

# D | Accent HEALTHY LIVING

Culture Editor: Larry Aydlette 561-820-4436 or pb\_accent@pbpost.com | On the Web: [palmbeachpost.com](http://palmbeachpost.com)



**Cleveland Clinic**  
Florida

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:  
**LEAKY HEART VALVES**

HEALTHY LIVING

Learn how mitral regurgitation affects your heartbeat. Q & A, D4

## Seniors need refresher in sex-ed



**Steve Dorfman**  
Boomer Health

Last week, I drove past an upscale retirement community adorned with Valentine's Day decorations.

There was once a time when my immediate reaction would've been a quick "isn't-that-sweet?" smile.

Unfortunately, not anymore.

Thanks to some recently released Centers for Disease Control data about sexually transmitted diseases, now I couldn't help but wonder how many of the widowed, divorced or otherwise newly single seniors would be partaking in the kind of behavior that would put them at risk for being yet another CDC statistic.

Last month, the CDC reported that, between 2007 and 2011, the incidences of syphilis and chlamydia among seniors increased by 52 percent and 31 percent, respectively.

Those statistics mean that folks over the age of 65 are now at greater risk for sexually transmitted diseases than any other demographic.

What's more, the numbers reconfirmed that an alarming trend — first noticed in 2010 when the CDC said STDs in seniors had doubled between 2000 and 2010 — had not only continued unabated, but had picked up steam.

Experts cite a confluence of factors contributing to these developments, which are particularly — yet not surprisingly — prevalent in Florida, one of the states with the highest incidence of senior STDs:

- Increased late-life divorce rates. Increased emphasis on senior fitness (a case of "unintended consequences," if there ever was one).

- Increased availability of erectile-dysfunction medications, many of which are now covered by Medicare plans.

- What's more, folks in their 60s, 70s and 80s who are re-entering the dating/sexual scene came of age in an era when condom use was employed primarily to prevent pregnancy.



**Jordana Perlman**

"Having a more casual lifestyle with diminished responsibilities, better medications, ample free time, and living in close proximity to other seniors seems to be the formula for reworked conventions and a rampant increase in sexual activity," says psychotherapist Jordana Perlman, founder of Psychotherapy of the Palm Beaches ([psypb.com](http://psypb.com)).

Often living in what a recent New York Times article described as quasi "dormlike"

Dorfman continued on D7

Q&A WITH A CARDIOLOGIST

# ARE YOU A HEART ATTACK WAITING TO HAPPEN?



Dr. Michael Metzger specializes in heart catheterizations accessed through an artery in the wrist. CONTRIBUTED



CONTRIBUTED

## DR. MICHAEL METZGER

■ Metzger's group, South Palm Cardiovascular Associates, is in Boynton Beach. He's also part of the "Cardiac Alert" service at two community hospitals, which provide fast attention for patients entering the ER with heart attacks.

■ He specializes in doing heart catheterizations by running a stent through an artery in the wrist rather than the traditional procedure that uses an artery in the groin. "Approximately 90 percent of cardiac catheterization procedures are done from the groin ... by accessing the femoral artery and advancing to the heart through the aorta in the abdomen and chest. I, however, use the radial artery ... access. The advantages include patient safety and comfort."

## New tests can pinpoint your personal risk.

By Lois Cahall  
Special to The Palm Beach Post

It was more than a decade ago that I phoned my just-retired, 65-years-young mother in Florida and began reviving her up with the highs and lows of my life in Manhattan.

She interrupted, joking: "Stop ... or you'll give me a heart attack!"

Moments later, as she hung up the phone, my mother collapsed to the floor.

She died, just like that, from a massive heart attack. The No. 1 killer of women.

After reading her autopsy report, I saw her cholesterol reading was close to 300 — too high. Anyone with cholesterol over 240 has more than twice the risk of coronary heart disease as someone whose cholesterol is below 200.

My mother was afraid of taking the newly FDA-approved cholesterol-controlling medicines because of potential side effects like liver damage.

I'd give anything to have my mother alive today ... with any side effect.

So with partial guilt and a longing to see how heart disease treatments may have changed since then — and because February is American Heart Month — I found Dr. Michael L. Metzger, a cardiologist who offers a lot more than just being the man in a white lab coat and stethoscope.

Actually he's young and dressed in a crisp shirt and

Heart continued on D5

## 2014 WALK TO DEFEAT ALS

# Walking for Susan

Susan Spencer-Wendel aims to raise 'boatload of money' to beat the disease.

By Jane Smith  
Special to The Palm Beach Post

The honors keep piling up for former Palm Beach Post courts reporter Susan Spencer-Wendel.

She and her husband, John Wendel, will be honorary chairs of the 2014 Walk to Defeat ALS/Palm Beach on March 22.

"Susan and John deserve to be honored," said walk chairwoman Dorothy Bradshaw. "Susan made a concerted effort to not let ALS keep her from continuing to live life and to continue to do the things that she enjoys for as long as

she can. Having experienced the effect ALS has on the caregiver, I admire John for all that he is and continues to do for Susan. He gives true meaning to the words 'until death do us part.'"

Spencer-Wendel was an award-winning courts reporter when she was diagnosed in June 2011. Often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a progressive, fatal neuromuscular disease that slowly robs the body of its ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe. She took a medical leave from

Susan continued on D7

'Susan made a concerted effort to ... continue to do the things she enjoys....' — Dorothy Bradshaw, walk chairwoman



Susan Spencer-Wendel gets a kiss on the forehead from her husband, John, at the start of an October football game at Forest Hill High School in Lake Worth. BRUCE BENNETT / THE PALM BEACH POST

## IF YOU GO

**What:** 2014 Walk to Defeat ALS  
**Where:** Okeetee Park, suburban West Palm Beach  
**When:** 10 a.m., Saturday, March 22  
**Info:** [walkfl.alsa.org](http://walkfl.alsa.org) or 813-637-9000, ext. 126.  
**After-walk activities:** Live music, hot food and cold drinks, and bounce house and face painting for kids. A Barnes & Noble representative will sell the paperback version of "Until I Say Good-Bye," which Susan Spencer-Wendel will sign with the help of her husband, John.  
**To donate to a cure for ALS:** Go [walkfl.alsa.org](http://walkfl.alsa.org), and click on Palm Beach walk

**DUNCAN THEATRE**  
[www.duncantheatre.org](http://www.duncantheatre.org)

Fun for All!



Dinosaur Zoo LIVE  
Saturday, February 22  
@ 11am & 1:30pm

Direct from Australia, Erth's DINOSAUR ZOO Live™ brings an awesome array of prehistoric creatures to life on stage. From cute baby dinos to teeth-gnashing giants, your family will observe and interact with extraordinary, life-like creatures in this highly imaginative, entertaining and educational live show.



Women of Ireland  
Monday, February 24 @ 8PM

"mesmerizing"  
— Irish Examiner  
"superhuman at times... gripping"  
— Sarasota Herald Tribune



As seen on NBC's Americas Got Talent  
Saturday March 22 @ 8pm

William Close  
& the Earth Harp Collective



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4200 Congress Avenue (I-95 Exit #63, west 1 mile)