

# Healthy Aging

NEWSLETTER SUMMER • 2014



## Creativity Can Be a Fountain of Youth!

*There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind,  
Your talents, the creativity you bring to your life  
And the lives of people you love.  
When you learn  
To tap this source, you will truly have defeated age.*

*-Sophia Loren*

*You've got to get up every morning with a smile on your face  
And show the world all the love in your heart  
Then people gonna treat you better  
You're gonna find, yes, you will  
That you're beautiful as you feel.*

*-Carol King*

*Even without drumbeats,  
banana leaves dance.*

*-African Proverb*

*Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,  
but beautiful old people are works of art.*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

**Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength.**

**-Betty Friedan**

*What's the secret to aging gracefully?  
We cant stop the clock, but we can keep our spirits  
young with humor, gratitude, and creativity.*

*-Unknown*

### From The Coordinator

"Grow old my friends with me.  
Let our lives show works of beauty."

Welcome to the summer edition of the Healthy Aging Newsletter. In this edition of the newsletter and then again at the Missouri Institute on Aging, we are considering the topic of Aging Artistically.

Research suggests that our quality of life can be significantly improved by making sure we attend to creative aspects of life. Some studies have shown that creative pursuits can have positive intervention effects, with the benefits being true gains in health promotion and disease prevention. (Cohen, 2006)

It is also a matter of the

ATTITUDE

you bring to aging. In the artistic way you WALK and even the way you TALK.

The way in which you

BREAK DOWN old things and CONSTRUCT new things.

It is in the way you propel yourself through life as a sage with artistic wisdom.

As you read this newsletter,

consider how to better

unleash your creative self. –

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

Aging Artistically: Making Time to be Creative .....page 2

What the Research Says About Aging Artistically .....page 3

Calendar of Events .....page 4

Celebrating 125 Years of the Morrill Act .....page 5

Recipe: Tangy Fruit and Feta Salad .....page 6

2014 Paula J. Carter Center on Minority Health and Aging Advisory Board Members .....page 7



# What the Research Says About Aging Artistically

Nancy F. Browning

LU Professor Emeritus of Cultural Diversity



For years, people thought that aging always brought a decline—in health, creativity and quality of life. But, Hickson and Housley (1997) explain that there are many people whose creativity continues into their senior years: Verdi was 85 when he composed “Ave Maria”; Martha Graham was still performing at 75 and choreographing at 95. In fact, the first exhibit of Grandma Moses’ work occurred when she was 80. According to Nuessel et al. (2001), “creativity can undergo a resurgence in the later years of life, and especially in life’s last years.”

Castora-Binkley et al. (2010) describe a number of health benefits found by researchers who study the impact on older adults of participating in arts programs taught by professionals. Their review of the literature on arts participation and aging showed that creative acting decreased anxiety. Theater workshops increased levels of personal growth in some studies; in others, they improved cognition (thinking skills), including problem-solving. Learning jazz dance improved balance but had no effect on mood. Piano lessons aided memory and increased the speed of perception.

An increase in a sense of mastery and decreased depression were the results of creative expression combined with reminiscing. Most studies focused on those seniors within the normal range of mental functioning. Even when participants had dementia, being engaged in painting and drawing reduced sadness and boosted five factors related to well-being (“interest, sustained attention, pleasure, self-esteem and normalcy”).

Hickson and Housley (1997) state that “a necessary step for the elderly to enjoy a more rewarding life in the later years is learning to be more creative.” They also remind us that “creativity in later life is not limited to

those individuals who exhibited artistic talent earlier in life.” They review studies in which seniors who took part in the arts stated that they felt rested and also liked themselves and others better. Hickson and Housley also discuss a 10-year longitudinal study, where the same people were studied over that time span. Here, seniors who took part in creative activities lived longer and were healthier during this 10-year period than those of a similar age who did not take part in the arts. Research by Cohen (2006) confirms this positive outcome. Cohen compared two groups of seniors. One group took part in a choir or other arts taught by professionals; the control group remained active but not in the arts. He found that the creative participants were healthier physically and mentally. Some even stabilized their conditions or improved when compared to the control group.

According to Barron and Barron (2012), authors of *The Creativity Cure: A Do-it-yourself Prescription for Happiness*, growing your “creative capacity” produces an internal transformation. It is much more lasting and satisfying than merely making behavioral changes. Barron and Barron find that creativity is necessary because it provides true



satisfaction, “inner resources for solace” and joy in the process. They state that “science has shown that purposeful hand use is associated with elevated mood.”

So how does a person cultivate a creative self? Barron and Barron (2012) propose the Five-Part Prescription (5PP), which takes about one hour per day. Their easy-to-read book guides the reader through seven weeks of practice. After seven weeks, the process will become a habit. The 5PP focuses on the following: (1) “Insight” (knowing yourself), 10 minutes per day; (2) “Movement” (physical exercise), 15 minutes per day; (3) “Mind Rest” (relaxation/meditation), 5 minutes per day; (4) “Your Own Two Hands” (using hands purposefully, including daily life activities, such as chopping vegetables, sewing or repairing), 20 minutes per day; and (5) “Mind Shift” (creating positive thoughts), 10 minutes per day. One reason this method works is that it is clear. As the authors state, “Often in life the issue is not falling off the track, as you inevitably will, but rather making sure you have a method for getting back on.” They pose questions, such as “What are you not starting? What do you do instead?” Their method helps to deal with the inner critic, the one that undermines people when they focus on what they cannot do.

These days, we can find most items readymade. So, it might seem odd to think that taking time to create by hand matters. But it does. And fortunately, as Barron and Barron (2012) assert, “It’s never too late to learn new habits. Being engaged in something is far better than being idle.” So, keep in mind that research supports being creative in later life. And put that research into practice by taking a step today to incorporate more creativity into your life.

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## Aging Artistically: Making Time to be Creative

Most people associate creativity with genius. But really, everyone is creative. People might create a tasty meal or a flowerbed, although they did not make the ingredients or the flowers. And when using your hands, body and mind as forms of expression, the process is more important than the product.

I participate in folksinging sessions where a small group gathers monthly for the joy of singing together. We are accompanied by a guitar and sometimes, a bass fiddle. But, this is not a performance. Although we finish after 9 p.m., being creative with our breath and our voices rejuvenates us.

Before I retired, I was too busy to sing with a group. One of the wonders of aging artistically is that you generally have more time for creative projects as a senior.

I also meet weekly to knit and crochet. Our group is similar to old-fashioned quilting bees; we talk and share while creating with our hands.

After seeing a demonstration of primitive rug hooking, I took a class and now travel to Rocheport, Missouri, for monthly “hook-ins.” This technique uses strips of felted wool to form a design. Just seeing the store filled with multicolored wool swatches inspires me.

In 2009, I had to stop eating gluten (found in wheat, rye and barley) and many other foods. At first, I created gluten-free foods by substituting ingredients into recipes. Now, I devise and share delicious recipes through a weekly blog and recipe collection, free of charge, at [www.glutenfreeandgrateful.com](http://www.glutenfreeandgrateful.com).

In retirement, I have been reminded that it is important to take time—or make time—to be creative. In fact, when I reflect in my journal, I often find that a great day was one in which I created something—by baking, writing or doing needlework.

As I look ahead, I see my young adult novels published. I see myself learning to draw with pastels. I will finally master origami (Japanese paper folding) and make flowers from brightly colored paper. I will plant a shade garden. And I will paint and wallpaper the dollhouse I bought years ago.

In college, I told my art professor I wanted to learn to weave but had no time. She told me: “If it’s important, you make time.” So make time for yourself and your creative pursuits. Try new avenues of creativity, by dancing, singing, painting, or making toys or furniture. Age artistically! ■

Nancy F. Browning





# Looking Ahead.... Calendar of Events Throughout the Year

*As you are working on Aging Artistically, here are some events that you may want to plan around.*

## 2014

Tuesday, August 26 through Thursday, August 28, 2014: 17th Annual MIMA

Sunday, September 7, 2014: Grandparent's Day

Monday, September 29 through Friday, October 3, 2014: Annual Gathering of Kings

Sunday, October 12 through Sunday, October 19, 2014: Lincoln University Homecoming Week

Thursday, November 27, 2014: Thanksgiving

December 24, 2014 - January 1, 2015: Winter Recess at Lincoln University

## 2015

Thursday, January 1, 2015: Happy New Year!

Monday, January 19, 2015: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Saturday, February 14, 2015: Valentine's Day

March, 2015: Women's History Month

Monday, March 16 through March 20, 2015: Spring Recess at Lincoln University

April, 2015: Minority Health Month

May 2015: Older Adults Month

Sunday, May 10, 2015: Mother's Day

Saturday, May 16, 2015: Lincoln University Commencement

Monday, May 25, 2015: Memorial Day

Sunday, June 21, 2015: Father's Day

Saturday, July 4, 2015: Independence Day

Wednesday, July 15, 2015: 125th Celebration at Lincoln University  
of the Signing of the Second Morrill Act

*(Some dates are tentative. Please call LUCE for details at (573) 681-5543.)*





## Celebrating 125 Years of the Morrill Act

*(This information was extracted from Lincoln University: <http://www.lincolnu.edu/web/about-lincoln/our-history>).*

At the close of the Civil War, soldiers and officers of the 62nd United States Colored Infantry, took steps to establish an educational institution in Jefferson City, Missouri, which they named Lincoln Institute. On January 14, 1866, Lincoln Institute was formally established under an organization committee. On September 17, 1866, the school opened its doors to the first class in an old frame building in Jefferson City. Lincoln Institute formally became a state institution in 1879 with the deeding of the property to the state.

Under the second Morrill Act of 1890, Lincoln became a land grant institution, and the following year industrial and agricultural courses were added to the curriculum.

*(The following is an excerpt from the 1890-system celebration brochure)*

### Yesterday

In 1862, the First Morrill Act was passed, establishing at least one college in every state “accessible to all, but especially to the sons of toil.” This Act was introduced by Senator Justin Morrill, known as the Father of the Land-Grant Institutions. A magnanimous leader, Morrill’s vision was about education for all social classes and a shift from predominantly classical studies to applied studies — preparing students for the real world and advancing the nation by providing opportunity to educate all classes of its citizenry.

Not only was Morrill’s vision one of true democracy in higher education, he was also an abolitionist. In 1865, about four million hard-working, but primarily illiterate, blacks were set free from slavery. According to Justin Morrill, “They are members of the American family, and their advancement concerns us all.” Thus, he introduced The Second Morrill Act of 1890 which included this class of laborers. Congress did pass the Second Morrill Act of 1890, which included the stipulation that African Americans were to be included in the U.S. Land-Grant University Higher Education System without discrimination. The 17 southern and border states would not consent to this

admission of blacks to their institutions. Therefore, in the legislation, it was allowable for these 17 states to found a second land-grant institution, which became known as the Negro Land-Grant Institutions and today as the 1890 Land-Grant Universities and Tuskegee University (the 1890s).

### Today

The 1890 Land-Grant Universities are ladders to opportunity for those students who face limited access to education. We create a campus Climate that fosters student satisfaction and a sense of community, leveraging diversity to enrich the learning environment and contribute to the strength of the nation’s workforce that recognizes a diversity of perspectives and a richness of varied talents and ideas.

All of the 1890 universities share a common thread:

- The distinction of having teaching, research and extension programs of the highest quality in the food, agricultural and related sciences.
- Integrate expert research with community based, extension initiatives.
- Are proud to be USDA partners. As a part of our mandate as land-grant universities, the
- 1890s receive federal funding annually from USDA/NIFA to engage in programs that are
- stake-holder driven and respond to emerging issues related to food and agricultural sciences.

### Tomorrow

We will continue to lead the collaborative vision of a better world, addressing the challenges of our time and focusing our work on lifelong learning opportunities for all. We fervently commit to improve the socioeconomic status of the impoverished and help to transform lives at the local, regional, national and global levels.....

*For more information, contact Pamela Donner, Coordinator; Lincoln University Cooperative Extension and Research Media Center*

**Save the Date!**  
**July 15, 2015**

THE 1890 LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Lincoln University  
Cooperative Extension and Research

125 Years of Providing Access and Affirming Opportunities

Scan this code with your smart phone to find out how to participate in the celebration!

Lincoln University is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer





## Tangy Fruit and Feta Salad



Lettuce mix  
Pecans, whole or halved  
Diced pear  
Feta cheese  
Dried cherries  
Additional fruit, optional (strawberries, blackberries, etc.)

Arrange lettuce on plates. Then, add other ingredients. Serve with a tangy balsamic vinaigrette. This salad makes a wonderful lunch, with no accompaniment needed.

(Recipe from Nancy F. Browning, [www.glutenfreeandgrateful.com](http://www.glutenfreeandgrateful.com))

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And you can be creative with this salad by serving on a bed of baby spinach. Try walnuts or sliced almonds instead of the pecans. Or, substitute an apple for the pear. Vary the cheese, by using blue cheese.\* You can also experiment with various types of dried fruit, such as cranberries or blueberries. The possibilities are almost endless!

\*Note: Be sure to use gluten-free blue cheese if your salad is to be gluten-free.

### Nutrition Information

Total Calories = 239

Protein = 7grams

Total Fat= 13 grams

Saturated Fat= 6 grams

Carbs= 25 grams

Dietary Fiber= 17 grams

Calcium= 228mg

Potassium= 349mg





# 2014 Paula J. Carter Center Advisory Board Members on Minority Health and Aging



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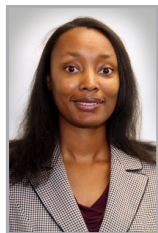
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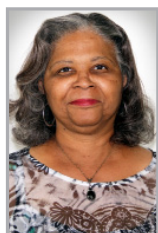
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