

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 30th

THE BAD GUYS DON'T STAND STILL

The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) is warning of a new impersonation scam in which callers are pretending to be from the Sheriff's Office and spoofing the sheriff's phone number, then asking suspicious questions of anybody who picks up. Additionally, the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services reports a scam where SNAP beneficiaries are told that their benefits have been cancelled, and to call the scammer back to "get benefits reinstated."

"Spoofing" is the practice of altering the way an incoming call's number appears on a recipient's Caller ID. It is legal when used for legitimate purposes. Spoofing becomes illegal when the number is being altered for illegal purposes.

OFA does not cold-call people. If you see an OFA phone number on your Caller ID and you didn't contact us first, that's not OFA calling you. As for law enforcement, DCSO points out that legitimate law enforcement does not attempt

to satisfy a warrant or make promises to avoid prosecution by soliciting money. If anyone thinks they may have been a victim of a scam they can contact the Sheriff's Office at 845-486-3800, call the DCSO tipline at 845-605-CLUE (3583), or email dcso tips@gmail.com.

By now you may be thinking of all the other articles you've read about phone scams, and how new technology would enable phone carriers to ensure that calls were coming only from authenticated phone numbers. And yet scam calls keep coming in. What happened?

Scammers adjusted their tactics to stay a step ahead of new laws and technology.

THE BATTLE AGAINST PHONE SCAMS CONTINUES

The Robocall Index maintained by youmail.com shows total 2022 robocall numbers of over 137 million – *just for Poughkeepsie*. That's roughly 103 calls per person affected. Compared to call numbers of recent years, that number is about in the middle. Some progress, but not enough.

One big problem: the new "STIR/SHAKEN" verification technology doesn't work on calls that come from or pass through older networks, like landline

telephone wires. That may be how the DCSO impersonators are getting through to people.

A PROMISING ANECDOTE

For a recent success story, we turn to “Larry and Helen,” a couple in their 80s from the central Canadian city of Saskatoon. Their suspicions kicked in earlier this month, as they were headed to an ATM to withdraw money that they would have given to a phone scammer posing as a grandchild in legal trouble. Since they were still in touch with the scammer to arrange the drop-off, they asked for police assistance in hopes of being able to catch the scammer in the act. It worked. Three men from Quebec are now in custody charged with 10 counts of fraud over C\$5,000. Authorities say the men had victimized several other older adults before encountering Larry and Helen.

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

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM ENROLLMENT CLINICS

If you're covered by Medicare, there's a new eligibility change that could mean considerable savings for you.

Starting this year, eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) in New York State expanded to single individuals with Medicare who have a gross income up to \$2,107 per month and couples with monthly gross incomes up to \$2,839. New York State does NOT look at your assets for this program.

In New York State, MSP helps older adults and people with disabilities living on low incomes by paying their Medicare Part B premiums (\$164.90 each month) and enrolling them in Extra Help, the federal prescription drug subsidy program that the Social Security Administration estimates is worth about \$5,100 per year. This program lowers prescription costs and gets rid of the deductible and the "donut hole", or gap coverage. The financial assistance can be a lifeline, allowing enrollees to maintain their Medicare coverage, access needed care, and afford other necessities, like food and rent.

If this is the first time you're learning of this, you can find out more about your potential savings. The Office for the Aging is hosting two Medicare Savings Program Enrollment Clinics for Dutchess County resident older adults in early

February. Please call ahead to reserve a time to meet with a trained counselor.

- Friday, February 3rd from 10 am to 1 pm at Sun River Health, 3360 NY 343 (East Main St.) in Amenia, about 0.3 miles east of the light in the middle of Amenia. To reserve your spot at this event, call 845-206-7526 (Ed) or 845-475-4159 (Mitzi). Masks are required at Sun River Health.
- Wednesday, February 8th from 10 am to 2 pm at the Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie. To reserve a spot at this event, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

Both events are subject to cancellation or postponement due to weather and/or community infection prevention measures.

Be sure to bring the following information with you to your appointment:

- Proof of income;
- Proof of age (driver's license and/or birth certificate);
- Your Medicare card;
- If you pay for dental insurance or Medicare Supplement, bring a bill;
- Proof of address, like a current utility bill.

For older adults who are homebound or whose schedules conflict with MSP enrollment clinics, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 and we'll

connect you with the resources you need.

STILL SPACE FOR NEW “FRIENDLY CALLS” VOLUNTEERS

We continue to have excellent response to our request for OFA “Friendly Calls” program volunteers – thanks!

If you’re just reading about the program for the first time, here’s the quick version of how it works:

Volunteers (age 18+ welcome) speak once a week for 20-25 minutes on the phone with a pre-screened older adult participant in the program, with the goal being to re-establish social connections for isolated older adults. Volunteers can speak with more than one older adult, if they have the time to do so.

We’re hosting orientations for new Friendly Calls volunteers during the next two weeks at OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie. More will be scheduled in February and March as needed.

Contact OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones at bjones@dutchessny.gov for more information.

SENIOR PARK PRINTS ART SERIES – 2 SESSIONS LEFT

Older adults interested in learning more about creating their own art can take part in the “Senior Park Prints Arts Series” in conjunction with Dutchess County Parks. It’s been taking place at OFA Friendship Centers around the county, and two more sessions are left.

Assistant Park Naturalist Jess Steinbach is taking her artistry on the road, and will be teaching on how to make nature art with acrylic. These are free classes, and all supplies will be provided. Limited availability. Call OFA at 845-486-2555 to reserve your space. Choose one:

- Thurs., February 2nd - Northeast/Millerton Library Annex, 28 Century Blvd., Millerton
- Thurs., February 16th - East Fishkill Community Center, 890 Route 82, Hopewell Jct.

Each event takes place 2:30-3:45 pm. Please register in advance; walk-ins cannot be accepted.

For a look at the first Senior Park Prints event that happened this past week at the OFA Friendship Center in Poughkeepsie, [visit this Facebook link from Dutchess County Parks.](#)

USE “211” TO ARRANGE AARP/TAX-AIDE SERVICES

Since 1968, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program has helped over 50 million low-to-moderate income taxpayers. As an intricate part of the Coalition Tax-Aide takes the lead in training volunteers and managing over 20 tax preparation sites in Dutchess, Orange, and Putnam Counties. [More information here.](#)

PREPARATION PROCESS (Service is provided by appointment only.)

Appointments are made by calling United Way Help Line 211 or 1-800-899-1479. Appointments can be made from 9 am to 2 pm Monday through Friday. If you do experience a wait time, we encourage you to use the option of leaving your name and phone number for a callback.

Important: Appointments cannot be booked through the Office for the Aging or any of the Tax-Aide sites.

Please be patient. Early call volume is very high. Please answer your phone when you are called back. Note: the caller ID may be that of one of our volunteers as opposed to the United Way 2-1-1 call center.

Each filer is required to obtain a Pre-Appointment packet, complete the packet prior to their scheduled appointment and come to the appointment with all required tax documents. Pre-Appointment Packets have a complete listing of

documents you are required to bring to your appointment. IRS-certified Tax-Aide volunteers will review your tax documents and complete a short interview using the required IRS intake form. After the interview is complete, the volunteer will input tax information using the software provided by the IRS.

Your tax return will be quality reviewed by another IRS Certified Tax Counselor. Once the return is completed, the Tax Counselor will review the entire return with you and obtain your permission to e-file the return. Filers are required to remain at the tax site location during the preparation process.

Please note valuable information you received in your appointment confirmation email regarding additional forms you may need for your appointment.

PRE-APPOINTMENT PACKETS

Printed packets are available at the tax site you are scheduled at during preparation hours. If you have difficulties getting to the site for packet pick-up, contact 875-475-7500.

Pre-Appointment Packet is available for download. Click on the link below.

[Pre-Appointment Packet \(14 pages\)](#)

NEW OFA GROUP PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE

We're happy to see more older adult and caregiver groups resume in-person meetings in 2023, and the Office for the Aging has two new Outreach presentations available for those groups. One presentation is "Exercise as You Age," aimed at encouraging physical activity among older adults, whether solo or as part of an organized exercise program such as those offered by OFA. The other is "Aging in Your Home," a discussion of what older adults can do to ensure their home environment is as conducive to healthy aging as possible, even if their budget for home improvements is limited.

For more information on all OFA group presentations, call 845-486-2555 or email bjones@dutchessny.gov. The February and March calendars are filling up quickly!

Other aging news:

Medicare Part D prices [may change unexpectedly](#).

More information on the [recently announced second phase](#) of utilities credits for additional customers and businesses with outstanding bills.

[Six healthy choices](#) to slow memory decline, and [three steps](#) to aging exuberantly.

How to [grocery shop on a budget](#).

Speaking of grocery prices, [what's out there to take the place of eggs?](#)

Living to 100 takes some good genes, some luck, good environmental and lifestyle factors, and...[read the whole thing](#). Also, [stay hydrated](#).

This week's birthdays:

1/29: Actor/businessman [Tom Selleck](#) (78)

1/30: Singer/songwriter/drummer [Phil Collins](#) (72)

1/31: Baseball Hall-of-Famer [Nolan Ryan](#) (76)

2/1: Actor/comedian [Garrett Morris](#) (86)

2/2: Comedian/actor [Tom Smothers](#) (86)

2/3: Actor/comedian [Nathan Lane](#) (67)

2/4: NFL Hall-of-Famer [Lawrence Taylor](#) (NY Giants) (64)

And, in conclusion, a Bad Joke.

Somebody stole my roll of paper towels. I'm hiring a bounty hunter to get it back.