Seeing my future in hers ... and it's not very promising

ANNIE LANE
ADVICE

Dear Annie: I'm 58, never married, no kids, no siblings, no nieces or nephews. A neighbor of mine is very ill and in a nursing home.

She has a daughter, but the daughter barely even bothers to visit her, and it breaks my heart. I call my neighbor often to try to lift her spirits.

At the same time, I've been dealing with some depression myself. I keep thinking about how I will be 70 one day — and who will be there to visit me? I have health problems, but I stay on top of my appointments.

I'm terrified I'll end up like my neighbor, alone in a home with no one around to show up. Do you have any advice?

— Hoping for Better Days

Dear Hoping for Better Days: Not marrying and having no siblings doesn't condemn you to a life alone. You're already proving that you're a devoted friend by calling your neighbor and lifting her spirits. Keep nourishing your friendships.

Where you can, start planning for the practical side of getting older. Look into long-term care insurance while you're still healthy enough to qualify, and get your finances in order so paying for help later isn't a scramble.

Some towns also have "villages" — member-based networks of older adults who check in on each other.

The depression deserves its own attention, separate from all of this. A primary care doctor can screen you and, if needed, refer you to a therapist or start you on medication.

Between the friendships you're building and the care you give your health, you're doing more for your future than you realize.

Dear Annie: My best friend's birthday is coming up and I want to do something nice for her. In the past, I've done small gestures that I thought were meaningful — a signed copy of her favorite book, a photo album of our trips together, her favorite cupcakes delivered to her office.

But her gifts always put mine to shame. For my birthday earlier this year, she treated us both to a weekend getaway together. The year before, she brought all of my girlfriends to a spa for massages.

I want to do the same for her, but it's just out of my price range. How do I make her feel special on her birthday without blowing up my budget?

— Priced Out of Friendship

Dear Priced Out: You're blessed with a generous friend, but generosity isn't a competition, and she's not keeping score. A signed book and a photo album are the kind of gifts people keep for decades.

Round up the girlfriends she treated and do something budget-friendly together — a home-cooked dinner, a game night, a day trip nearby.

Gifts are meaningful when they show you're paying attention, not when they come with a receipt to match.

Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

Know those household plants that aren't pet-safe

HELOISE
HINTS

Dear Heloise: Every year, we see cats and dogs in our clinic who suffer anything from a sore mouth to organ failure because they chewed on a plant — usually an indoor plant.

Here's a list of the worst offenders and most dangerous houseplants for pets:

— Anthurium
— Begonia
— Chinese evergreen
— Dracaena (aka dragon tree)
— Snake plant
— Aloe vera
— Sago palm
— Dieffenbachia
— English ivy
— Schefflera
— Ficus
— Fiddle leaf fig

Either place these plants up high, or better yet, don't grow them in your yard. Your cat or dog doesn't know any better, but you do.

— Kathy, in Oregon

THE CAT'S BATH TIME

Dear Heloise: Most people assume that all cats hate baths. While it's true that some do, the ones who don't raise much of a fuss were bathed as kittens.

I always started my cats out with baths as kittens and bathed them about once a month.

It kept their fur clean, and as they grew older, they knew that they'd get a bath and were used to it.

Bathing a pet also removes saliva from their fur, reducing allergies at the same time.

— Thomas F., in Greensboro, North Carolina

RESCUE PETS

Dear Heloise: My mother raised show cats (copper-eyed white Persians), and they were sweet cats with lots of personality.

However, if I were to go to a rescue shelter and select a cat, I'd pick just an everyday gray tabby.

They can be funny, sweet, playful and healthy. Many show animals are inbred and often have physical problems because of this. Some of the nicest pets that I've ever had were rescues.

How about your other readers? Have they got any interesting stories about their rescued pets?

— A Cat Lover, via email

Cat Lover, thanks for writing in, and what a great question! Readers, if you have any rescue pet stories that you'd like to share, please send them in to Heloise@Heloise.com.

— Heloise

PERSONAL SAFETY HINT

Dear Heloise: Lynn, in Vermont, suggested not giving service personnel a car fob that has your house keys attached. I go a step further for safety. At every gas station, I lock my car while pumping gas.

My friends are surprised when I mention this, but how easy would it be to have someone open your front passenger door while you're occupied? And what's normally on the front seat? Usually, your handbag.

— Jean, in Arkansas

Jean, this is a good idea. I usually have my shoulder bag with me across my body while I pump gas.

A close friend of mine locks her purse in the trunk of her car before she leaves her garage. She doesn't usually get it out unless she needs to get gas or shop.

— Heloise

Heloise is an internationally known household-advice columnist, speaker and author. Email her your question at Heloise@Heloise.com.

50-280 (Rev. 01-26/8)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

Campbell Independent School District (name of school district) will hold a public meeting at 5:30 PM on August 17th, 2026 (time, date, year) at the CISD Administration Building Board Room (name of room, building, physical location) at 480 N Patterson St., Campbell, TX 75422 (city, state). **This meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate the school district will adopt.**

The school district invites public participation in the discussion.

The tax rate the school district ultimately adopts at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax $ 0.6669 /$100 (proposed rate for maintenance and operations)

School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters $ 0.0000 /$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	17.07 % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Debt service	0.00 % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Total expenditures	17.07 % increase	or	_____ % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Tax Code Section 26.04)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	$ 341,502,283	$ 352,122,447
Total appraised value* of new property**	$ 8,473,880	$ 8,817,246
Total taxable value*** of all property	$ 211,060,707	$ 213,511,921
Total taxable value*** of new property**	$ 6,661,530	$ 7,506,142

* Appraised value is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(8).
** New property is defined by Tax Code Section 26.012(17).
*** Taxable value is defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(10).

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* $ 0

* Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance and Operations	Interest and Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	$ 0.6669	$ 0.0000*	$ 0.6669	$ 5,154	$ 13,840
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	$ 0.6897	$ 0.0000*	$ 0.6897	$ 5,102	$ 13,885
Proposed Rate	$ 0.6669	$ 0.0000*	$ 0.6669	$ 4,937	$ 13,358

* The interest and sinking fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	$ 221,346	$ 205,092
Average Taxable Value of Residences	$ 87,454	$ 79,372
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per $100 Value	$ 0.6669	$ 0.6669
Taxes Due on Average Residence	$ 583	$ 529
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		$ (54)

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person age 65 or older or their surviving spouse, if the surviving spouse was age 55 or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is $0.6669 (school voter-approval rate)**. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of** $0.6669 (school voter-approval rate).

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	$ 1,700,000
Interest and Sinking Fund Balance(s)	$ 0

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.