defensive stocks, depending on economic conditions. In the current economic environment, I would avoid long-term bond funds due to inflation prospects. Adding a TIPS (U.S. Treasury Inflation Protected Securities) ETF to the portfolio is one way of dealing with this concern.

The intermediate term assets can be invested in a mixture of conservative dividend paying stock and short to intermediate term bond ETFs. For the bond portion, the investor can select both taxable and federally tax-free ETFs depending on tax status and income needs. Short-term assets, those needed in the next three years, should be primarily in cash money markets or CDs.

Once the assets are allocated and the specific funds selected, the investor is then able to concentrate on rebalancing each quarter or each year depending on the economic climate and the individual’s specific needs and objectives. Using this approach, the near-term is always protected, and longer-term investments have ample time to recover from temporary downturns.

For many investors Exchange Traded Funds, incorporated into a comprehensive allocation plan, offer an attractive alternative to investing in individual stocks and bonds or actively managed mutual funds. They “free” the investor to concentrate on the important criteria of asset allocation and the timeliness of an investment strategy and look beyond the short-term gyrations of the financial markets.

Norm Whiteley publishes a free monthly online investment newsletter and teaches classes for Coastal Carolina University’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He is also a past president of Lifelong Learning. He can be reached at nwhiteley@coastal.edu or nwhiteley@verizon.net.



THE SECRET CODES TO LABEL READING

By Larissa Gedney, MS RD LD Clinical Nutrition Manager, Conway Medical Center

Have you ever stood in front of the grocery store shelves with dozens of different ver-

sions of a product staring back at you? Low fat! Fat free! Light! Reduced sodium! Sugar free! What do they all mean, and which ones should you choose? The following tips will help you decipher the meanings behind food labels and key you in to a few secrets that manufacturers may not want you to know.

REDUCED: Any product labeled “reduced” (such as reduced sodium or reduced fat) means that it has 25 percent less than the original version. But this does not necessarily mean the product is your best choice. For example, a can of soup that originally had 850 milligrams (mg) of sodium in it may be labeled as “reduced sodium” and still have over 600 mg of salt, which is a hefty amount, especially for someone with high blood pressure or who may be watching sodium content.

FREE: Sugar-free and fat-free foods will have less than 0.5 grams in the product. (Trans fats are allowed to have less than 1 gram). With the emergence of trans fats as a “bad” fat that increases total cholesterol, most manufacturers are trying to find ways to eliminate them from their products...or at least from their packaging. Be sure to check the ingredient list for foods listed as “hydrogenated” (most commonly partially hydrogenated oils), which is a sure sign that the food has some trans fat in it. Have you noticed the serving size of your favorite food getting suddenly smaller? It could be that the manufacturer is trying to meet the “less than 0.5 grams” rule so that they can call their product “Trans Fat Free!” or “Sugar Free!” The other problem that sometimes arises with “free” foods is that when one evil is eliminated, another is increased. In order to make a high fat food still taste good after all the fat has been removed, higher sugar content may take its place. The moral of the story is: just because it says “free” on it, does not mean you are free to eat as much as you want. Make sure to use portion control.

LIGHT/LITE: When it comes to the calories, “light” products have 1/3 of the original. For fat and sodium, it means it has half the amount. These foods are usually a good middle-of-the-road choice.

HIGH IN/EXCELLENT SOURCE: This label usually refers to the fiber or vitamin content of a food. It will have at least 20 percent of the recommended Daily Value of that nutrient in it.

As a general rule of thumb, a good place to start when checking labels is to look at the serving size listed at the top of the label. The following nutrient amounts listed are in relation to the suggested serving size. Is this the amount you will be eating? If you eat double the serving size amount, all of the numbers listed on the label will therefore also be doubled. No single food should be considered completely off-limits, but with adequate portion control and a better understanding of food labeling, anything can be eaten in moderation.

Guilt-Free Chocolate Amaretto Cheesecake

Ingredients:

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 4 Tbsp. Butter, melted
- 2 eggs
- 16 oz. block silken tofu
- 4 oz. reduced-fat cream cheese
- 2 Tbsp. amaretto or chocolate liquor
- 1/2 c. granulated sugar
- 1/4 c. cocoa powder

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Mix together the graham cracker crumbs and melted butter and press in the bottom of an 8-inch spring form pan.

Mix the remaining ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour into the prepared crust. Bake for 50-60 minutes until set. Cool completely. ENJOY!!

If you have questions about this article, Larissa Gedney can be reached at the Conway Medical Center at 843-347-8241.

We want to hear from you!

-If you have comments or questions about articles in this issue, want to submit a letter to the editor, ask a question or make a comment, or if you would like to suggest appropriate subjects for consideration in future issues of *PrimeTimes*, the *PrimeTimes* staff wants to hear from you. If you want to be added to the *PrimeTimes* mailing list, just call, fax or write to let us know.

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Sally and could get around a bit more easily. She rode her bicycle with us and actually showed us how to pick green apples and sprinkle salt on them to cut out “some of the sour.” She was just lovely. Graying curls peeked out from underneath a homemade red bonnet, and her smile was just something that always made me feel so welcome. So safe. So at home. I loved Miss Carrie. She was the accomplice to the secret about to be told.

Now, Miss Sally’s husband, Billy Jo, liked to take him a drink every now and again. He took to deep bouts of depression and often we’d find him sitting in an old truck out in his horse pasture just tuckered out from a good long swig of something. He was as good as gold and would give you the shirt off his back, but that didn’t keep him from hiding bottles of homemade wine in our playhouse, just off the backyard. We’d find them sometimes and I’ll admit, I’ve even tasted that wine. Nasty, I say, Nasty.

Now, one night late, Mr. Billy Jo came staggering home. For a good ole’ country boy, there are no curfews set by the wives. That’s just a rule in rural Horry County, or at least it was back then. But on that particular night, Miss Sally and Miss Carrie decided they’d try a little tough love with Mr. Billy Jo. Even though she played the role of loving wife and confidant, Miss Sally had just about enough of the late nights and the next day’s trials and tribulations that came along with those late nights.

So upon his entering through the door, Miss Carrie hoisted Mr. Billy Jo, a fairly little man, up onto her shoulder and dragged him out to the front yard pecan tree. With the help of Miss Sally, she tied him to the tree, where they whipped out his belt and beat the devil out of him. Two old women beating an old man with a belt because he didn’t know when to come home. Now, according to Miss Sally, they never did “draw blood” but they had hoped to draw the meanness out. Understandable.

After Miss Sally and Miss Carrie felt that Mr. Billy Jo may have learned his lesson, they loosened the ropes and took him into the house where they politely tucked him into a warm bed. The next day, Mr. Billy Jo sat down by Miss Sally and said, “I feel like somebody’s beat the pure tar out of me. If I didn’t know any better, I’d think I got in a fight last night.”

The old man died, years later, not knowing that it was his own wife who tied him to a tree and beat the snuff out him. Honestly, I don’t know how many people really know the story. But, the moral of this story, gentlemen, is perfectly clear to me. Before cashing in on a late night, come on home to your loving wives. You just never know what we may have in store for you.

Bridgette Johnson is a PrimeTimes favorite; her writing is sure to reach our inner selves, making us think of home, of growing up, of parents and siblings and grandparents and school. As previously stated, Bridgette is the Horry Home Companion, bringing life alive with tales -not “tall” but true. Bridgette is a gardener as well as a writer and is sowing seeds for thinking and for blooming. When she isn’t doing all those things, she is helping our local businesses and owners as executive vice president of the Conway Chamber of Commerce. And, she is also sharing creativeness and tale talking-writing with CCU students as a teaching associate in the Department of Communication. Johnson can be reached at 843-248-2273.

PET THERAPY BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE

...Truly Man's Best Friend

By Lesley Bess, RN, Center Director, Active Day of the Grand Strand

The positive benefits of animal-assisted therapy and visiting dogs has long been established in national research projects. The unconditional love and therapeutic gain animals bring to humans can be witnessed firsthand at a medical adult day program in Myrtle Beach. Handlers volunteer their time weekly to bring in these incredible dogs for personal interaction with the seniors and those who are disabled at Active Day of the Grand Strand.

Sigi Mayo, the owner and handler of Abby, a two-year-old German Shepherd, said that she realized very quickly that Abby was very intelligent, eager to learn and ready to give love and affection when she came to her as a foster dog in May 2009 from the Noble Shepherd Rescue mission. Abby was trained as a working service dog under Richard Kaplan. "Abby and I are grateful for allowing us to visit this center to help her achieve her goal," said Mayo.

Bode is a pure bred Golden Retriever, who is also a certified working service dog trained by Kaplan. Owner and handler of Bode, Jeanne Maxon said, "He's friendly and has a natural instinct for gentleness when interacting with both the seniors and the young. He loves the attention they shower on him. He accepts dog biscuits, hugs, pats and kisses from the people, retrieves the ball when they throw it and performs obedience tasks for which he receives applause."

Pet therapy included in a therapeutic program for the elderly and disabled provides a multitude of social, physical and emotional benefits. The visits foster socialization, increase alertness and encourage physical movement. The animals have an evident affect on mood and have been shown to decrease stress level. The dogs decrease agitation in some Alzheimer's patients, who are visibly calm and cheerful when interacting with the dogs. In an article published in the American Heart Association Journal in 2001, it was readily acknowledged that stress levels can be reduced by interaction with animals, which in turn is believed to lower blood pressure and heart rate. Even the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website offers a section on the health benefits of pets noting that pets can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels and feelings of loneliness by increasing ones opportunity for exercise and outdoor activities, as well as socialization. Those with mental or physical impairments, as well as mental health issues like depression or anxiety disorder, that are mostly withdrawn-naturally want to reach out to the animal on introduction.

Visiting dogs like Bode and Abby offer unconditional affection and therapeutic touch to all individuals, accepting the people as they are...no matter their age or disability. It is this acceptance that is one of the most important benefits of the visiting dogs. Most of us experienced the joy of having pets when we were children. However, as we age, our circumstances and ability to care for pets may change. The interaction of a visiting dog or animal rekindles that affection and triggers happy memories from our childhoods with our own family pets. For more information on scheduling a visit with Abby or Bode, please call Jeanne Maxon at 1-910-575-6476.

Lesley Bess can be reached at 843-626-8501 or lbess@activeday.com.



A THANKFUL PEACE:

HONORING THE LIVES AND SACRIFICES OF VETERANS...TELLING THEIR STORIES

By Dennis J. Wolterding, Manager of Communication Education, Mercy Care

In the cobalt blue light of a January day, Air Force Veteran Phil Millonzi could be truth personified as he tells his tale by the kitchen window.

“She was just a lady in St. Louis,” he begins. “I was wearing my Air Force retired hat and she looked at me and said, ‘Are you just wearing that hat or did you really retire?’” “No,” Millonzi replied, “I retired from the Air Force with 22 years of service.” And though he admitted he hadn’t seen combat, it made no difference to her. “She just stood up, just nonchalantly, and looked me in the eye. She shook my hand and while she was shaking it, she said, ‘Thank you. Thank you for serving.’”

And then, his voice breaking, Millonzi sighs. “But in all these years, right up to the present day, she is the only person that has ever, ever taken a moment to thank this veteran. I wish I had her name because I’d send her a Christmas card every year.”

For an instant, all is quiet as Phil, his wife, Karon - also an Air Force Vet - and I absorb the mixed beauty and woe of this vignette. And I can’t help thinking that just as all history is story, so too, all story is history, if only we have the humility to respect and record it.

In the old days, of course, it was different. For the sake of art - the ode or the novel or the movie - heroes had to be larger than life (as if life were not large enough). From Gilgamesh to Audie Murphy, they had to go to hell and back. And then their reward, conferred by a grateful people, would be a story recorded not simply as history, but as legend, and eventually, myth.

Now, our field of vision is smaller, but, as in microscopy,

much more acute. Nationally, through such means as the Veteran’s History Project of the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/vets) and, locally, through CCU’s Center for Military and Veterans Studies, we seek to mine the golden thread that is each soldier’s unique experience. And we dream that one day, we’ll weave those strands into the grand tapestry that shows us how it - WWII or Vietnam or the Persian Gulf War - really was.

But such lofty matters were not the purpose of my visit to Phil and Karon. I had come to enlist their help with Mercy HONORS, our program to thank veterans in hospice and the wider community for their service in the cause of freedom.

The idea did not originate with Mercy Care. It is patterned after Deborah Grassman’s seminal work in caring for thousands of dying veterans at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Florida. Grassman found that many of her patients were battling not only the imminence of death in their final months of life, but the terrors of post traumatic stress disorder, resulting from their military service, as well. She developed specific therapies, including a Ceremony of Thanks, to bring “hope and healing” to these men and women.

For all its power, the HONORS Ceremony is surprisingly simple: A veteran, such as Mercy Care’s Bereavement Coordinator and Chaplain, Major Loran Bulla, reads the Declaration of Thanks; then affixes a specially-designed American flag pin to the honoree and concludes with a formal military salute. As an enduring reminder to all of what has transpired, the honoree and family are presented with a framed Certificate of Appreciation.

The impact of this unpretentious ritual, particularly on veterans who have been shunned or scorned, such as those from the Vietnam Era, can be stunning. Many weep openly or



reveal themselves in deeper ways - such as sharing war experiences they've never told or disclosed only to intimates.

For dying vets, there is often a manifest transformation from pain to peace. As Chaplain Bulla describes it, "I can remember looks on faces as though something has been settled."

So the story becomes not just history but personal redemption. "The question that's really being entertained at the end of life by the veteran," explains Bulla, "is not did I give enough, but has my life been worth it?" And in the safety of telling their story and the celebration of their service, the veteran understands that, in Bulla's words, "If you're receiving, you gave enough, because it's not necessarily about giving all, it's about contributing."

And now, Karon Millonzi recounts her 20 years in the Air Force, starting as a medic who fainted at the sight of blood, then graduating to hospital administration and, in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm, clutching her gas mask as scuds exploded near King Fahd Airbase in Saudi Arabia, and she learned that "don, ditch and cover" wasn't even remotely a drill.

And yet, she insists, "What I did wouldn't fill a bucket compared to what others did."

And, as the blue light of winter still fills the kitchen, I realize that every veteran's story is an epic "far above our poor power to add or detract" and that there are not words enough nor good enough to honor them as they deserve, but that we must spend a lifetime trying – the very life they've preserved for us all.

Dennis can be reached at 843-455-6234 or e-mail dwoalterding@mercyhospice.org. Dennis wants PrimeTimers, and others, to know that Mercy Care is actively seeking volunteers with past military service for its HONORS Program. Those interested are invited to call Kathy Tresselt, volunteer coordinator, at 843-347-5500. For more information about programs or services call 843-347-5500 or visit Mercy Care at www.mercyhospice.org. Dennis recommends reading Deborah Grassman's "Peace at Last, Stories of Hope and Healing for Veterans and Their Families" (Vandamere Press 2009).

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Conway ... A Place for Meandering

By Betty Molnar, Conway Visitor Coordinator

MEANDER: to wander casually without an urgent destination...

If meandering is your style, then Conway is your “kind of town.” A drive through beautiful neighborhoods reveals roads that meander past its oldest living residents, majestic live oaks replete with Spanish moss. A stroll around the historic town meanders by outstanding restaurants, eclectic shops, working art studios and a vintage theatre complete with neon marquee. And of course, no trip to Conway would be complete without exploring the ancient river by way of a narrated river cruise or by meandering along the Riverwalk at the edge of the beautifully reflective black waters of the Waccamaw.

For many years, Conway has been the gateway through which millions of people pass each year on their way to Myrtle Beach. But most people never realize Conway’s attributes as one of the oldest towns in South Carolina. From its beginnings as a “Kings Town” (established as Kingston in the early 1730s), it has played a major role in the development of Horry County. “Kingston” was created in 1734 as part of Royal Governor Robert Johnson’s “Township Scheme.” It was laid out on a riverside bluff in the center of what would become Horry County. Following the Revolution, patriotic citizens wanted to discard the name that honored Great Britain’s King George II. The name was changed to Conwayborough for local Revolutionary war veteran and five-term legislator Robert Conway.

Today people are discovering that it is easy to spend the entire day in downtown Conway. Start your visit at the Conway Visitor Center, located at 903 Third Ave., for free brochures, a shopping/dinning guide and copies of the popular self-guided tours. One, entitled “The Live Oaks of Conway” introduces visitors to some of the “city’s oldest citizens.” Another, “A Guide to Conway’s Historical Trail,” offers a tour that winds its way past a number of 19th century houses, churches, graveyards and a free museum. Meander through Conway’s historic business district and nearby residential neighborhood and you’re sure to discover sites that are listed on the Historical Trail (17 of which are listed in the National

Historic Register) around almost every corner. They include two church buildings, a cemetery, a bridge, three old warehouses, the old county courthouse, a train depot, an antebellum office building and

numerous houses. Most are from the 1800s, but the train depot and a few of the houses are from the early 1900s. The bridge was constructed in the 1930s.

As you stroll along the Riverwalk, look for the three audio interpretive stations (two are located along the pathway that leads from the Kingston Street entrance to the boardwalk and one just below the Peanut Warehouse) that were placed there last fall. One describes paddle boat travel in the late 1800s as remembered by those lucky enough to experience it. Another tells the story as in was recorded in the journal of a young English gentleman who explored the Waccamaw in 1732 and proclaimed it to be “South Carolina’s Boldest River.” The third tells the history of the Waccamaw People, the Native Americas who lived along the river’s banks long before the first explorers ventured into “the howling wilderness.”

At the Horry County Museum, you’ll find artifacts of early native tribes, a display of regional wildlife and an informative look at local industrial history. The museum also offers a variety of changing exhibits.

Plan to tour Conway at your own pace and allow plenty of time for shopping and dining along the way!

For more information about an exciting day trip to Conway, call the Conway Visitor Center at 843-248-1700 or the Conway Area Commerce of Commerce at 843-248-2273.



*“Don’t drive by ... don’t walk past ... meander through Conway,
Our Historic Rivertown.”*



Now... Where The Heck?

By Rocky Cartisano, Research Associate, Lifespan Studies, Coastal Carolina University

It happened again at lunch recently; one of the companions talked about “losing it,” you know, “memory.” His “event” was not being able to find his cereal box in the pantry, only to find the box in the refrigerator when getting milk for his coffee. “Why?” he proclaimed, “would I have put it there and not remember.” He then related that just a few days ago he couldn’t find his cell phone until he called the number from his land phone and the cell rang – it was under the newspaper he had been reading. So with his experiences seemingly happening all of a sudden (questionable) he must be in the early stages of “dementing” (his word!). The rest of us kind of laughed and collectively responded that “these things happen”, and each related some like instance of forgetting. WHY - so often, do we and our pals say “losing it!”

Following lunch, I then remembered some articles at www.npr.org I’d read in March about “The Aging Brain is Less Quick, But More Shrewed” and “To Keep Your Brain Nimble As You Age, Stretch IT.” (There are several other similar articles on the site.)

Perhaps encouraged by the large numbers of Baby Boomers reaching 60 to 65 this year and for decades to come, there are many more studies of brain and memory and retention. And most of these studies are reaching conclusions that debunk long-held research that brain development was pretty much finished at 25 years.

In the March/April issue of AARP magazine, a lead article is “Boost Your Brain Health.” The article makes reference to our “youth-oriented culture” that doesn’t offer much thought to brain growth after 50 and that the healthy brain gets stronger with age. Studies at the Salk Institute show that memory centers of adult human brains can grow new cells. Studies show that getting more physical and mental exercise stimulates brain cells to grow more and survive longer, and enhance the connection with other nerve cells. Brisk walking for 40 minutes four times weekly increased blood flow to the regions of the brain shown to be able to grow new cells. Movement is crucial to brain health that some of the cognitive changes blamed on aging may be the result of inactivity.

Barbara Strauch, the health and science editor of The New York Times, has a new book just released, “The Secret Life of

the Grown-Up Brain” which she wrote as a result of her starting to have “senior moments.” Strauch’s interests got her involved with investigating on her own as well as learning from many researchers delving into brain functions, growth and memory. Strauch opines, “We’ve been trained to think that aging equals decline and that just isn’t so – in some of the categories that matter most, our brains are functioning probably at their best in our new modern middle age,” and that new modern age goes well into the 60s.

Strauch finds positive news from research that as the brain traverses middle age it gets better at recognizing the central idea – the big picture. If kept in good shape, the brain can continue to build pathways that help its owner recognize patterns and, as a consequence, see significance and even solutions much faster than a young person can. One longitudinal study that started in 1956 (longitudinal meaning the same people have been studied over time) is only now yielding solid information which shows we’ve been wildly misguided about our brains, according to Strauch.

A quiz that Strauch presents is to take a look at the following list: January, February, March, April, January, February, March, May, January, February, March, June, January, February, March. What would the next word be? Then: January, February, Wednesday, March, April, Wednesday, May, June, Wednesday, July, August, Wednesday. What would the next word be? Then trying numbers. Look at the series: 1, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4, 3, 6, 5. What would the next number be?

These are examples for measuring logic and reasoning. The answers are, in order, July, September and for the number sequence the next number would be 4 then 7, 6. Such problems test our abilities to recognize patterns and are routinely used by scientists to see how our cognitive - or thinking - processes are holding up. If you’re into or further on in the 60s and figured all of them – be proud – your brain is humming along just fine.

So, if you put the cereal into the fridge or hid your cell phone, you can be at peace with yourself if you’ve figured out the quizzes.

There is much out there – to find, read and practice – that has to do with brain health and memory and to help find solace in the fact that some pretty normal people forget where they placed the car keys.

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of “functional beverages”. According to the American Dietetic Association (2008), functional beverages have been “enhanced with added ingredients to provide specific health benefits beyond general nutrition.” The Food and Drug Administration currently regulates foods and beverages, but does not specifically define what ingredients are allowed in functional beverages. In other words, until we have evidence that these beverages cause harm, they will continue to be sold in the marketplace.

Energy drinks usually consist of a combination of caffeine along with exotic tropical extracts, vitamins and minerals. Most energy drinks have as much caffeine as coffee and much more than soft drinks (see Table 1). Some energy drink manufacturers claim their products increase concentration, emotional status, metabolism, reaction speed and performance. Yet, manufacturers do not also inform consumers that using them can cause later fatigue and dehydration.

Most scientific reports on caffeine consumption and health have suggested that for healthy individuals, moderate caffeine consumption is not harmful. However, excessive caffeine can cause anxiety, depression, tremors, difficulty sleeping, fast heart rate and nausea. Because large amounts of caffeine are found as a key ingredient in energy drinks, many health experts believe the manufacturers should be required to list caffeine amounts on the label. One “exotic” substance that is often used to caffeinate energy drinks is guarana. Basically, guarana is a stimulant with a higher caffeine content than coffee beans, tea leaves or chocolate. It is also known to be a very strong diuretic.

Another ingredient often found in energy drinks is the nonessential amino acid, taurine. Taurine is found in abundant amounts in meat and fish and is found in our central nervous system, heart and skeletal muscles. Since our body naturally creates taurine from protein, a nutritionally sound diet is all that we need. If this is the case, why supplement energy drinks with taurine? One manufacturer selling taurine supplements provided the following claims online: “...protects major organs from oxidative stress, halts cardiac arrhythmias and restores youthful energy levels”. These claims were accompanied by research studies; however, all research on taurine noted on this site was conducted on rats. Since most studies on taurine have been conducted using rodents, we are not sure the results are valid for humans. Presently, there is much that is not known about the role of taurine in physiological processes. It has not been proven to be energy giving and currently there are more questions than answers regarding the value of adding taurine in large amounts to the diet.

Many energy drinks contain vitamins and minerals. While moderate amounts of these are not likely to be harmful, one would probably benefit more from a large glass of water along with a multivitamin pill that provides 100 percent of your DRI of vitamins and minerals.

To summarize, many health experts are concerned about energy drinks for many reasons. Many of them contain ingredients that have not been studied for safety, dosage and health benefits. Although they provide hydration because they are in liquid form, the caffeinated ingredients provide a dehydrating effect on the body. Although coffee can provide ample doses of caffeine, one usually sips coffee. Energy drinks are similar to soft drinks in their marketing, presentation, carbonation and taste, and are often consumed in greater quantity. If you choose to drink them, do so very sparingly.

Table 1.
Caffeine content of various energy drinks and other beverages.

| Energy Drinks | Caffeine Content per serving |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Red Bull | 80 mg. / 8.3 ounces |
| Monster Energy | 160 mg. / 16 ounces |
| Rockstar | 160 mg. / 16 ounces |
| Wired X505 | 505 mg. / 24 ounces |
| Fixx | 500 mg. / 20 ounces |
| Other Caffeine Containing Drinks | |
| Brewed coffee | 200 mg. / 12 ounces |
| Brewed tea | 80 mg. / 12 ounces |
| Mountain Dew | 54 mg. / 12 ounces |
| Canned or bottled tea | 20 mg. / 12 ounces |

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SMILE~A~WHILE

PrimeTimes recognizes that there's always room for a smile – occasionally even a laugh out loud – among the serious topics we address. If you have a humorous story about the lighter side of aging, send it in and we may publish it in future issues of the newsletter.

A linguistics professor was lecturing to his class one day, "In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative." "However, he pointed out, "there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative." A voice from the back of the room piped up., "Yeah, Right!"

AND REMEMBER... "A kiss is proof that you can still find some of the nicest things in life right under your nose!"

