

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 27

Golden Living . . . News for Older Adults, Their Families and Caregivers

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Dutchess County Office for the Aging

Could you walk to your nearest local grocery store? Only a few Dutchess County residents could even think about it - and even someone shopping only for themselves would find it a challenge to get their purchases back home on foot. There are mass transit options; but again, there might be challenge walking from home to the bus stop and back. Hiring taxis is an option, but they can be pricey and not always available.

For day-to-day essentials, we need reliable transportation. For most of our adult lives, that meant driving ourselves. Driving represents the ability to take

care of our own practical needs. It represents freedom and independence, especially for older adults.

Measuring Our Driving Skills As We Age

Before we get anywhere near the conversation about giving up one's car keys, let's note some realities that work in favor of older drivers.

Statistics indicate that most older drivers are safe drivers. They drive fewer miles, obey motor vehicle laws, avoid rush-hour traffic, and are less likely to drive at night and during bad weather. Older drivers are also less likely to drive with in-car distractions like hand-held mobile devices, and are less likely to be ticketed for driving under the influence.

Now, the dreaded "on the other hand..."

It's hard to come to terms with a loss of skills, but we owe it to our loved ones

and all the drivers who share the road with us to honestly evaluate our skills, and adapt as necessary. The same studies that point out positives for older drivers also indicated that drivers age 70 and older have higher crash rates per mile driven, compared to middle-aged drivers. Crash fatality rates increase significantly after age 85.

Each older driver's skill is closely connected to their ability to function in other activities of daily living. The more living skills they retain, the more likely they are to retain driving skills as well.

Whom Would You Trust To Talk With You About Your Driving?

It's hard to predict. A Massachusetts Institute of Technology AgeLab/The Hartford survey indicates that older male drivers tend to trust the judgment of a spouse more than older female drivers; in that same study, 15 percent of both older male and female drivers indicated that a spouse would be the *last* person they'd trust. If you're looking for an evaluation perceived as freer from bias, consider that the MIT/Hartford survey shows that many older drivers

trust the opinions of their doctors, and for good reason. A decline in driving skills may have a cause that can be addressed in conversation with doctors. For instance, a doctor can help you explore alternatives to taking a medication that has a sedative effect, which can make driving unsafe. A doctor may also refer an older driver to occupational therapy to help bolster skills like moving one's foot between the gas pedal and the brake. Having trouble with that particular skill is often a consequence of weak hip flexors.

Not Having The Conversations Is Not An Option

Have a plan. You'll hear us repeat that point many times this year, and beyond. And it doesn't have to be a perfect, unchanging plan that lasts for the rest of your life; it need only be adaptable to the changes that come as you age. Consider your ability to drive right now, as well as in the months and years to come. Consider where you'll be living; will it be your current home, or another? If you're thinking of moving to a more aging-friendly home, walkability and proximity to transit will be factors to consider. If you must transition from driver to passenger, the ideal is to make that a gradual

process.

Initiate those conversations with family, caregivers, and doctors, instead of being surprised and possibly upset on the day they initiate those conversations with you.

OFA and Your Transportation Options

There are many transportation services that can accommodate older adults in Dutchess County. Some are funded by County and local governments, while others are carried out by volunteers. Your local houses of worship may offer transportation options as well. An extensive list of transportation options is available at **dutchessny.gov/ofatransportation** or by calling OFA at **845-486-2555**. The newest OFA-supported option is called **GoGoGrandparent**, or GoGo for short. Wherever ride-sharing options like Uber or Lyft are available in Dutchess County, so is GoGo. It's an on-demand transportation option for older adults in Dutchess County who are not on Medicaid and have no other options for transportation, with limited free rides to non-emergency medical

appointments within Dutchess County for GoGo clients who have registered with OFA. Call OFA at **845-486-2555** to register with GoGo and check availability of free non-emergency transportation. **Registering in advance is a must!** GoGo is now also available for older adults in Dutchess County, regardless of Medicaid status, for the purpose of visits to loved ones in a hospital, nursing home or hospice within Dutchess County. Contact OFA for 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

Social media: www.facebook.com/DutchessCountyOFA

POUGHKEEPSIE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE – TEMPORARY CLOSURE

STARTS JANUARY 30TH

Beginning Thursday, January 30, 2025, the U.S. Social Security office at 332 Main Street in Poughkeepsie will be temporarily closed for renovations.

Social Security officials note that many services are available either online

at ssa.gov, or by phone at 800-772-1213.

During the renovations at the Poughkeepsie office, individuals requiring in-person services may visit the Social Security office in Middletown at [85 Crystal Run Road \(Suite 100\)](#).

“FRIENDLY CALLS” UPCOMING VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

With OFA’s “Friendly Calls” program, you can choose to make phone calls to older adults at risk of social isolation, or you can choose to receive calls - or you can do both. For those of you who haven’t volunteered before and are exploring your possibilities, “Friendly Calls” can be ideal. A typical "Friendly Calls" series takes place once a week, for 20-30 minutes a call, for eight weeks. “Friendly Calls” volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Those who wish to receive calls must be Dutchess County residents at least 60 years of age.

Upcoming “Friendly Calls” orientations at OFA headquarters at 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie are scheduled as follows:

Monday 1/27/25, 1:30pm

Tuesday, 2/4/25, 10:00am

Monday, 2/10/25, 1:30pm

Tuesday, 2/18/25, 10:00am

Monday, 2/24/25, 1:30pm

To schedule your orientation – they last about an hour – here at our Poughkeepsie office, call 845-486-2555 during business hours, or email ledgar@dutchessny.gov.

FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

When it comes to government holidays, New York State is unusual in that it has continued to observe the Lincoln's Birthday holiday (February 12), as well as the national Presidents' Day holiday (February 17).

Dutchess County Government offices, including OFA and OFA Friendship Centers, will be closed on both the 12th and 17th. Clients of OFA's Home Delivered Meals program receive meals in advance of each holiday, as well as in advance of anticipated inclement winter weather.

(And in case you were wondering...New York State recognizes Washington's birthday of February 22nd but does not observe it as a holiday.

[More here from mountvernon.org](#))

“DUTCHESS DEED WATCH” WEBSITE NOW AVAILABLE

Deed fraud is a crime in which thieves record a fraudulent document to try to take ownership of a home that isn't theirs. Deed fraud scams were first announced by the FBI in 2008, and the scams have remained stubbornly persistent since then, especially in areas with limited housing availability.

You may have seen infomercials and received mailers from companies wanting to sell you protection against deed fraud – but there's no need to buy any of that.

The [office of Dutchess County Clerk Brad Kendall this month rolled out a new Dutchess Deed Watch website](#) that's free to use. Visit dutchessny.gov/countyclerk and scroll down to the Dutchess Deed Watch section.

Other news:

(Video) More [exercise and flexibility options](#) for healthy aging.

Decades of research on Alzheimer's disease may be incorrect, if not outright fraudulent, [according to this New York Times editorial](#).

Why does our "biological clock" work the way it does? [Here's some science](#).

Looking for something to watch? "[Barney Miller](#)" made its debut 50 years ago this month.

This week's birthdays:

1/24: Singer-songwriter [Neil Diamond](#) (84)

1/25: Pro Football Hall of Famer [Carl Eller](#) (83)

1/26: Actor/Dutchess County resident [David Strathairn](#) (76)

1/27: U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice [John Roberts](#) (70)

1/28: Actor/director/writer [Alan Alda](#) (89)

1/29: Actor/businessman [Tom Selleck](#) (80)

1/30: Singer/songwriter/drummer [Phil Collins](#) (74)

And here again, the Bad Joke:

Every day, dozens of people go to mime school, never to be heard from again.