
MEETING HOUSE ECHOES Edith A. O'Leary Senior Center

Winter 2012 - Volume 23

North Reading, MA 01864

Dept. of Elder Affairs

Tel: 978-664-5600

Email: mprenney@north
readingma.gov

Senior Center

157 Park Street
Third Meeting House
on the Common

Senior Center Hours:

Mon.-Thur. 8am-4pm

Fri. 8am-1pm

Director

Mary S. Prenney

Clerk

Mark Meehl

Pgm. Mgr. Jean Fitzgerald

Van Drivers

Marty Dickman

Mechele Cronin

Meal Site Managers

Linda Crowe, Brenda Bugden

Home Delivered Meals

Driver Jackie MacArthur

Council on Aging Board

Atty. Brian Snell, Chair

Sarah Peterson, Secretary

Ed Broughton, V. Chair

Eleanor Fritsch

Joe Veno

Rich Wallner

Maureen Donato

Representatives to

Council on Aging

Acting Lt. Mark Zimmerman,

N. R. Police Department

Acting Deputy Captain

Barry Galvin,

N. R. Fire Department

Selectmen Steve O'Leary

Friends of the COA

Officers

Hugo Wiberg III, Pres.

Angela Mauceri, V.Pres.

Tom DeSwarte, Treas.

Joanna Lexth Sec'y

COUNCIL ON AGING MISSION STATEMENT

The Council on Aging advocates for older adults by helping to meet their needs in areas of health, economic, social and cultural welfare. The Council encourages maximum independence and seeks to improve the quality of life of citizens of the Town of North Reading.

From the Director — Mary Prenney

I hope this message finds you all wintering well — warm, happy and healthy into the 2012 New Year.

For many of you who experience cabin fever this time of year, the Senior Center is a great place to visit. It is warm, cozy, friendly — the coffee is always on and most days, there is a yummy treat to go along with it. We also have the transportation to get you here, if your only excuse is "I don't drive in this weather." So please come by, whether just for a short visit, or to join in one of our special programs. It will make your days seem so much warmer and brighter!

There are a few very important notices in this newsletter that I hope you read carefully. Back in October, we experienced that freak Halloween snow storm, leaving us with not much snow, but many of us without power for an unusually long period of time. If you were one of those unfortunate residents, please read the enclosed "**9-1-1 Disability Indicator Form**" information carefully. And if you were one of the lucky few who didn't lose power, I also suggest you read it carefully — it could save your life!

Congratulations to Chief of Police Edward W. Nolan on your Retirement and

Good Luck to our new Police Chief Michael P. Murphy

From the Editor — Katharine Barr

With the holidays behind us, now it's time for a little "quiet time." Time to reflect on the year behind us, and plan for the year ahead. Time for those tasks and projects you just couldn't seem to get around to — up to now! Time for a few realistic New Year's resolutions — ones you actually have a good chance of keeping! But most of all, it's time for YOU! Time to relax and recharge your batteries.

Our goal is to help North Reading Elders age safely in place with dignity and independence in the homes and community they helped build...because there is no place like home!!!

DINING AND TRANSPORTATION

Senior Dining at the Center

Mon. — Fri., noon, \$1.50 donation
(Call before 10:30AM the day before)

Home Delivered Meals

(formerly Meals on Wheels)
Mystic Valley Elder Services
(781) 324-7705, Ext. 300

FREE Van Transportation

In town, for medical appointments, shopping, local errands, Senior Center Family Medical Center, Wilmington Lahey Satellite Clinic, Wilmington
(Call one day ahead to arrange a ride)

The following Senior Center Programs are FREE unless otherwise noted

HEALTH & WELLNESS

• Blood Pressure Screening

Mondays 1PM — no appointment needed
At Edith A. O'Leary Senior Center
1st Thurs. 1:30-2:30PM
At Common Room, Peabody Court

• BEST — *Pat Brennan, Instructor* (Balance Energy Strength Training)

Meets 9AM Monday mornings and works toward strong bones, energized muscles, better balance.

• Exercise — *Emma Palmer, Instructor* Meets 9:30AM Tuesdays and Thursdays, and involves gentle stretching, toning, strengthening.

• SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders)

A counselor is available every Tuesday afternoon — by appointment only — to help answer questions and fill out applications.

• Elder Care Advisor — *Lisa Felci, LSW, RN* from Mystic Valley Elder Services is available — by appointment only — to offer information, advice and education in confidential setting, to elders and their families.

• Assistance with Fuel Oil and Food Stamp (SNAP) Applications is available at the Center - call for an appointment.

ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE CENTER:

• Card Games

Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00PM

• Bingo

Wednesdays 1:15PM

• Senior Chorus — *Marcia Cutlip, Director*

Mondays 10:30AM. Singing is good for mind, body and soul!

• Wii Bowling

Mondays 1:00PM

Senior Trips (details to come)

March: Experience the spirit and charm of Ireland at the Cape Cod Irish Village, S. Yarmouth. Lunch, entertainment, a terrific show and great gift shop. \$57 pp.

May: Take a visit to yesteryear at the Wells, Maine Antique Auto Museum (more than 70 antique cars) and the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunk, where you can ride the beautifully restored antique trolleys. Lunch included. \$58 pp.

Warm Pancakes to Warm the Soul!

Perk up a cold, winter morning with a hot cup of coffee (or tea) and a stack of warm, syrupy pancakes! Every 2nd and 4th Friday at 9AM, you can enjoy all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, OJ and bottomless cup of coffee or tea at the Senior Center. There now, doesn't that warm the cockles of your heart — whatever they are! On the 4th Friday, we also have a speaker. Our upcoming schedule isn't finalized as yet, but on Jan. 27, we'll be hearing from Dick Carnevale, N.R. DPW Director. And on Feb. 24, we'll be getting "the rest of the story" about Town landmark Kitty's Restaurant. Please join us and bring a friend - breakfast is just \$3 per person. Call (978) 664-5600 to reserve your place.

Cards for Our Soldiers — Year 'Round

Please donate any cards you don't need or want. And yes, you can purchase some, if you want. We're looking for Christmas cards and all other holidays, Thank You, Hello, note cards, and any other cards our soldiers would enjoy. So that throughout the year, the Seniors can add personal notes and send the cards to our soldiers overseas, to let them know they're being thought of. Please drop off cards at the N.R. O'Leary Senior Center. For more information, contact Shirley Miller (978) 664-4863.

Reflections on a Senior Center

By Jean Fitzgerald, O'Leary Senior Center Pgm. Mgr.

There are times when I feel like I work at "Cheers," the bar from the old TV show. When someone walks through the door, whether it's the exercise group, Bingo, or the lunch bunch, people look up and greet the person coming in by name, just like they did Norm when he entered the bar.

If anyone had told me I would work at a Senior Center, let alone be program coordinator, I would have told them they were nuts. The last place I would want to work would be a Senior Center with all those "Old People." Things have changed, however — my attitude certainly has. I have come to love the people, miss them when they aren't here, and saddened when they pass away. I believe we have become a family. We care about each other, ask where someone is when they are not here, and ask about their health when they are ill.

When I started my job, I did not want to be here. I felt out of place. I was only in my early sixties. I did not think like them. Anyway, I came to work — I found some very nice people. I always tried to smile and treat everyone the same. As I planned different activities, I really shook some cages; I was taking them out of their comfort zone (like I was really in mine!). Suppose I planned this party and no one came? Well, lucky for me, people came, enjoyed themselves and looked forward to the next event.

I now find the Senior Center a good place to be. We have some new programs like Wii Bowling every Monday afternoon, and a water-color class once a month. I believe many people would find it a good place to be, if they dropped in for one of our events, or just dropped by for coffee or maybe a pancake breakfast. Then, maybe one day, we'll look up when you come through the door and greet you by name, just like they do on "Cheers."

Where Would You Like to Go?

Marie Berndtson says that the Friends of the NRCOA would like your input on trips you'd like to take. Call her at (978) 664-6949 with your suggestions.

Your Driver's License & Handicap Placard

HEADS UP! Be aware that the Registry of Motor Vehicles is no longer sending out license renewal reminders. You are permitted to renew up to 12 months early. Handicap placard renewal reminders will still come in the mail, but keep in mind that it is illegal to drive with your placard in the window.

Veterans' Update

Financial Challenges? Are you a veteran or spouse of a veteran with an honorable discharge and in financial crisis? If you are single or widowed and your income is below \$1545 and your cash assets are below \$3200, or you are married with a combined income of \$2045 or less and cash assets below \$7000, you could be eligible for financial assistance through the States Chapter 115 benefit program, or receive assistance for medical compensation, or both. To find out if you qualify, call Susan Magner, N. Reading Dir. of Veterans Services — at (978) 357-5212.

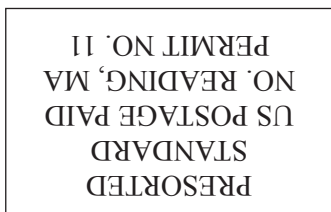
Can I Still Change My Medicare Plan?

The 2011 Medicare Open Enrollment period ended on Dec. 7. But there are still *a few changes you can make, if you qualify*. Trained SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) volunteers can help you! They offer free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to anyone on Medicare. Call the Senior Center and ask for a SHINE appointment. Or call 1-800-243-4636, then press or say 3. Once you get the SHINE answering machine, leave your name and phone number. A volunteer will call you back as soon as possible.

Food Stamp Assistance (SNAP)

Seniors living on a fixed income may be eligible for SNAP/food stamp benefits. The FoodSource Hotline can help with applications over the telephone. They also assist current SNAP recipients with questions regarding their cases, as well as referrals for local emergency food resources. The Hotline is open Mon. - Fri. 8AM - 7PM and Saturday 10AM - 2PM. Call **1-800-645-8333**.

Address Service Requested



NORTH READING ELDER AFFAIRS
157 PARK STREET
NORTH READING, MA 01864



Thanks — We Couldn't Do It Without You!

- As always, our friends at Washington St. Dunkin' Donuts for breakfast treats
- Gordon Thornton — our knight in shining tool belt!
- Maureen Doucette and Billie Skerrett for their gorgeous holiday baskets
- N. Reading Little League, sponsors of our Veterans' Luncheon
- Boston Flower Market for great prices on Thanksgiving and Christmas plants for our Home Delivered Meal clients
- Hope & Alex Rabasco for the festive holiday decorations for our Dec. raffle
- Project Linus Coffee Hour Group who donated blankets, hats, etc. for needy children
- The Wonderful Friends of the COA for helping decorate the Center

Friends of the Council on Aging

Submitted by Angela Mauceri

The Friends have been having a lot of fun, with

trips to nearby points of interest. He have been to the Kennedy Library, the WWII Museum, the Boston Symphony rehearsal session, and the Boston Public Library, just to mention a few. We look forward to more day trips, with many thanks to Marie Berndtson and her committee. Keep an eye out for more upcoming activities. After redecorating the interior of the Center with new curtains and painted radiators, we decorated for Christmas, to make it a homey and welcoming place for our Seniors to meet friends, exercise, play Wii Bowling, or just hang out. The Friends of the NRCOA will be meeting at 7PM on the second Monday of January, March, May and June. Come and join us to find out what's happening with the Friends.

Save These Dates:

- Jan. 17 New Year's Party with Jim Moses, catered by China Cuisine
- Feb. 14 Valentine's Day Party