

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of July 20

Staying Cool While Minimizing Your A/C Use

A question came up during a recent conversation among colleagues at OFA, as the nation celebrated its 250th anniversary this month:

How did the Founding Fathers manage to survive summer heat, in Philadelphia, wearing all that clothing...plus powdered wigs?

It happens that Thomas Jefferson kept meticulous daily weather records, for decades. He generally recorded temperature and other conditions first thing in the morning when temperatures were typically the coolest, then again in the mid-afternoon when the day was at its warmest. On July 4, 1776, he bought himself a new thermometer, which showed a Philadelphia morning temperature of 68 and an afternoon high of 76 - an exception to the rule of scorching summers.

As it turns out, we could learn a few things from the founders' ways of adapting to the heat, without modern innovations like air conditioning:

Swap heavy clothing for lighter fabrics - Many colonists put away their woolen clothing in warmer weather, opting for cotton and linen instead.

Where formal wear was required, as in Independence Hall, many wore lighter "tropical" wool, and unlined coats and waistcoats.

The founders also opted for clothing that was lighter in color as well as weight: light grays, cream, beige, and white.

Minimize Heat from Cooking - Without electricity or natural gas for cooking, a hearth had to be kept burning around the clock. Many homes used a small "summer kitchen" building to keep heat away from the main home, and to reduce fire risk. We can do much the same by moving at least some of our cooking outside to a grill, and by eating outdoors. Sleeping outdoors was also an option, with everyone from tenement dwellers in New York City to

Presidents Wilson and Taft at the White House choosing outdoor sleeping arrangements.

The Founders Were Big Fans of Fans

Without electricity, ingenuity was required to keep cooler air moving. Ben Franklin invented a fan powered by a rocking chair, while George Washington purchased a chair fan powered by a foot pedal. Later inventors repurposed wind-up clock mechanisms to power ceiling fans.

With the benefit of electricity, a strategically placed box fan or two can move warm air out of living spaces, with at least somewhat cooler air taking its place. Bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans can move warm air from indoors to outdoors.

Other No-Air-Conditioning Cooling Strategies

The "night flush" - It's got nothing to do with toilets, and everything to do with windows. In the evening, once the air outside is cooler than the air inside, it's

time to open your home's windows to flush out the warm air and allow a cross breeze. You should be able to start fresh in the morning with a cooler home - and keep it cooler for longer, *if* you close your windows the next morning, and close the curtains over any windows that face south or west into the sun.

Do the big cleaning jobs at night - Wait to use your dishwasher and clothes washer until evening hours when temperatures are cooler. Also, consider hanging laundry outside to dry. You'll save the cost of running the clothes dryer while reducing heat and moisture in the house.

Picnic Schedule Update

It's been an unusually hot and smoky week, and that necessitated the rescheduling of the OFA Summer Picnic for older adults living in the Towns of North East, Pine Plains, Stanford or Washington from July 15th to Friday, July 24th.

If you're an older adult who lives in one of those towns who hasn't already signed up to be there, there's still time to sign up for that picnic by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

The Town of Wappinger/Village of Wappingers Falls picnic scheduled for Wednesday, July 22nd is at capacity.

As of Friday, July 17th, there were still seats available at the other remaining picnics on the 2026 schedule.

July 29 – Town of Pleasant Valley (at West Road School)

August 12 – City of Poughkeepsie (at Stitzel Field)

August 19 – Towns of Beekman and LaGrange (at Freedom Park)

August 26 – Town of East Fishkill (at Hopewell Rec Park)

The full schedule, including Google Map links and pictures from past picnics, is at www.dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics. Many thanks to the Pines at Poughkeepsie, Central Hudson, Westchester Medical Center Health Network, and AccentCare for their support of this year's program.

OFA Mobile Office Hours for Summer

Here's the summertime list of OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy's mobile office hours...thus far.

To book your half-hour time slot to get your aging services questions answered, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555:

Tuesday, July 21st, noon-1:30pm – Clinton Library/Town Hall, 1215 Centre Rd., Rhinebeck

Thursday, July 23rd, 10am-noon – Tri-Town Friendship Center, 1576 Main St. (US 44), Pleasant Valley (at the Presbyterian Church)

Tuesday, July 28th, 1-3pm – Millbrook Library, 3 Friendship Ln.

Thursday, August 27th, noon-3pm – Amenia Library, 3309 NY 343

Your local civic organizations or governments can arrange Mobile Office Hours for your home community by contacting OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours or emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov.

Other news:

[Dutchess County honored 103-year-old WWII Army Nurse Helen Mostachetti](#)

this week at Dover Town Hall.

The Food and Drug Administration has [approved an at-home starter dose](#) of the Alzheimer's drug lecanemab (Leqembi).

[What are aging populations going to do to state budgets?](#)

A “lawnmower” enzyme has been found by scientists to be capable of...[reversing cellular damage that was assumed to be irreversible](#).

Taking Metro North from Poughkeepsie or New Hamburg into Manhattan this summer? Weekend track work from July 25th to September 13th means [reduced weekend operations for many trains between Poughkeepsie and Beacon](#).

This week's birthdays:

7/18: Yankees/Mets manager [Joe Torre](#) (86)

7/19: Songwriter/guitarist/astrophysicist [Brian May](#) (Queen) (79)

7/20: Guitarist/songwriter [Carlos Santana](#) (79)

7/21: Cartoonist [Garry Trudeau](#) (78)

7/22: Former Yankees pitcher [Sparky Lyle](#) (82)

7/23: Actor/activist [Woody Harrelson](#) (65)

7/24: Actress [Lynda Carter](#) (75)

And a Bad Joke!

What is the difference between a poorly-dressed man on a tricycle and a well-dressed man on a bicycle?

Attire!