

THE NEW MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

By A. Tereasa Rerko, Esq.

Medicare has now changed to include prescription drug coverage, known as Medicare Part D. This coverage is supplemental to Medicare Parts A and B and is not offered directly from Medicare, but is private insurance coverage that you purchase just as you would any other health insurance policy. Medicare is underwriting part of the cost of this insurance, so that those who purchase it pay a reduced monthly premium. Persons of limited resources may receive additional help with the payment of their premiums.

Medicare Part D prescription coverage is not a discount drug card. It requires you to choose a private prescription drug plan. The plan you choose will require that you pay deductibles and co-pays for prescription medications, up to certain limits per month and/or per year. There are many plans, and each covers different medications. You should carefully choose the plan that provides payment for the medications that you are taking.

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TAX TALK WITH JIM

By James A. Horchak, Esq., C.P.A.

Since April 15 falls on a Saturday this year, you have two additional days to file your 2005 tax return. Tax returns must be postmarked by midnight on Monday, April 17, 2006.

Beginning in January, you will be receiving various tax documents such as W-2 forms and 1099 forms. You should store these tax documents in the same place as your other tax records in order to make your tax preparation easier.

The new standard deduction amounts this year are:

single taxpayers - \$5,000
married filing jointly - \$10,000
married filing separately - \$5,000
head of household - \$7,300

The new personal exemption amount you can claim for yourself, your spouse and your children is \$3,200 per person.

Federal tax forms are available online at www.IRS.gov or at your local post office or public library. If you need help with your return, please call me at 724-552-2745.

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The LEGAL UPDATE is prepared by the staff of QRG for its friends and clients. The UPDATE sets forth general principles and should not be acted upon without specific advice.

BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA



WHAT'S THE VERDICT?

By Richard H. Galloway, Esq.



We are proud to announce that two of our attorneys, Vincent J. Quatrini, Jr. and Richard H. Galloway, were among the lawyers included in the 2006 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*, the pre-eminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. The first edition of this elite list was compiled over twenty years ago. This list recognizes lawyers who are respected by their peers and references the areas in which these attorneys concentrate their practices.

Attorneys Quatrini and Galloway were also recently included in the February 2006 issue of *Pittsburgh Magazine*, spotlighting those listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* who practice in the Western Pennsylvania region. Attorney Quatrini was recognized for his practice in workers' compensation law and Attorney Galloway for personal injury litigation and criminal defense.

QRG SEMINAR SERIES

We want your input to plan future seminars. Are any of the following topics of interest to you? E-mail, call or mail us your choices and any other suggestions. Thank you!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto accident injuries | <input type="checkbox"/> Estate planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rights of an injured worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing home planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selling or buying a home | <input type="checkbox"/> Living trusts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private disability insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Changes to DUI laws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding your auto or homeowners' insurance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

E-mail to: info@qrglaw.com Call Terri Ross @ 724-837-0080
Mail to: QRG, 550 East Pittsburgh St., Greensburg, PA 15601

Two college roommates, Abe and Zach, hadn't had much chance to get together in the last few years, since Zach lived in Pittsburgh and Abe lived in Philadelphia. That all changed when Zach's kids needed some furniture moved out west. The buddies decided to do the move themselves, so they bought a van, consulted Map Quest and hit the road.

In a couple days they had reached St. Louis and while admiring the Arch, Abe unfortunately missed a stop sign. The St. Louis police promptly gave Abe a citation for the stop sign violation and another one for driving an uninspected vehicle. Abe paid the citations on the spot and the buddies moved on. Time was a little tight, so Abe put the pedal to the metal and ran through a speed trap operated by the Missouri State Police at 80 mph, 25 mph more than allowed. The trooper unfortunately issued a citation not only for speeding but for careless driving as well. At that point, it was decided that perhaps Zach should drive for a while!

The next day when rolling through Texas they rolled just a little too fast and a local policeman pulled out from behind a billboard. Zach's first instinct to step on it - after all, the policeman was in a '68 Ford Falcon - wasn't a good one since the policeman got on the radio and a few miles later Zach was pulled over by another patrolman and charged with speeding and fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer. The officer was pretty miffed and told him that he would lose his license for fleeing or attempting to elude. But Zach wasn't too worried since he wouldn't be back in Texas any time soon.

For some excitement, the buddies wheeled into Las Vegas. It was a hot day and they threw down a few martinis, followed by a pitcher of margaritas. It was just a short drive back to their hotel but Zach's unusual driving soon caught the eye of the Las Vegas Sheriff's Department. His blood alcohol test was just a little bit over the line, but he was arrested for drunk driving and his license was suspended in Nevada for six months. Big deal, thought Zach, he doesn't live there.

They finally reached California, the end of the trip. Though the boys accumulated a few traffic offenses, they weren't too concerned since they all occurred out of state.

Do the buddies have anything to worry about?

Answer on Page 7

Choosing the right plan may appear to be an impossible task; the many types of insurance plans are mind-boggling. However, here are some resources to turn to for help in making your decision. Medicare has a publication called **Medicare & You, 2006** which includes a worksheet to help you choose a plan. You may go to the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov, or call Medicare's toll-free number: 1-800-633-4227.

Medicare is encouraging everyone who is Medicare-eligible to select and join a plan now, regardless of current prescription drug needs. If you join a plan after May 15, 2006, you will be subject to a penalty in the form of a permanently increased monthly premium.

Some dates to remember:

January 1, 2006:

- Date that Medicare Part D prescription coverage begins

November 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006:

- Enrollment period for the new prescription drug plans
- If you do not choose a plan during this time, you will be subject to the penalty, estimated at 1% per month for every month that you wait to enroll. This penalty will be paid as long as you have Medicare Part D prescription coverage.

May 15, 2006:

- The last date you can enroll until November 15, 2006

November 15, 2006:

- The first date after May 15, 2006 you can enroll in a plan if you miss the May 15, 2006 deadline

November 15 to December 31 of each year:

- The time period in future years during which you can join or switch plans

All plans must provide at least the standard Medicare prescription benefit. Participants pay monthly premiums of \$32.20 per month, plus the first \$250 per year of drug expense, and approximately 25% of the cost of prescriptions up to the benefit limit of \$2,250. **Then there is a gap in coverage.** Participants must pay all drug expenses above \$2,250 until they reach \$5,100 in total prescription drug spending, after which Medicare will pay 95% of prescription drug cost. Some plans offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.

Here are some things to consider in choosing a plan:

- If you're a senior with little to no drug expenses, consider a plan with extremely low monthly premiums (some are under \$20/month).
- If you want your drug expenses balanced throughout the year, consider a plan with no deductible.
- If your annual drug expenses are between \$2,250 and \$5,100, consider a plan that offers some coverage for the gap, or "doughnut hole".
- Make sure that the specific drugs that you need are covered by your plan.
- Although not permitted to recommend a specific plan, your pharmacist may be able to help you decide which plan best suits your needs.

"MEET THE PETS"



1.



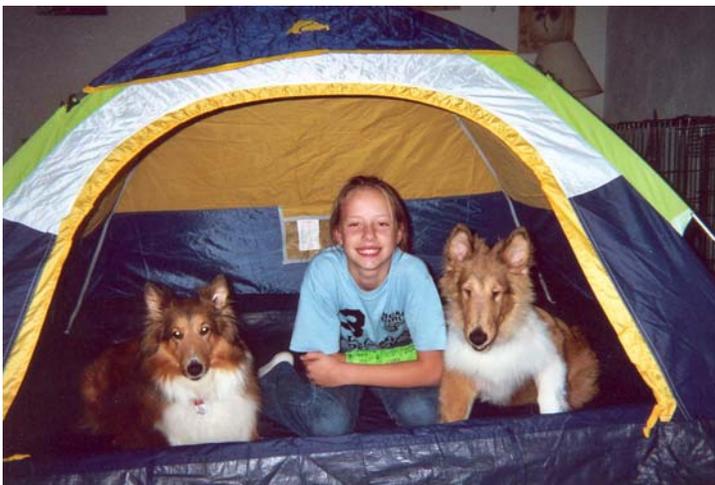
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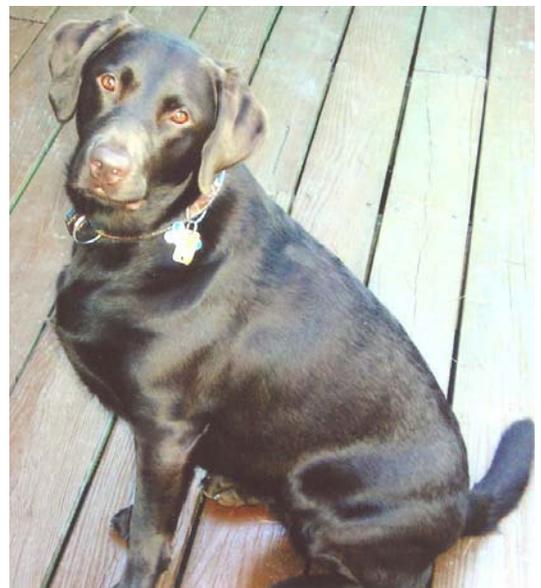


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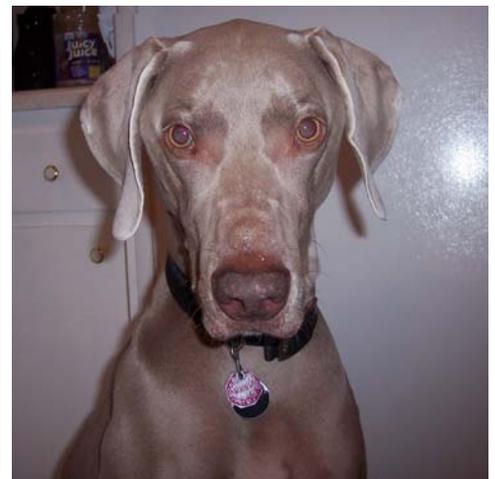


We thought you might be interested in seeing some of the pets of QRG! See if you can match the names with the proper QRG pet.

ANNIE
CHESTER
CODY
CORY
GRACEY
HARLEY
JACK

LIZA
O'REILLY
PIGGY
ROCKY
SPUNKY
TYSON
WHISKERS

Answers are on page 7.



QRG COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Over the years, we have formed relationships with many community leaders, businesses and organizations. From time to time we will feature articles from people and organizations in our community about subjects which we feel may enrich your life. In this issue, we are featuring Jane Kerr, Director of the Laurel Area Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers Faith in Action Program. Jane is married to Rev. Clark Kerr, pastor of the Latrobe Presbyterian Church. They live in Latrobe with their son, Trevor.

ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR LAUREL AREA SENIORS



By Jane Kerr

It is an everyday struggle for some people to remain independent in their own homes. Maintaining a house, purchasing groceries, household supplies and clothing, and getting to doctors' appointments can be not only an effort but also a physical impossibility. Many older people do not have a family member, neighbor or friend who can help them with these common, everyday tasks. It can be more than a matter of quality of life; it can involve issues of isolation and loneliness and meeting basic survival needs. The Laurel Area Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (LAIVC) Faith in Action Program was founded in 2002 to address this growing problem.

The mission of the program is to enhance the quality of life for persons 60 years and older who reside in the Greater Latrobe and Ligonier areas by providing companionship and assistance. Partnering with 37 community groups, the LAIVC Faith in Action program is making a difference in the lives of many in these communities. In 3 short years, over 180 volunteers have been recruited, screened, and trained to assist 198 recipients with a variety of "quality of life" services. These volunteers have devoted over 8,000 hours of time providing rides to doctors' offices, trips to the grocery store, help with errands, friendly visits, assistance with correspondence and paying bills, relief for full-time caregivers, and routine household maintenance.

The program has built significant relationships with many community partners, including St. Vincent College and Adelphoi Village. Paid internships funded through PHEAA, credited programs, and service learning credits for volunteers through the college have helped to forge a strong connection between the college students and elderly in the community. Students from the various Adelphoi residential homes have had a dramatic impact on the lives of those struggling to remain independent in their homes. Providing snow shoveling in the winter, leaf raking in the fall, and lawn mowing in the summer, the students are able to experience the satisfaction of helping those who are frail, vulnerable, and in need.

The program demonstrates the many ways that neighbors working together with a shared purpose and mission can make a real difference. Faith In Action is an incubator that grows individual responsibility and initiative, kindness and philanthropy, community awareness and respect. This work helps to create a community that is a dynamic and expansive place where people want to live and raise families. Faith In Action brings together caring people with those who are unable to accomplish those activities of daily living many of us take for granted, to the benefit of each person and the greater community.

To support or become involved in the program, call 724-539-4357 or email faithinaction@msn.com.

MEDICAID ALERT !

Medicaid planning - that is, how you will pay for skilled nursing home care in the future - was changed dramatically through a federal law passed on February 8, 2006. New restrictions are being imposed on the ability to transfer assets to family members in order to qualify for Medicaid coverage of nursing home expenses. Please look to upcoming issues of this newsletter to address the changes as they begin to unfold, or call David DeRose at 724-552-2725 for an appointment to determine if the new regulations will affect you.



WHAT'S THE VERDICT?

Continued from page 2

ANSWER: Both boys have troubles. Pennsylvania is a member of the Drivers License Compact (DLC), an agreement among 45 states designed to maximize traffic law enforcement efforts nationwide. Each state agrees to maintain a "one driver record concept" - a complete driver record in the driver's state of residence to determine driving eligibility both in the home state as well as other states. The DLC requires the reporting of all traffic convictions and license suspensions or revocations of out-of-state drivers to the home state.

Certain major offenses, when committed in another DLC state, are treated as though occurring in Pennsylvania and the appropriate sanction is imposed under Pennsylvania law. These offenses include homicide by vehicle, driving under the influence, failure to stop in the event of a serious accident, fleeing or eluding a police officer and any felony in which a vehicle is used.

Out-of-state minor traffic offenses such as speeding or stop sign violations do not get put on the Pennsylvania driving license record.

How does all this affect the roommates? Abe ran a stop sign and drove an uninspected vehicle in Missouri. Both offenses resulted in points on his Missouri record but would not be added to his Pennsylvania record.

In Texas, Zach sped and attempted to flee the police. The speeding does not have any effect, but fleeing or eluding is a suspendable offense. When it is reported by Texas, Pennsylvania will suspend Zach's license.

In Las Vegas, Zach was guilty of DUI. Nevada suspended his operating privilege for six months and forwarded the information to Pennsylvania. Since the suspension for DUI in Pennsylvania is one year, he will lose his operating privilege in Pennsylvania for that period.

With all this trouble, the buddies decided that their next trip would be to Georgia or Michigan, because those are 2 of the 5 states that are not members of the DLC, and would not affect their home state licenses!

The moral of the story is...be a good, safe driver and you won't have to worry about problems like this! For more information about the DLC, visit:

http://www.dot10.state.pa.us/pdotforms/fact_sheets/fs-dlc.pdf

QRG PERSONAL NOTES

Attorney **Jim Horchak** and his wife **Beth** recently welcomed their daughter, **Quinn Allison**, born November 21, 2005. Quinn enjoys the attention of her big brother Max, who turns three on February 26.

Cassidy Chappell, daughter of legal assistant **Rhonda Chappell**, was selected to play on the fifth grade Norwin Girls Basketball Tournament Team.

Lydia Herrholtz, daughter of legal assistant **Angie Herrholtz**, and several of her friends won first place in the Ligonier Halloween Parade in October 2005. Their picture was featured in the *Ligonier Echo*.

The Pinewood Derby, a Cub Scout tradition, brought out the racing streak in quite a few QRG kids! Participating in this year's Derby were: Wolf Cub **Connor Monzo**, grandson of **Dick Galloway**, Tiger Cub **Patrick Grundy**, son of **Teresa Rerko**, Tiger Cub **Zachary Taylor**, son of legal assistant **Kellie Taylor**, and Webelos Scout **Raymond Sowinski**, nephew of **Joyce Novotny-Prettiman**.

Janice Galloway, wife of attorney **Dick Galloway**, and her sister, **Karen Elliott**, recently completed their great adventure: a cross-country ride from Pennsylvania to California, where Karen resides, with stops in Branson, St. Louis, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and The Grand Canyon.

MEET THE PETS - ANSWERS

PET	OWNER
1. JACK	Legal assistant Angie Herrholtz (pictured with Lydia Herrholtz)
2. O'REILLY	Attorney Brian Bronson
3. ANNIE	Legal secretary Debbi Picciano
4. GRACEY	Legal assistant Brenda Sherbondy
5. CODY and	
6. CORY	Legal assistant Rhonda Chappell (pictured with Cassidy Chappell)
7. LIZA	Attorney David DeRose
8. SPUNKY and	
9. WHISKERS	Legal secretary Patty Apone
10. ROCKY	Office administrator Joyce Vivio
11. TYSON	Legal secretary Diane Miller
12. PIGGY and	
13. CHESTER	Legal secretary Jodi Busko
14. HARLEY	Attorney Jim Horchak

SUPER BOWL CHAMPS!

Like most everyone in the area, at QRG we have had Steelers fever! If you have been into the office, you may have noticed our "Black and Gold Fridays" during playoff season. You may have even seen the guy with the helmet in the back row in our waiting room!

We are proud to have the Lombardi Trophy back in Western Pennsylvania!



**CONGRATULATIONS
PITTSBURGH STEELERS!**

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(724) 837-0080
Visit us at
www.qrglaw.com

