

Here you're among friends!

Dear Friends,  
As this month marks my final one as your President, I want to express my deep gratitude for the past three



**From the President's Desk**

years. It has been an honor to serve and to get to know so many of you. The friendships formed here are something I will always treasure.

Senior Pals thrives because of its volunteers, and I want to thank Cathy Landry, Linda Saucedo, Carla Chambers, Gladys Gordon, Martha Britton, Joan Sabino, Al Sabino, Sharon Bowen, and Elaine Wilson for stepping in whenever needed. I am equally grateful to all our "saintly cooks" who faithfully brought their favorite dishes to our potluck lunches. You fed us well, body and soul, and helped make our gatherings feel like family. And to those who quietly worked behind the scenes to keep our events running smoothly, please know your efforts did not go unnoticed.

A special word of thanks goes to my wife, Cordy, for her steady support and for arriving early each month to brew gallons of fresh coffee for the entire membership. Her efforts have blessed us all.

As I step aside, I offer my warmest good wishes to the incoming leadership. May your work be joyful, creative, and full of the same spirit of friendship that makes Senior Pals so special.

Thank you for your trust and kindness. Serving as your President has been a privilege I will always cherish.

With gratitude,

Art

### The Mystery of Mama, Papa, and the Missing Fafa

By Art Dominguez, SPN Editor

**M**y wife and I were at Walmart the other day as she was looking to purchase some clothes for our granddaughters. When she shops, I hold fast to my assigned position standing by the shopping cart like a loyal sentry as I have no opinion in these matters. Close by I noticed a young family. The mother was juggling a baby on her hip while her toddler tugged on her blouse, calling "Mom, Mom," all while trying to make a sensible clothing decision. In a frustrated, albeit, motherly tone she told the toddler, "Go with Dad while I look at clothes for your brother." Dad, I noticed, had similar sentry duty to mine which was that of standing mindlessly by his shopping cart. And right there between the clearance rack and the toddler socks, it struck me: why are mothers called "Moms," but fathers called "Dads"? Why aren't we called "Fafs"? It made perfect sense to me.

I had to look into it and that small moment in Walmart opened the door to a much bigger story, apparently one that linguists have been studying for decades. Babies across the world, regardless of culture or language, tend to produce the same early sounds. These syllables aren't learned; they're simply the easiest noises a tiny mouth can make. Research in child language development shows that the earliest consonants infants produce are the *bilabials*, sounds made by

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### Speaker Spotlight: The Healing Power of Music, Featuring Andrea Morrow, Music Therapist at TIRR Memorial Hermann

This month, Senior Pals is in for a real treat. We're welcoming Andrea Morrow, a board-certified music therapist from TIRR Memorial Hermann, who will open our eyes (and ears) to the remarkable world of music therapy.

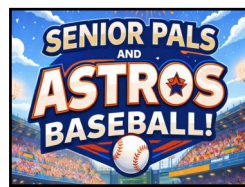
Andrea works every day with patients recovering from stroke, neurological conditions, injuries, and life-changing illnesses using rhythm, melody, and creative expression to help restore movement, memory, speech, and emotional well-being. She'll share stories from her work, demonstrate how music activates the brain in surprising ways, and show us why music is far more than entertainment, it's medicine with a beat.

And that fits right in with our group as it has never been shy about making joyful noise.

Come join us for an inspiring, and interesting program that promises to strike all the right chords. Bring a friend, bring your curiosity, and bring your love of music. I'm sure Andrea will take care of the rest.



Zygmunt Godzina	06 02	Marylyn Monroe	6/1/1826
Joan Sabino	06 04	Che Guevara	6/1/1928
Esperanza McDonald	06 06	Morgan Freeman	6/1/1937
Cordy Dominguez	06 07	Natalie Portman	6/9/1981
Joan Johnson	06 08	Michael J. Fox	6/9/1961
Lynne Froelich	06 09	Prince Philip	6/10/1921
Terry Vaughn	06 11	Judy Garland	6/10/1922
Betty Zaboly	06 19	Venus Williams	6/17/1980
Robin Dufour	06 23	Zoe Saldana	6/19/1978
Mina Bowers	06 25	Lionel Messi	6/24/1987
Linda Carrer	06 25	Ariana Grande	6/26/1993
Beverly Wagener	06 29	Elon Musk	6/28/1971
Scott Rabalais	06 30	Mike Tyson	6/30/1966
Bonita George	07 02	Tom Cruise	7/3/1962
Sharon Perreault	07 11	Sylvester Stallone	7/6/1946
Tina Stone	07 13	Harrison Ford	7/13/1942
Ann Boat	07 14	Nelson Mandela	7/18/1950
Shelia Taylor	07 14	Robin Williams	7/21/1951
Patricia McNamara	07 24	Selena Gomez	7/22/1992
Cindy Vega	07 28	Mark Cuban	7/31/1958



## Senior Pals Astros Game!

Our annual Astros adventure is back, and it just keeps

getting better! Each year, this outing has grown into one of our most laughter-filled, memory-making Senior Pals traditions. If you've been before, you know the fun. If you haven't, well, this is the year you don't want to miss it.

We're planning a trip to Daiken Park on Thursday, September 3rd, at 1:30PM, for a game against the Chicago White Sox.

Cost: \$85.00 per person Includes:

- Comfortable charter bus transportation
- At-the-gate drop-off and pickup
- Your game entrance ticket

Space is limited, so hurry and sign up before seats are gone. All tickets must be paid by our August meeting.

It's going to be a great afternoon of baseball, fellowship, and summer fun, we hope you'll join us!

### Fafa from page 1

bringing the lips together, such as m, p, and b paired with the open vowel "a," which requires almost no effort at all. These combinations appear across cultures not because they share a common origin, but because babies everywhere stumble into the same sounds by accident.

One of the most tender explanations for "Mama" comes from the linguist Roman Jakobson, who observed that infants often make a soft nasal hum while nursing, something like "mmm." With their lips sealed around the bottle or breast, that's the only sound they can produce. When they release their lips, that hum naturally blossoms into "ma," and before long, the repeated syllable becomes associated with the mother herself. Whether the baby intends it or not, the sound becomes a call, and the call becomes a name.

Curiously, even though "m" is tied to nursing, many babies say "dada" or "papa" before "mama." Mothers everywhere have rolled their eyes at this, but the explanation is mechanical, not emotional. The consonants d, p, and b are quick, popping sounds, easy for a baby to produce once they begin experimenting with their lips and tongue. Studies in early phonetic development show that these "plosive" sounds often emerge before nasal ones like m. Parents, ever hopeful, hear "da-da" and immediately claim it as a tribute to Dad. And just like that, the syllable becomes a title.

Over time, those early baby syllables *mama* and *dada* or *papa*, grow up right alongside the children who speak them. As speech becomes clearer and the tongue gains confidence, *mama* naturally softens into *Mom*, and *papa* or *dada* trims itself down to the sturdy, one-syllable *Dad*. It's the same linguistic path that turns *kitty* into *cat* and *doggie* into *dog*, the mouth matures, the sounds tighten, and the words settle into the shapes we use for the rest of our lives.

And that brings us back to Walmart and my question.

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*"...the same sounds appear again and again even in cultures with no shared linguistic history."*

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If babies start with *dada* and eventually arrive at *Dad*, why don't they ever begin with *fafa* and grow into *Fad*? The answer, as it turns out, is that "f" is one of the last sounds to show up in a child's speech. To make it, a little one has to place the top teeth on the bottom lip and blow air in a controlled stream, a tricky maneuver for a mouth still learning the basics. Speech-development research shows that "f" doesn't reliably appear until well after the first birthday. By the time a child can manage it, the titles of *Mama* and

See *Fafa* on last page

# PALES PUZZLE



## - Spot the Differences -

Think you've got a sharp eye? There are 15 changes tucked between the two images some obvious, some tiny enough to make you squint. Give it a try and see how many you can uncover. If you get stumped, the clues are on the last page.



"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

- Thomas Edison

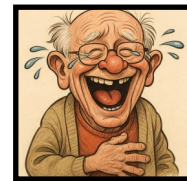
## June Lunch Outing: Lupe Tortilla Tex-Mex

Located at 19437 I-45 N (Frontage Rd), next to Red Robin on Wednesday, June 24th at 12:30 PM. Lupe Tortilla serves up a large variety of Mexican favorites perfect for a lively summer lunch with friends. Come join us! We are skipping a luncheon in July to allow for summer travel. Thank you Carla Chambers!

## A Quick Note from Our Projectionist: We're on Summer Vacation!



Senior Pals Theater is taking a break for June and July, soaking up a little sunshine. We'll miss seeing you, but don't worry, we'll be back on Wednesday, August 20th, refreshed and ready for more fun on the big screen. Enjoy your summer, Senior Pals, and get ready for a great comeback in August!



## Grandpa's June Jokes

- ⇒ I told my wife June is the month I finally get in shape. She said, "I guess a circle is still a shape."
- ⇒ I asked my grandson what he's doing this summer. He said, "As little as possible." and I said "Ah, a family tradition lives on."
- ⇒ I told the family we're taking a summer vacation, They all cheered...until I said that my budget only covers gas to Buc-ee's.
- ⇒ My grandson asked where we're going this summer. I said "Wherever I can get the cheapest Senior Discount."
- ⇒ I told my wife I was financing the whole vacation this year. She said, "Great, should I'll pack a lunch for the driveway!"

*Fafa* from page 2

*Papa* are already firmly taken. Poor “Fafa” never had a chance.

What’s truly remarkable is how universal these early syllables are. From Navajo *amá* to Mandarin *māma*, from Swahili *baba* to Persian *baba*, the same sounds appear again and again even in cultures with no shared linguistic history. It isn’t because ancient tribes traded baby-talk dictionaries; it’s because the human mouth begins in the same place everywhere, and the human heart responds in the same way. Babies babble. Parents listen. A sound becomes a name. A name becomes a bond.

So the real answer is gloriously unromantic. “Mama” and “Dada” won because babies found them easy, and parents found them adorable. That is how language often works. There is also something rather charming in this. Before children can say mother or father, before they can manage grammar, politics, theology, or complaints about the price of gas, they reach for the simplest possible sounds. Out of that babble came some of the warmest words in the language.

For those of us in the Senior Pals circle, these names carry decades of memory. We may not remember our first word, but we remember the tone we used when we called out “Mama?” in the middle of the night, or “Dad?” when the car wouldn’t start, or when life itself wouldn’t behave. Those simple syllables, so easy a baby can say them, ended up carrying hospital visits, wedding rehearsals, Thanksgiving blessings, and the long arc of family life.

The linguists can tell us how the sounds formed. Only the heart can tell us who they belonged to. And perhaps that’s why Scripture gives us one more simple, childlike name, one that echoes across eternity: “Abba... Father.” A word as small as a syllable. A love as large as a lifetime. Happy Father’s Day! \*~\*~\*

*Sources*

Jakobson, Roman. *Preliminaries to Speech Development*. MIT Linguistics Archives. Ferguson, Charles. “Baby Talk in Language Development.” *Journal of Linguistics*. Oller, D. Kimbrough. *Infant Vocal Development*. Academic Press. Sander, E. “Speech Sound Acquisition and Developmental Norms.” *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*.

*“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.”*

Luke 15:20 (NABRE)

**Senior Pals Meeting Schedule**

**2025/2026**

June 13, 2026

**2026/2027**

August 8, 2026

September 19, 2026

October 10, 2026

November 14, 2026

December 12, 2026

January 9, 2027

February 13, 2027

March 13, 2027

April 10, 2027

May 15, 2027

June 5, 2027

Meetings are from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at Sheltz Hall. For more information you can read our newsletter at: **ap.church/seniorpals**

**Senior Pals Officers 2025/2026**

President	Art Dominguez
Vice-President	Cathy Landry
VP Membership	Gladys Gordon
Treasurer	Linda Saucedo
Secretary	Carla Chambers
Trip Committee	Martha Britton
Ambassador	William Lessmann
Program Chair	Joan Sabino
Raffle	Sharon Bowen
Newsletter Editor	Art Dominguez
Hospitality	Open
Happy Hours & Luncheons	All Senior Pals Members

For more information, email us at: **seniorpals@ap.church**

- Clues to Picture Differences**
1. Dad holding a hotdog
  2. Large sailboard heading in opposite direction
  3. Kids playing with Football
  4. Glass on table cloth is solid blue
  5. Purple flower in vase is blue
  6. Mom’s right hand bracelet is missing
  7. Bird missing from tree
  8. Flower Pot in Gazebo is lower
  9. Grilling dad has blue sunglasses
  10. Third bird flying in opposite direction
  11. Squirrel missing from the front of picnic basket
  12. Dog’s tail is shorter
  13. Boy’s watermelon is eaten
  14. Missing fork in picnic basket
  15. Mysterious extra arm on girl playing ball

**Senior Pals Mission Statement**

To foster a community of faith-minded seniors seeking to forge meaningful friendships withing a small group setting. Aim to foster a sense of belonging for seniors of all faiths and provide opportunities for seniors to share their life experiences and interests. Through group activities, volunteering, and supporting one another, we aspire to instill a strong sense of community and provide comfort to those in need. Our forum serves as a trusted space for seniors to make new