

## Helping those who help their parents

◆ **Local CAPS:** Members of N.H. Children of Aging Parents group turn to each other for support.

By **KATHLEEN D. BAILEY**  
Special to the Sunday News

**SUNCOOK** — When Eric Feustel's mother died a few years ago, he didn't know what to do.

"I made some decisions too late," he said.

For example, he made the call for a hospice program three days before her death, "and they didn't return the call until after she passed away."

He promises to do better with his father, still an active senior living in Maine, when the time comes.

Feustel is the founder and coordinator of the local chapter of Children of Aging Parents. The group meets monthly to help adult children deal with the issues brought on by an older population that is living longer, fuller lives with unique complications.

Feustel's support group is "exactly what it says it is: We provide support for adult children with elderly parents."

It's not a pre-bereavement group, he emphasized.

"Instead, we're here to support our parents as they go through their life changes."

Specifically, the group addresses the issues of parents making the transition from independence to greater dependence, Feustel said, with the focus on children who provide all or some of that dependent care.

"The purpose of the group expires when mom or dad goes into a nursing home," he said. "They've completed the transition."

The Suncook group is loosely affiliated with a Philadelphia-based national group of the same name, Feustel said. "They don't tell us what to do, but they gave us a lot of information to start out with."

Feustel formed the local CAPS after a chance conversation with a friend.

"She attended a church that had done this," he said, "and it struck me as a good idea."

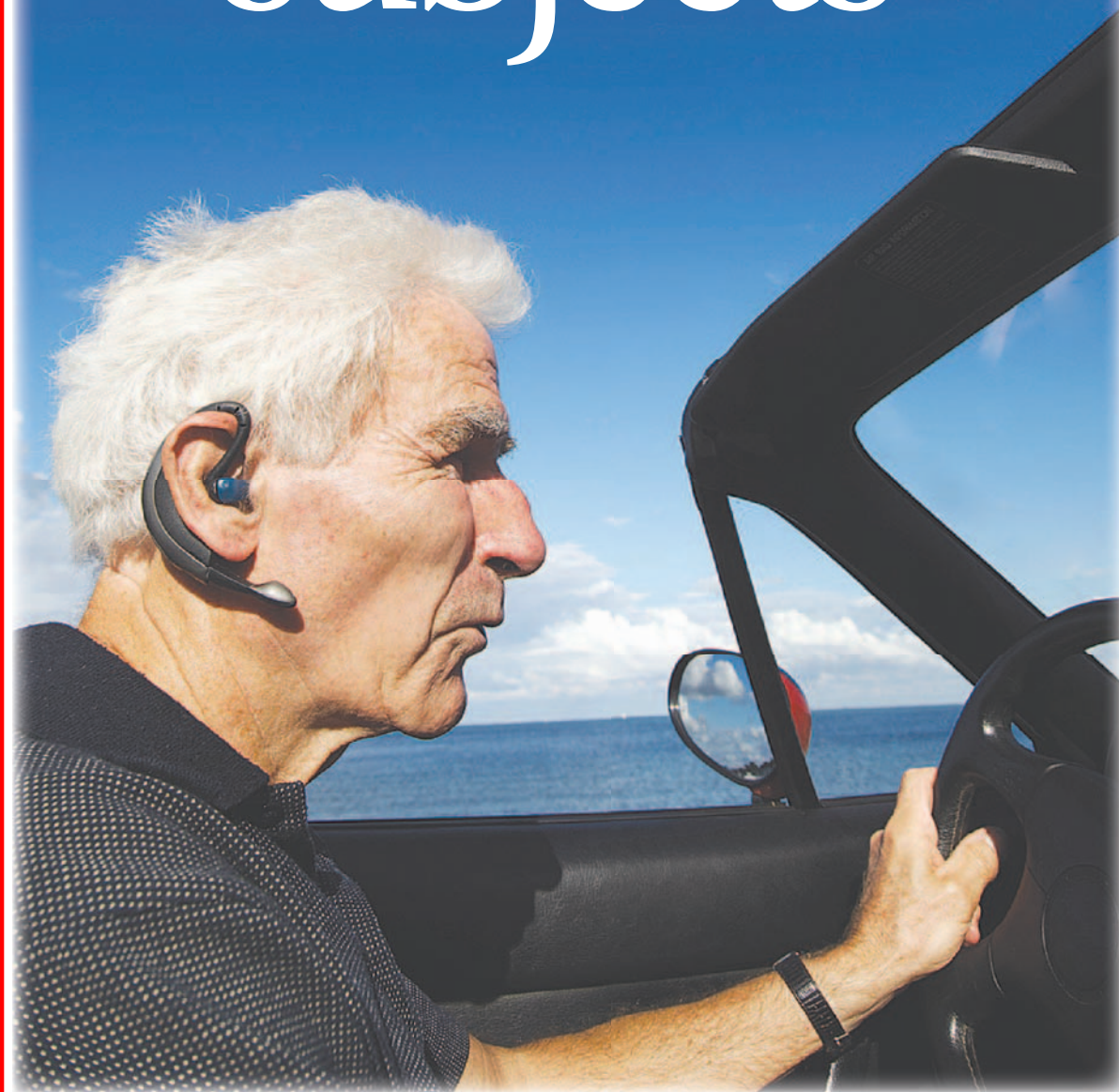
The group, which started meeting in fall of 2008, has about five regular members.

What issues do they confront? Senior driving is huge, according to Feustel. Group members agree that it's hard, and often heartbreaking, to convince a loved one to give up that piece of independence.

"It's not a legal responsibility, but a moral one," Feustel said. "You don't want someone's parent to do harm they never

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# Sensitive SENIOR subjects



## Program helps drivers stay 'fit'

◆ **CarFit:** Seniors take advantage of AAA-sponsored event to make sure they're still up to speed with their cars.

By **CHELSEY POLLOCK**  
Sunday News Correspondent

SALEM

**W**HEN the Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital Network teamed up with AAA last month to host their first CarFit safety program, more than 30 older drivers from the area showed up to make sure they're still ready for the road.

Seniors who participated said they got a lot out of the program.

"I learned a couple of things about my own car," said Liberty Tatarow, 90, of Haverhill, Mass. "I didn't know I could blow the horn in the center or where to put the belt. I had it too high. They told me to put it lower to save my life."

Tatarow said she's not ready to give up the keys anytime soon.

"I fight with the best of them," she joked. "I consider myself a good driver."

Experiences such as Tatarow's underscore the need for elder-driver safety inspections and education, said Sarah Riley, the Northeast Rehabilitation occupational therapist who organized the event.

"The education piece is huge because once people learn a little, they are more inspired to keep up on those skills," she said.

With the population of elderly drivers rising steadily, growing numbers are in need of a refresher. According to the national Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, there were more than 20 million drivers age 70 and older in 2006, up from 18 million in 1997. And with the oldest baby boomers due to turn 65 next year, the number of seniors behind the wheel is about to climb even more steeply.

CarFit — which was developed by AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association — puts drivers through a 12-point checklist to ensure their car is adjusted to meet their needs.

During the Salem session, each driver spent about 20 minutes with hospital staff members trained in the CarFit program. Inspectors checked seat and mirror positions to eliminate blind spots and ensure that all lights and signals were working.

"We are just trying to make them aware of the safety issues with driving and aging, and to keep them on top of it," said hospital physical therapist Neil Washington, who performed sev-

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*"We are just trying to make them aware of the safety issues with driving and aging, and to keep them on top of it."*

**NEIL WASHINGTON**  
physical therapist at  
Northeast Rehabilitation  
Hospital



CHELSEY POLLOCK

Physical therapist Neil Washington measures the distance between driver Norman Martin, 75, and his steering wheel at a CarFit program for older drivers at Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital in Salem. Martin drove from his home in Andover, Mass., to participate in the program earlier this month with his new car. "I just thought I should get it checked out to see if there's anything I should know," he said.

## They're unique ... and he's sure of it

Joe McQuaid, publisher of this newspaper, is a stickler about word usage. He got me on the use of the word unique.

*Unique: existing as the only one or as the sole example; single; solitary in type or characteristics.*

I forget what I was writing about, but I called it/her/him/that "unique" when I should have used "unusual" or, perhaps, "distinguished." "Different" would have been perfectly suitable. "Unique," however, was not.

And, Mr. McQuaid, in his effectively subtle way, let me know that.

But I think the boss will agree with me today: Theresa Novak Chabot and Max Sullivan are unique.

**Jim Fennell**  
Just Checking In



*(Editor's note: Theresa Novak Chabot should not be confused with Theresa Chabot of Manchester, the subject of a 2006 Sunday News profile, who has been called "a prayer warrior" for her involvement in*

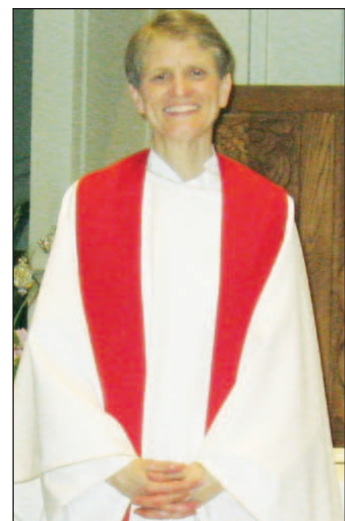
*Catholic causes.)*

Sullivan became the first musician from New Hampshire to be selected to play in the International House of Blues Foundation's Blues SchoolHouse Band at the House of Blues in Boston. And he's only 19.

I would say both are unique.

We first checked in with Chabot at the end of 2009. She recently had become a deacon in the Roman Catholic Womenpriests, a secessionist order established in 2002 that believes single men sworn to

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**THERESA NOVAK CHABOT**  
Roman Catholic Womenpriests



**JIM VAIKNORAS/NEWBURYPORT DAILY NEWS**  
**MAX SULLIVAN**  
SchoolHouse Band bluesman

## Drivers

eral vehicle inspections during the May 8 event.

Drivers were encouraged to make any necessary changes on their own. "We don't make the adjustments," said Washington. "We want them to do it so it's a learning experience. We want them to be doing it themselves over time."

Inspectors also talked with drivers about any sight and mobility issues they'd been having and what kind of adaptive equipment they might

consider, such as a larger rear-view mirror or seat cushion.

Norman Martin, 75, of Andover, Mass., didn't end up making any adjustments to his newly purchased car, but he said he was glad to know everything was in working order.

"I just thought I should get it checked out to see if there's anything I should know," he said after his inspection.

Beyond the CarFit inspections, representatives from the hospital and AAA set up

computer stations to test driver readiness, including a driving-themed Wii video game.

Glenn Fogg, a hospital recreational therapist, said he often uses Wii games with his patients.

"With the Wii itself, there's just the fun concept," he said. "But it brings about a different avenue for the patients to practice hand-eye coordination and sequencing."

Linda Sousa, 63, took a turn playing the game, where she

raced a Volkswagen Beetle through crowded streets.

Sousa, of Methuen, Mass., said she saw the event in a AAA newsletter and wanted to make sure her car was a good fit for her.

"It's kind of embarrassing," she said, "but I didn't have my rear-view mirror adjusted correctly, and I didn't know."

"You did yourself a favor today," Fogg chimed in. "And after seeing you in the Beetle, I'm glad."

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## Parents

intended to do."

Sibling issues are also on the table.

"There's often conflict on how best to care for a parent," Feustel said, adding that the problem typically is exacerbated when siblings are far-flung.

He recounted the experience of one friend who spent several years as the primary caregiver for her mother, who suffered from Alzheimer's. When the mother's symptoms became worse, Feustel said, the friend's siblings, who lived in various parts of the country, didn't understand.

"They kept saying, 'Why don't you just keep her at home?'" he said.

The parents of the Suncook CAPS group's current members all live in New England, Feustel said.

Group members often are members of a so-called "sandwich generation," Feustel said. Such members have adult children of their own, and are typically at the peak of their careers. Their burning issue? "How can you do it all?" he said.

The group has had speakers on elder issues, including a representative of the Merrimack County ServiceLink who gave a presentation on area social-service agencies. But, more often, a meeting finds members helping one another based on experience and trust.

"We talk about medical issues and try to understand what our parents are going

through," Feustel said. "My dad has a hearing problem. We talk about how difficult it is even to reminisce — when you have to shout."

"The issues may not be identical, but are conceivable to others in the group."

CAPS is not a professional therapy group, Feustel said, and is non-directive.

"We share what's in our hearts. We laugh and cry," he said. "Every one of us is here because we love our parents, and we don't want to be in a hostile situation."

He's always had a good relationship with his father, Feustel said.

"This group has given me the confidence to take a stand and be firm, but also to put myself in my father's shoes," he said.

He expects the group to help him with his father's final transition, whenever that may be.

"When you're going through it the first time, you don't know what's typical, atypical, normal or abnormal," he said. "You're not comfortable with your own feelings. When my mother died, I asked myself, 'Was I overdramatic? Too nonchalant?'"

The group meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Suncook United Methodist Church on Main Street. For more information, call the church at 485-9707.

Online: The national Children of Aging Parents Web site is caps4caregivers.org.

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# AARP offers driving refresher class throughout NH

The AARP Driver Safety Program offers driving refresher courses in classrooms throughout the state every month.

The two-part class, which doesn't involve any tests, is open to all ages, but is geared toward drivers 50 and older.

Pre-registration is required for the two-part class, which costs \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for nonmembers.

Classes are offered at several locations this month:

**Nashua:** June 7 and 9, Dartmouth-Hitchcock, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., to register, call 577-4000.

**Portsmouth:** June 8-9, Wentworth Con-

nections, 127 Parrott Ave., 1-5 p.m., call Gail Bergeron, 430-0070.

**Manchester:** June 14-15, Community Health Services of Catholic Medical Center, 1-5 p.m., call 626-2626

**Hudson:** June 16-17, Hudson Police Department, 4-8 p.m., call 886-6011.

**Lancaster:** June 16-17, Weeks Medical Center, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., call 823-4022

**Plymouth:** June 21-22, Plymouth Senior Center, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., call 536-1204.

**Rochester:** June 22 and 24, Frisbie Memorial Hospital, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., call 332-4882.

**Exeter:** June 22 and 24, Exeter Recre-

ation Department, 1-5 p.m., call 773-6151.

**Nashua:** June 22 and 24, Southern New Hampshire Medical Center, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., call 577-2335.

**Dover:** June 23-24, Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, 3-7 p.m., call 742-6075.

**Meredith:** June 23-24, Meredith Community Center, 4-8 p.m., call 677-7187.

**North Conway:** June 22 and 24, Gibson Senior Center, 12:15-4:15 p.m., call 356-3231.

For more information about the class, call (888) 227-7669 or 228-8483. The class also is available online. For more details, visit [www.aarpdriversafety.org](http://www.aarpdriversafety.org).

## Fennell

celibacy are not the only ones who can be priests.

To join the RCWP means being excommunicated, and Chabot, a Claremont native who now lives and works in Manchester, had been deeply involved in the Roman Catholic Church. The idea of fracturing that relationship weighed heavily on her mind, she said, but she ultimately decided to follow her calling and was ordained as an RCWP deacon in November.

She was ordained a priest during a ceremony May 1 in Rochester, N.Y., and presided over her first Mass on May 22 at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Union Street.

Chabot and a few people who support her brought in a makeshift altar to the rented church. There were about 100 people in attendance.

"There were people there just to see the event, there were people who I had known for many years, and there was everyone in between," Chabot said. "There were people in the pews sobbing, and there were a lot of smiles, huge smiles." She said the reality and scope of the event really struck her as she was holding the chalice while preparing communion.

"I was numb for hours afterwards," Chabot said. "It was a surreal feeling. It was so monumental."

Chabot said she would be in the homes of the people in her small congregation to conduct Mass for the near future. She hopes the flock will grow and there will be enough money raised soon to be able to use a church somewhere in the state or city on a regular basis.

They called Max Sullivan "Baby Boy" during his performances with the House of Blues' SchoolHouse Band because he was the baby of the group.

In a band made up of veteran musicians, the teenager from Brentwood was the youngest. He beat out far more established guitar players to get the gig with the Boston concert venue.

The SchoolHouse Band

## Senior center to air Obama's session on health benefits

**MANCHESTER** — Retirees and their families are invited to the William B. Cashin Senior Activity Center, 151 Douglas St., at 11 a.m. Tuesday to view a special question-and-answer session with President Obama on senior benefits under the new health reform law.

The program will be televised at 11:25 a.m. on C-SPAN-1. Those watching at the Cashin Center may call in to ask the President their questions.

For more information, call the center at 624-6533.

played and performed a history of the blues for school children throughout the city during seven shows that just wrapped up. Max sang lead on two songs: John Mayer's "Waiting on the World to Change," and Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog."

Pam Ward, who ran the program and put the band together, calls Max "an amazing guitar player with an incredible feel."

"I've seen a lot of guitarists and I'm pretty sure he's a prodigy," Ward said.

Max says he had to learn how to play the guitar on his own when he was 13 because his mom said he never practiced the clarinet when he was younger, so she wasn't going to pay for guitar lessons.

But his mom did give him a Stevie Ray Vaughan CD to listen to, and that's how he learned.

Max isn't quite sure how to describe his music, saying it's influenced by everyone from Stevie Ray and Jimi Hendrix to the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin to the Pixies and the White Stripes.

He's been playing shows for more than two years and

is trying to line up at least a couple of gigs a week this summer. He competed in a blues competition two nights ago at the Tupelo Music Hall in Londonderry.

Max, who just finished his sophomore year at the University of New Hampshire, hopes to release his first EP in July, a seven-song collection he still hasn't titled. He said it should be available on iTunes, in local music stores and on his own site, [myspace.com/max-sullivan](http://myspace.com/max-sullivan).

In the meantime, he and his band, the Max Sullivan Group, are scheduled to play around the region, including appearances at La Bec Rogue in Hampton Beach. Some gigs will be solos, others with the band.

Ultimately, Max would like to move down the boardwalk from La Bec Rogue and open for a big-time act at the Casino Ballroom and, maybe, someday, get back to the House of Blues with his own band.

Pam Ward is not betting against him.

"If these things are based on talent, as it should be," Ward said, "then he should be here on a regular basis."

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Now, that, I think, would be unique. Or, at least, unusual.

E-mail staff writer Jim Fennell at [jfennell@unionleader.com](mailto:jfennell@unionleader.com).

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BECAUSE I ENJOY CRACKING JOKES ABOUT MANICURISTS QUITE OFTEN, PEOPLE SAY I'M A FINGERNAIL QUIPPER.

### JUMBLE

Answer :

MARROW VISION ALBINO  
ANGINA INTONE EULOGY

Naturally, a beaver has a —

"GNAWING"  
AMBITION

Today's puzzles are on Page F5

5	3	8	4	7	9	1	2	6
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