

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of December 5th

Holiday Advisory:

Dutchess County government observes Christmas Day on Monday, December 26th; and New Year's Day on Monday, January 2nd, 2023. Offices and Friendship Centers will be closed both days.

Clients of OFA's Home Delivered Meals program will receive meals in advance of each day that friendship centers are closed.

OLDER DRIVER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK IS DECEMBER 5-9

In a largely suburban and rural county like Dutchess, being able to drive is all but essential to independence, and there's no time like the present to go over any concerns you have about driving as you age.

The good news: there's no hard-and-fast age at which you must give up the keys. The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has one standard for driving privileges: your driving ability. As they put it: "[T]he DMV can require

an evaluation of a driver whose skills and abilities are in doubt. The DMV will examine reliably reported information to determine if a driver needs to be re-evaluated.” A physician, police officer, or someone who knows or has observed the driver can contact DMV if they believe a driving re-evaluation is needed.

Best to be prepared. It’s never too late to learn how to become a better driver, but there’s work to be done and your close attention is a must.

The next time you visit your regular doctor, talk to them about any concerns you may have about your health as it relates to driving. Mention to the doctor if you’re concerned that pain, stiffness, arthritis, or medications might impede your driving ability. At your next eye doctor visit, ask if there are ways to improve your eyesight, and be sure your prescription is up to date. Sunglasses are a good investment this time of year, given that sunrises and sunsets happen this time of year when roads are busiest.

Have a frank discussion about your driving skills with family and friends as well. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has both online and classroom courses available where you can brush up on your driving skills. You can also have your driving skills checked by a driving rehab specialist or occupational therapist.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There's a lot that's still within your control when it comes to continued driver safety, but you'll need to put in some work. Being physically active helps improve strength and flexibility, which you'll need to continue driving well. OFA offers both live and remote exercise classes; contact us to learn more and get signed up.

IN THE MEANTIME...

When in doubt, don't go out. Dutchess County winters can be tough on any driver, whether they're 28 or 82. Plan your travel for when conditions are best.

Drive like a townie. By that, we mean that you should have a good working knowledge of less-crowded alternatives to major roads in your area.

Use assistive devices. Back-up cameras are now standard equipment on new cars, but even if you're not looking for a new car there are aftermarket cameras that can be installed on older cars. Other devices that can help:

- Swiveling auto seat cushions;
- Vehicle grab bars that can help you get up from a car that's low to the

ground, or down from a truck or SUV that's higher up;

- Panoramic rearview mirrors and blind spot mirrors;
- Grip assistance devices for steering wheels.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114

Delafield St., Poughkeepsie, New York 12601, telephone 845-486-2555, email:

ofa@dutchessny.gov website: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

WINTER OFA "THRIVE60+" NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE

You can read the newsletter now by visiting www.dutchessny.gov/aging and clicking on the THRIVE60+ link. For those who are not online, we're in the process of printing copies for distribution through the mail and at public libraries.

We appreciate all the assistance we can get in preparing the newsletters for mailing. Read the next item to find out more.

CLERICAL VOLUNTEERS WANTED, WEEK OF DECEMBER 5-9

If you are available to help us prepare newsletters for mailing any weekday in the coming week, please email bjones@dutchessny.gov with your days/hours of availability. Since the newsletters were in the process of being printed as of when this email went out, we'll let you know when we need you.

FOR THOSE WHO SPEAK LANGUAGES IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH

Many Dutchess County caregivers and older adults speak both English and the language of the country or region from which they emigrated.

For those who are most comfortable in languages other than English, every page of the Dutchess County website (www.dutchessny.gov) features a Recite Web accessibility toolbar. It's cloud based, with nothing that needs to be installed on your device.

On the upper right of any page on the county website, you'll see "Language and Accessibility Options." Click on it, and the Recite toolbar opens at the top of the page.

One of Recite's features translates county website content into dozens of other languages. For example, "Office for the Aging" becomes "Oficina para el

Envejecimiento” in Spanish; “Ufficio per l'invecchiamento” in Italian; “Офіс у справах старіння” in Ukrainian, and so forth.

For the visually impaired, it’s possible for Recite to speak the text on any page of the county website AND to do that in many languages. There’s also a magnifying glass feature, as well as the ability to control font sizes and colors.

For those who rely on dial-up internet, there’s an option to load a text-only version of the website.

[Click here for the complete Recite user guide.](#)

Try it out for yourself and let us know what you think. Email bjones@dutchessny.gov with questions.

HOLIDAYS AT ELLESDIE CHAPEL AT BOWDOIN PARK (Saturdays in December)

Enjoy a walk at Dutchess County’s Bowdoin Park (85 Sheafe Rd, Town of Poughkeepsie) and you’ll hear traditional holiday favorites from the belfry of the park’s Ellessdie Chapel, which is the chapel that’s visible from Sheafe Rd. Music plays from 3-5 pm, every Saturday in December. For more information, follow Dutchess County Parks at www.facebook.com/DutchessCountyParks.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY WHEN OUT FOR A HIKE DURING BIG-GAME SEASON

State law requires hunters to wear at least 250 square inches of hunter orange or pink outer clothing (hat, vest, etc.) when hunting deer or bear with a firearm ([click here for the full regulation](#)), but the law does not require it of non-hunters who may be out for a walk in the same wild areas that can be used by hunters, including state forests and multiple-use areas (MUAs).

While brightly colored clothing isn't required for non-hunting outdoorspeople during hunting seasons, it's certainly a good idea.

The state DEC website indicates that this year's regular deer hunting season in the state's Southern zone, which includes Dutchess, began on November 19th and runs through December 11th, with the late bowhunting season taking place December 12-20 and December 26-January 1st.

Hunting hours each day run from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.

FREE "FOREST BATHING" IN FISHKILL

“Forest bathing” is a term OFA has used for many years in our Successful Aging presentations for older adults and caregivers. It involves a walk in the woods, but there’s more to the concept of “forest bathing” than hiking.

The term originates in Japan, and its purpose beyond physical exercise is to reconnect with the forest atmosphere, something we thankfully have a lot of in Dutchess County.

Dutchess-based Evergreen Minds (www.evergreenminds.org) is hosting a free forest bathing event on Saturday, December 17th in Fishkill. The exact location and time will be provided upon registration at <https://evergreenminds.org/event/forest-bathing/> . Registrants can also email Michelle Olson for info: molson@evergreenminds.org, or call 845-464-3256.

More below from Evergreen Minds:

- Forest Bathing is a very slow, gentle stroll in nature that is led by a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide to help people relax, restore, and reconnect with their natural state of being.
- This is not just a hike or an educational walk. This experience is for you to help get out of your busy, anxious mind and into your body. You will be

invited to grow your sense of wonder, curiosity, and your own relationship with the human and more-than-human beings around us!

- *We invite people who are living with dementia and their care partners to join us to honor the land, one another, ourselves, and this change of season.*

Dress appropriately for the conditions, whatever they may be. In the event of more serious inclement weather, the event may be re-scheduled.

WHY THE RAIL TRAILS AREN'T PLOWED

If your walking tastes run more to the Dutchess Rail Trail or Harlem Valley Rail Trail, remember that the trails are not plowed during the winter.

The trails are designed to remain unplowed through the winter, so that winter sports enthusiasts like snowshoers and cross-country skiers can use the trails when conditions permit; paved surfaces will last longer; and trailside furnishings like benches and signs aren't damaged by passing plows.

AND SPEAKING OF PLOWS...

Here's a question we get a lot every winter:

The plow destroyed my mailbox. Who do I see about a new one?

We checked with the Dutchess County Department of Public Works, and the answer depends on what kind of road you live on.

- If you live on a highway maintained by the New York State Department of Transportation, (roads like Route 9, 9D, 9G, 22, 44, 52, 55, 82, 115, 199, 216, 292, 308, 343, or 376)...you will not be reimbursed.
- If you live on a town or village road, consult your local government's highway or public works department.
- If you live on a County road (the ones with the blue signs with gold numbers), here's what to do: A DPW complaint form is available at [this link](#). If the county's Risk Management division approves your application, reimbursement of up to \$65 is possible.

Consult the post office in your zip code if your regular mailbox is taken out of commission by a plow.

Other news:

In general, obesity is associated with a higher risk of dementia, but [for some kinds of body fat the opposite may be true.](#)

Will exercising with a cold make you feel better, or worse, or have no effect? [That depends.](#)

[Are you financially educated](#) when it comes to retirement savings?

[An open letter to tech product designers](#) from older users.

This week's birthdays:

12/4: Game show host [Wink Martindale](#) (89)

12/5: Author/playwright [Hanif Kureishi](#) (68)

12/6: Animator/screenwriter [Nick Park](#) (64)

12/7: Baseball Hall-of-Famer [Johnny Bench](#) (75)

12/8: Irish flute player [James Galway](#) (83)

12/9: Actress Dame [Judi Dench](#) (88)

12/10: Actress [Susan Dey](#) (70)

And indeed, there's a Bad Joke:

“The Twelve Days of Christmas” is completely unrealistic. There is no way that you're still accepting gifts from someone after four days of birds.