

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 22nd

MEET OFA'S NEW "FRIENDLY CALLS" PROGRAM MANAGER

OFA's Friendly Calls program enters its second year of operations with a new Program Manager, Linda Edgar. Many older adults in Dutchess County know Linda as the recent past director of the Town of Poughkeepsie senior center, and before that as a tennis instructor and former coach of the tennis teams at Roy C. Ketcham High School. She's taking the reins of the Friendly Calls program now that its first program manager, Sue Serino, became Dutchess County Executive this year.

If you're a Dutchess County older adult who'd like to receive a weekly Friendly Call from an OFA volunteer, please contact us at 845-486-2555 or ofa@dutchessny.gov. Prospective volunteers can also reach us this way. We schedule regular Friendly Calls orientation sessions at the OFA main office in Poughkeepsie, with dates and times of each orientation available at www.dutchessny.gov/calendar.

Those who are caregivers for a Dutchess County older adult at risk of social isolation can also contact us to learn more about Friendly Calls and how it can help support caregiving.

“SERIOUS TOYS”

Plentiful research backs the idea that an animal companion can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation among older adults; but, as many a grownup has told many a child, having a living animal companion is a long-term commitment of time, money, and cleanup work. A pet might not be something within an older adult’s abilities, especially for homebound individuals.

All is not lost for older animal lovers, though. During the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State tested the effectiveness of robotic pets on isolated older adults and found that the pets were 70% effective in producing a decrease in feelings of isolation. OFA’s own observations of animatronic pets in action with selected Dutchess County older adults mirror these findings. The pets have been effective companions often enough that we’re taking the program out for walkies, so to speak.

OFA has a limited supply of realistic animatronic pets for qualifying older

adults, courtesy of the New York State Office for the Aging. The pets respond to both touch and voice. The cats purr when petted, but don't claw the furniture. The dogs make lifelike sounds, but don't start barking while you're on the phone.

We've been distributing animatronic companions to older adults most at risk for isolation, and who would likely be unable to care for a living pet. Contact OFA at 845-486-2555 or ofa@dutchessny.gov to find out more, especially for older adults who may be unaware of the many OFA services for which they qualify. Visit dutchessny.gov/aging for more details.

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

SENIOR PARK PRINTS ARTS SERIES – ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!

If you're a Dutchess County older adult (60+) who's looking to develop a new skill, there's space available at one of the remaining free Senior Park Prints art classes, co-hosted by OFA and Dutchess County Parks:

- **Thursday, February 1st - 2:30-3:45pm** - Millerton Northeast Millerton

Library Annex, 28 Century Blvd., Millerton

Space is limited to 12 registered older adults per event. Call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 to register.

All art supplies will be provided, and each artist can take home their new masterpiece after class.

“FRIENDLY CALLS” ORIENTATIONS COMING TO NORTHEASTERN DUTCHESS IN FEBRUARY

There’s been an upswing in interest in becoming an OFA “Friendly Calls” caller from prospective volunteers in northeastern Dutchess County. Rather than have volunteers make the long winter drive to and from OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie for an orientation session, we’re bringing the orientation out to northeastern Dutchess. We should have a schedule of orientations available by the time you receive next week’s (week of January 29th) newsletter.

For more information, email bjones@dutchessny.gov

AARP FOUNDATION TAX-AIDE NOW TAKING APPOINTMENTS

Another season of free tax preparation for low- and moderate-income

taxpayers, families and individuals is underway, courtesy of AARP Foundation and the CA\$H Coalition.

Appointments go fast, and can be made by calling 2-1-1, or 800-899-1479.

No age restrictions, and AARP membership is not required.

“STEPS TO SAFETY” AT LaGRANGE LIBRARY (Thu 1/25)

Vassar Brothers Medical Center and the LaGrange Fire District present “Steps to Safety,” a fire and fall prevention program for older adults created by the National Fire Protection Administration (NFPA). The Office for the Aging will be represented as well, with fall-prevention materials available.

The free presentation (no registration necessary) takes place at 10 am on Thursday, January 25th, at LaGrange Association Library (1110 NY 55, LaGrangeville).

The “Steps to Safety” approach promotes independence, collaboration, engagement, and empowerment for older adults for whom fire and fall prevention become increasingly essential as they age. NFPA reports that at age 65, older adults are twice as likely as the population at large to be killed or injured

by fires. By age 75, that risk increases to three times that of the general population—and to four times by age 85.

For more information, email amanda.gosson@nuvancehealth.org.

Related news: the Office for the Aging is preparing to schedule the spring session of “A Matter of Balance” fall prevention classes. Class venues, dates and times are provided once a participant’s registration is confirmed; “A Matter of Balance” cannot accept walk-in participants. For more class information, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTATION (Thu 1/25 on Zoom)

Route 9 wasn’t always a crowded highway; its origins date back to footpaths used by Native tribes, before the earliest European settlers arrived in the Hudson Valley.

Join the Dutchess County Historical Society and presenter David Turner on Zoom, on Thursday, January 25th at 7 pm for “How The Automobile Changed the Hudson Valley Landscape: A Look Through Vintage Postcards.”

[Click here for information](#) on how to get the Zoom link.

Other news:

How does dietary restriction slow aging? [We're starting to find out.](#)

America's health system may be unready for [an expected increase in aging patients with disabilities.](#)

Is [aging without illness](#) possible?

[What being 72 is like](#) around the world.

This week's birthdays:

1/20: Astronaut [Buzz Aldrin](#) (94)

1/21: Golf legend [Jack Nicklaus](#) (84)

1/22: Singer-songwriter [Steve Perry](#) (Journey) (75)

1/23: Actress/singer/dancer [Chita Rivera](#) (91)

1/24: Singer [Aaron Neville](#) (83)

1/25: Jazz composer/saxophonist [Benny Golson](#) (95)

1/26: Legendary sportscaster/mediocre baseball player [Bob Uecker](#) (90)

As we wait for warmer weather, this week's Bad Joke comes in the form of quotes from "Mr. Baseball," Bob Uecker:

"I knew when my career was over. In 1965 my baseball card came out with no picture."

"I set records that will never be equaled. In fact, I hope 90% of them don't even get printed."

"Baseball hasn't forgotten me. I go to a lot of Old Timers games, and I haven't lost a thing. I sit in the bullpen and let people throw things at me. Just like old times."

"I signed with the Milwaukee Braves for three-thousand dollars. That bothered my dad at the time because he didn't have that kind of dough. But he eventually scraped it up."

(As of Friday the 19th it's 25 days until pitchers and catchers report!)