



The Kimball Farms Observer



Volume 30, No. 3

Recipes! Yummy! pages 4&5

March 2021

Answering Calls for Assistance

Spring Fund Appeal Off to Fast Start

It is February 17 as I write this, only three days into our Kimball Gives Spring Fund Drive, and we've already reached 31% (\$4,750) of our \$15,000 goal! Special thanks to the 37 residents whose donations have given a marvelous kick start to this important effort. And thanks as well to the efforts of Committee Chairman Dave Vacheron, and Garry Roosma, who took on this responsibility for the first time. We are confident that residents' typical generosity will get us to the finish line.

You've had a chance to digest information in Dave's letter about where the money you contribute for this Fund Drive goes. Some stays right here to provide programs for us; a significant portion is distributed throughout the community as acknowledgement of our gratitude for what Lenox provides.

This year has been terrible for all not-for-profit organizations. It's not hard to know who and what needs financial support. What's hard is to figure out what we can do.

When our fund drive is over on March 15, Arlene Potler and her Kimball Gives Committee will be tasked with the responsibility of determining distribution of funds to area organizations and families. In the past we've been able to invite representatives of these groups to meet at Residents' Association meetings, provide personal stories about their work, and respond to our questions. Unfortunately, the last time we could do that was in 2019, before the pandemic hit. We're hopeful that the day will come, soon, when we can again gather in auditorium, able to invite people to share this information with us. Susan Dana and her Staff Education Grants Committee will determine allocation of funds

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Fund Drive Supports Emergency Services

Here's another reason to donate to the Residents' Association Spring Fund drive, which ends on March 15: your donation helps to support and thank the departments of the Town of Lenox like the Police, Fire and Ambulance which help to keep us safe and well cared for.

The Lenox Ambulance is part of the Town of Lenox Fire Department, based at the Central Fire Station next to the Town Hall on Walker Street. The professional ambulance staff includes five Paramedics, eight Emergency Medical Technicians and two Advanced EMTs. The two-year-old



Ambulance and crew

ambulance bristles with specialized equipment, functioning "like a rolling emergency room," according to Fire Department Chief Chris

O'Brien. "Donations like those from Kimball Farms help pay for the medical professionals who come to provide continuing education for the ambulance crews," reports Chief O'Brien, "and we really appreciate the help."

"It was a different story 40 years ago," reports Kimball Farms resident Gene Hunter, who was a volunteer for the Lenox Ambulance back in the 1980s. "Everyone was a volunteer; we took the EMT training course, but our responsibilities were limited to CPR and

(continued on page 2)

(Fund Appeal, continued from page 1)

for both Lenox High School students and Kimball staff members as they pursue their educational goals.

Many of us became familiar with waitstaff personnel when we enjoyed meals in our dining room; it was such a delight to hear them share their career hopes and goals. It was a delight, too, to see the bulletin boards near the Bridge filled with letters from Kimball staff we were able to help.

Both Arlene's and Susan's committees review all individual applications for grants and consideration of area groups to support. This is not an easy task, given profound need and never enough money to go around. Some of you have included with your check(s) the name(s) of worthy organizations to support; each of these will receive careful consideration by the committee.

**Please make your check payable to
Kimball Farms Residents' Association Fund
and put it in Mary O'Brien's cubby, #232,
in the Mail Room.**

Dorothea Nelson

(Emergency Services, continued from page 1)

transporting the patient to the hospital. If a paramedic was needed, the Lenox ambulance had to call for a Pittsfield ambulance. The volunteer ambulance squad reported to the Town Manager, and income was sporadic.

It won't surprise you to learn that these days the ambulance and its crews respond to an impressive number of calls for help each year: 1078 medical calls, out of 1654 "requests for assistance" in 2020. The statistics do not show how many calls are from Kimball Farms. COVID-19 has had an effect on the statistics, and you may be surprised to learn that there were 140 fewer rather than more medical calls in 2020 than in 2019.

Chief O'Brien looks at the statistics this way: "During March and April, people were afraid to go to the hospital because they worried about contracting the virus, so even if they had underlying medical conditions, they didn't call for help. By July, we saw more calls for help for really sick people who had postponed getting treatment because of the virus. Then from August on, people knew more about COVID-19 and were more comfortable going to the hospital, and the number of calls was closer to what we expect ordinarily."

The pandemic was also a challenge for the crews because the procedures related to virus precautions and safety changed often. Chief O'Brien said, "All

the Centers for Disease Control guidelines changed, sometimes overnight, as more information about the virus was discovered, but the crews went with the flow, and we were able to keep up."

On a recent visit to the firehouse, two new pieces of equipment that support the "rolling emergency room" goal were demonstrated by Lenox firefighter/paramedic Cody Schaefer. The first was the Lucas 3 device, a mechanical CPR machine with two settings that can provide up from 100 to 200 continuous compressions a minute. The machine fits across the patient's chest from side to side. "When you do manual CPR," Schaefer explained, "you have to stand over the patient, which can be unsafe when the ambulance is moving. The Lucas 3 fits closely around the patient so the CPR rate can be maintained if the patient has to be moved to a standing position, for example, to get into a small elevator or out of a tight spot during a rescue."

The Lifepak 15 looks like a "boom box" in a suitcase, but it's really a sophisticated heart and defibrillator monitor for early detection of heart attacks. The Lifepak sends information directly to the Emergency Room so that the Hospital can be prepared for the arrival of the ambulance. "It really upgrades the ambulance to paramedic level," says Cody Schaefer. "We used to have to wait for another



Susan's feeling much better now!

ambulance to come to be able to get that kind of information and send it to the hospital," he added.

Chief O'Brien cheerfully remarks that "sooner or

later, everyone will be in an ambulance," and he has a bit of advice: We're not out of the woods yet with the pandemic. We all need to follow the basic guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and be patient.

Susan Dana

President's Comments: Proof of Winter's Grip

These comments are always prepared well before they're read and their content unfolds as I consider the unfolding month. Just for kicks, this time, I Googled the month of March, hopeful that I'd find new meaning for these slippery, slushy days.

In nanoseconds, my computer responded with arcane facts, some not entirely appropriate for this periodical. Google begins its March column thus: "Welcome to the third month of the year — or, if you were born before 150 B.C., the first! According to the oldest Roman calendars, one year was 10 months long, beginning in March and ending in December. It may sound crazy, but you can still see traces of this old system in our modern calendar: because December was the tenth month, it was named for the number 10 in Latin (decem), just like September was named for seven (septem). So, what about January and February? They were just two nameless months called "winter," proving that winter is literally so awful it doesn't even deserve a spot on the calendar.

The digital encyclopedia goes on, but I'll leave it to you to continue your own explorations while we switch to what's happening here. We've had our two vaccines and now we wait for these precious concoctions to do their special work. Although no vaccine provides 100% immunity against Covid-19, this does provide reassurance that any vaccinated person who does get the disease will have a milder case. It is the beginning of a return to normality but, make no mistake, there's still a long way to go before we can gather in groups, enjoy visits from family and friends, frequent restaurants, theatres and movies.

These restrictions may seem unreasonable post-vaccines. Reading, hearing, observing first-hand the unhealthy results of semi-isolation can be frightening. But this virus remains strong; its mutations are growing; the death rate continues to rise.

We must REMAIN VIGILANT; WEAR YOUR MASK, OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING. It will take more than two vaccine shots to remove the peril of this disease. It will take the commitment of every one of us to observe these basic precautions.

Ninety-six percent of residents in Independent Living were administered vaccines, a terrific record. Assuming we all remain Covid-negative it's likely that we can slowly engage in more group activities. How much group activity will depend largely on our own behavior; the more compliant we are with whatever restrictions are set forth, the more likely it is we anticipate a return to a new normal.

Dorothea Nelson



Freeze? What Freeze?

A spell of bitterly cold weather did not deter a few rugged residents from venturing forth on a brilliantly sunny Sunday afternoon last month. The foursome pictured here were not the only brave souls. Along the perimeter road they met a few other indefatigable walkers: Caroline Medina, Kissa Guilsher, and Garry Roosma among them. Garry, it should be noted, deserves the greatest accolades: most days he and Jill circle the road three times to do a three-mile constitutional.

The road is safe and kept clear of snow, even after nor'easters come our way. The walk is invigorating and companionable, satisfying many of the troubles that beset us as we slog along through pandemic restrictions. Walking remains a great way to exercise and it's easy to find companions to join you.

Dorothea Nelson, photo by Garry Roosma

DAVE DISHES ... It Out.

Dealing with those leftovers

All of us have leftover food from our meals, a lot of which is never eaten. What to do with leftover roasted chicken? Or salmon? Or salad ingredients?

A few ideas you might consider:

A 9" (or thereabouts) fry pan is helpful to have on hand, as is olive or cooking oil, some seasonings and every day condiments like mustard and catsup. And vanilla ice cream.

What about zipping up the flavor of coleslaw? Stir in a half teaspoon of your favorite mustard (I use Dijon).

Leftover pasta? It's always good in any soup – just cut it into bitesize pieces and heat with the soup. Or put pasta in a microwaveable bowl and pour any thick cream soup on top, mix in and nuke: the seafood bisque is especially good as is the cream of chicken or broccoli soups. Grate some parmesan on top!

For a scrambled egg breakfast treat, I collect mushrooms from the salads or soups (sliced or marinated), tomatoes, onions, baby spinach, ham, asparagus tips, etc. and prepare as follows:

beat a jumbo or large egg in a small bowl with a tablespoon of cold water, salt and pepper and put aside. Slice onion, tomatoes, mushrooms, cheddar cheese, ham and spinach (or whatever you choose) into quarter inch pieces and set aside. On medium heat melt a good tablespoon of butter in a fry pan and then add the onion. Sauté until soft (about 5 minutes). Then, turning down heat to a low setting, add another tablespoon of butter, let melt and then add the other ingredients (except the cheese!) and cook a couple of minutes, stirring all the while. Then add the egg and then the cheese immediately after. Continue to stir until egg is done to your liking.

A toasted half bagel with cream cheese and nova scotia salmon is a perfect accompaniment.

Leftover roasted chicken? Remove from the bone, cut into bitesize pieces, add small diced celery (and onion if you like), mayonnaise, salt and pepper, mix well and you have ingredients for a delicious sandwich.

Vanilla ice cream is a great substitute for a sauce on desserts. Put a carrot cake or any dense cake in a microwaveable bowl, spoon out (a scoop doesn't work – it's too thick) the ice cream on top and nuke for 20 seconds and you have a delicious vanilla sauce that adds a tasty dimension to any cake or pie.

Hope I gave you food for thought 🤔! Enjoy,

Dave Vacheron

Birthdays!

Twenty-one residents celebrate birthdays in March There is a 15-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. March birthdays belong to:

Paula Byrddy, Henry and Julie Jadow, Adelene Quigley, Nancy Brigham, Henry Jadow, Joyce Hovey, Linda Wayne, Elizabeth Myers, Maureen Quinlan, Jeanette Liemer, James DeGiacomo, Patricia Moynahan, Suzanne Denat, Stephanie Beling, Lorraine Feldman, Trudy Pomerantz, Ronald and Martha Stewart, Doris Bell, Henry Kirshner and Claire Lowery.

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

The Kimball Farms Observer is printed and published by and for the residents of Kimball Farms

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Open Mic: Haunted by Grape Nut Pudding

It has been, at last count, 247 days since the beginning of the Covid pandemic lockdown. My sleeping habits have turned inside out and I'm prone to naps in the day and sleeplessness at night. I try to list all the good happenings of the day, and I must say that they are numerous and in the ordinary scheme of things they might go unnoticed. In these days of each of us having to learn how to deal with fear and loneliness, not unmindful of the fact that we are elderly and listed as among the vulnerable, I don't know whether I am counting the days like a prisoner and awaiting my release, or counting the end of my days. Rather, it is that I have become all the more aware of how precious are the days we are given and that we are given the strength and grace to see our way through.

Often when I have settled in "for a long night's sleep" and it eludes me, I go over a day's events and find that they were sort of crazy, and I spend the next hours reconstructing just what happened. The following is one recollection:

I found a half box of Grape-Nuts in my cupboard, and since I wasn't eating them anymore and my Scottish heritage wouldn't let me throw them out, I remembered an old pudding recipe; it was a wartime favorite. It needed only a few ingredients, took very little preparation and it was delicious. "What could be better than that? I have all I need." And I had remembered how to turn the oven on.

My mind was already focused on just making a simple pudding; Covid-19 and lockdown were receding. The ingredients were Grape-Nuts, eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla; pour into greased pan. Place pan in water and in 350-degree oven for 40 minutes. Simple, I thought. With the recipe in front of me, I measured the cereal and put it to soak in warm milk. I did think that it seemed to be quite a lot, but that's what the recipe said. Mix all the other ingredients together, sprinkle nutmeg on top, pour into pan and bake. Somehow those words reminded me of the British Baking Show and the words resounded in my mind: "Now Bake!"

I would need a baking dish, a roasting pan and two cake tins. I looked at the prepared ingredients and the baking dish seemed too small for the amount of waiting ingredients; in fact, there was some left. Check recipe; the ingredients had been doubled. Oh well, when things look grim, innovate.

My only baking dish was obviously too small; I had leftovers. Like many residents, I had disposed of most of my cooking equipment; after all, when was I going to roast a turkey? My only option for a pan for the water was a cake pan with a depth of two inches,

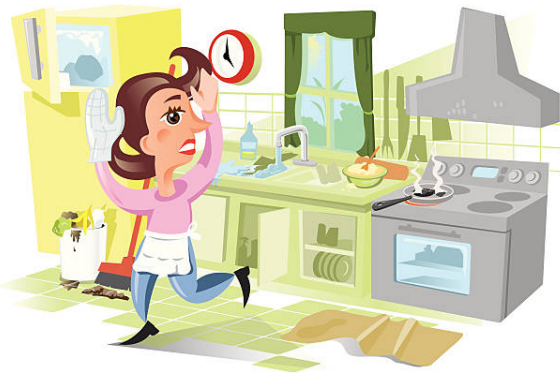
hardly like a roasting pan; the baking dish just fit. I placed the cake tin in the oven and poured hot water in. I wondered just how I was going to precisely fit the mixture into the waiting pan. It was going to demand steady hands, which at my age were no longer to be counted on; in order to reach the pan, I would have to bend over to keep the mixture safely in place.

My prayers became frantic as I was poised, pudding in hand, and it was obvious that God was not going to answer them.

The pudding spilled gently at first all along the front edge of the oven and then on the glass oven window. I couldn't stop and the dish was snuggled tightly into the cake pan. Quick, clean up the window, never mind what was adhering to the bottom of the oven. At last, the baking had begun. I turned to the excess pudding. What to put it into? I poured the mixture into three custard dishes, noting that there seemed to be an excess of Grape-Nuts, more than there should be, but by now, but I wasn't asking questions. I placed them into the second cake tin with the hot water and fit them into the oven. Needless to say, I was exhausted and cleaning the kitchen mess from making a "simple delicious pudding" bore no interest.

I must admit, the aroma was a delight and, at the appointed time, I removed the jury-rigged delight and placed it on a rack to cool. The final touch was to sprinkle nutmeg lightly on the custard top.

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(Pudding, continued from page 5)

I had forgotten that sometime in the past I had disposed of all my spices. A quick call to my neighbor, who brought a bottle of nutmeg, with the comment that it was quite old, five years, perhaps ten. "It's fine," I assured her (by this time anything was fine.) I wasn't through yet. The little desserts were ready to come out of the oven. I placed them on the rack with more than a little doubt of the success. After they had cooled, I turned them out and thought of my great-grandson, who is a hockey player; I had produced four Grape-Nuts hockey pucks.

In the midst of the messy kitchen, I looked at the pudding in the baking dish and took a taste. It wasn't bad, not quite as tasty as I recalled. I discovered that I hadn't put enough vanilla in, oh well, innovate, so I poured some maple syrup on the custard. It was quite acceptable, I thought. I spooned some into a small dish and took it to my kind neighbor. She later told me it was delicious, so I brought some to other neighbors and each proclaimed how tasty the pudding was.

As for the hockey pucks, they were dispatched to the nether world. The kitchen was cleaned and I had Grape-Nuts pudding for my dessert.

Gwen Sears

Gwen's Recipe

Grape Nuts cereal discontinued its own recipe for pudding long ago. Since then, many versions have appeared on the internet. Gwen followed a recipe posted by "Mimi in Maine." Note the instruction about a doubled pudding.

This was my mother-in-law's recipe. It is very good. That is all I can say. If you like Grape Nut Pudding, I think you'll like this. I always double the original recipe, so the ingredients below are for the double one, but if you want a smaller one, you can cut it in half.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup post grape-nut cereal
1 tablespoon butter
4 cups milk
2/3 cup sugar
4 eggs (beaten)

DIRECTIONS

Butter 1 ½ quart casserole.

Soak Grape-nuts in hot water for a short while.

Put into the casserole.

Add the butter, milk, sugar, eggs and vanilla; mix well.

Bake in a pan of water in 350-degree F oven for 30-45 minutes, maybe more, depending on your oven.

Before taking out, check to see if it is firm in the middle, then add your favorite seasonings and mayonnaise and you have a spreadable hors d'oeuvre for your favorite cracker or a treat to add to a salad or make a sandwich.

The Colonel Gets It Right

"Tonight we offer chicken."

Of chicken I sicken.

"Perhaps fish?"

Oh, please, another dish.

"A rare treat, steak."

Rare, well done, steak is a mistake

If you care for the earth

Or your personal girth.

"Unless we hold a competition

And make the plot thicken

By crowning a Miss Steak."

Whoa, put on the brake,

That kind of talk is sexist,

It has no right to exist,

And women today aren't chicken

About whose ---- they're kickin'.

So, gents, if you have nothing to hide,

Let the Colonel be your guide.

A chicken tender is not a tender gender.

Beware what bone you're pickin',

Just be sure it's finger-lickin'.

Poet Nauseate II



In Memoriam

James Scala

Jan. 12, 1930 to Jan. 29, 2021

George Keator

Dec. 29, 1935 to February 1, 2021

Richard "Dick" Moffatt

March 30, 1919 to February 6, 2021

Library Lines: New Gems in Our Collection

Here, in no particular order, are five recently acquired novels from our Kimball Farms library that make for great reads.

O'Farrell, Maggie, *Hamnet*. About William Shakespeare's personal life, we know very little, but we do know that he had three children, Susanna and twins – Judith, who died of the bubonic plague, and Hamnet (a variation of Hamlet), who later also died of the plague when he was only 11. (In England, at this time, about a third of the children died before age 10.) Four years after Hamnet's death, his father wrote his great tragedy *Hamlet*. This novel proceeds on two time levels. In one, a young, penniless Latin tutor falls in love with a spirited young girl named Agnes (interchangeable at this time with Anne) and, in the second, 14 years later, the family of the tutor (now a famous playwright in London), which includes the twins, is living with their tyrannical father-in-law in Stratford. The novel is an amazing tour-de-force. As one reviewer said: "Although the real Hamnet died centuries ago, this novel is timeless."

Nesbo, Jo. *The Kingdom*. This award-winning Norwegian writer is best known for his series of Harry Hole thrillers. *The Kingdom* is an imaginative variation on the Cain/Abel story about two brothers whose lives are entwined by love and intrigue. Roy, the elder brother and narrator of the story, has never left the comfort of his quiet Norwegian mountain home where he and his younger brother, Carl, grew up. While only in their teens, Roy learns that his brother is being sexually abused by their tyrannical father. To end this, Roy conveniently arranges an automobile accident in which both his father and mother are killed. To cover up this crime, other deaths are necessary. Carl escapes this troubled life by seeking his fortune in Canada. When he returns, several years later, he brings with him a new bride and plans for building a resort on the outskirts of town. But the brothers cannot escape their past — more deaths and intrigue are necessary. Where will it end?

Horowitz, Anthony. *Moonflower Murders*. Using the same plot device of "a novel within a novel" and the same heroine, Susan Ryeland, as he did in *Magpie Murders*, the author has created another thriller. In this work, Susan is now retired and managing, with

her boyfriend, a small hotel on a Greek island. This all ends when the Trehearnes come to stay and tell them about the disappearance of their daughter some years ago after she had begun investigating a murder in the hotel, where she was staying. Susan realizes that this murder formed the basis of her friend and author Alan Conway's novel *Atticus Pund Takes the Case* (which is reprinted in full). Susan becomes so intrigued with this story that she decides to return to England to resolve this unusual case.

Stuart, Douglas, *Shuggie Bain*. This novel has won several literary awards including the 2020 Booker Prize for Fiction. It is the story of a young, effeminate boy who is growing up in Thatcher-era Glasgow in run-down public housing with his alcoholic mother and two older siblings from a previous marriage, both of whom make eventual exits from these sordid surroundings, leaving Shuggie (the name is a Scottish variation of Hugh) to cope. He tries, without success, to fit in with the other boys at school while trying at home, to help his mother on a path to sobriety and happiness.

McBride, James, *Deacon King Kong*. Set in the late 1960s, this novel takes place in a mainly Black Brooklyn housing project, known as Cause Houses, similar to the one in which the author grew up. Deacon King Kong is a nickname of a 74-year-old Black man who is a deacon in his church and a great drinker of King Kong rum. He is also known as Sportscoat. One day in September 1969, he goes to the local plaza, a popular meeting place, and for no apparent reason shoots off his gun, wounding a young, personable drug dealer named Deems Clemens. The consequences of this shooting gradually involve such disparate people as members of an Italian mob, several policemen and a mysterious man known as Governor who is searching for a valuable piece of jewelry known as the Venus of Willendorf.

Here's to a month of good reading. In our next issue, I will introduce several new quality nonfiction titles.

John Gillespie

Gout: No Longer Just “Arthritis of the Rich”

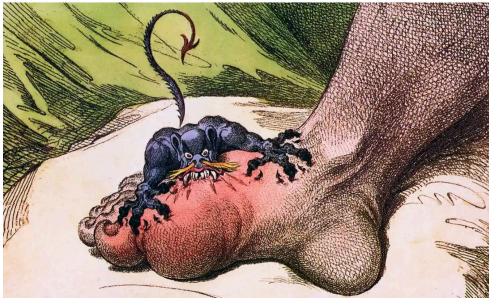
Persistent swelling and pain around a joint is a sign of trouble. Gout is an extremely painful type of arthritis that strikes without warning and causes extreme swelling, inflammation and pain in the joints, mostly in the feet, but fingers, knees, hips and shoulders can also be affected.

With a history spanning more than 2,500 years, gout is one of the oldest recognized diseases, with a who's who list of famous “victims.” (Go to Goutpal.com for a comprehensive list. You'll be amazed.) First identified by the Egyptians in 2,640 BCE, it was later recognized by Hippocrates in the fifth century BCE, who referred to it as “the unwalkable disease” because of involvement of the large joint at the top of the big toe. Hippocrates also noted the link between the disease and an intemperate lifestyle, referring to it as an “arthritis of the rich,” as opposed to rheumatism, an arthritis of the poor. Six centuries later, Galen associated gout with debauchery and intemperance, but also recognized a hereditary trait.

Gout is caused by a disruption in the body's chemistry that is well understood

and responsive to treatment. It is characterized by an overproduction or inability to excrete excess uric acid. Uric acid is a waste product found in blood. It's created when the body breaks down chemicals called purines, which are inherent in normal body metabolism.

Diet also plays a role, since gout is often aggravated by certain foods high in purines, such as red meat, liver, kidneys, yeast, anchovies, mussels, sardines, herring, bouillon, and meat extracts. Alcohol, especially beer, and drinks sweetened with fruit sugar (fructose), may cause an increase in uric acid levels, especially when consumed with foods high in purines. In most people uric acid dissolves in the blood, passes through the kidneys and leaves the body in the urine.



Old time blood sucker therapy

Excess uric acid levels in your blood can lead to the formation of crystals which deposit in the joints and can even cause kidney stones. The crystals are tiny needles with sharp points at both ends and were first identified in a gouty swelling by van Leeuwenhoek, one of the pioneers of microscopy, in 1679. Their chemical composition was unknown at that time. When the crystals accumulate in a joint, the body's defensive white blood cells rush in to attack, getting punctured in the process, causing inflammation and severe pain.

Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine looked at health surveys to compare rates of gout in 1988-1994 to 2007-2008 and found the disease had increased 44% over those two decades. They suspect it has a lot to do with the obesity epidemic and related health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It also found that rates of elevated uric acid levels were rising over time. It is estimated that one in five Americans have elevated levels of uric acid. Gout is more prevalent in men, but more and more women over the age of fifty are experiencing gout.

Medical treatment is essential and the first step is a proper diagnosis. It will be based on symptoms, physical diagnosis and blood tests. The blood test for uric acid is especially important but not definitive.

Other medications improve uric acid removal and are called uricosurics. Probenecid is the best known. It improves your kidneys' ability to remove uric acid from your body but it increases the amount of uric acid in the urine. Side effects may include, rash and kidney stones. Medications are often the most effective way to treat acute gout and can prevent recurrent attacks. Making certain lifestyle changes also are important, such as:

- Limiting alcoholic beverages and drinks sweetened with fruit sugar (fructose). Instead, drink plenty of nonalcoholic beverages, especially water.
- Limiting intake of foods high in purines, such as red meat, organ meats and seafood.
- Exercising regularly and losing weight. Keeping your body at a healthy weight reduces your risk of gout

Stephanie Beling, M.D.