

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of March 17

We've all made the mistake of buying something unnecessary because it looked like a great deal. We've all held on to things for far too long...just in case. For posterity. For sentimental value.

As we move from winter into spring this week, the goal for each of us doesn't need to be a home that's camera-ready for a Martha Stewart photo shoot; but our homes do need to be safe, sanitary, and usable for daily living.

How do we reach that goal, and stay there?

Why Clutter Happens

Our brains play tricks on us. When we own a thing, we value it simply because we have it, which makes it harder to get rid of. There's a name for it: the endowment effect.

We've All Been There

You look around your home and maybe feel self-conscious about the accumulated clutter. You're not alone! Here's just a few items of clutter that have been accumulated (and discarded) by Office for the Aging staff at their homes over the years:

A stack of cancelled checks from 1962

A single unused baby's diaper, size 4

A book of completed crossword puzzles

35 empty holiday cookie tins

5 old VCRs

A scratched-up Dean Martin album with no cover

Collectively, we felt much better having gotten rid of all that. We'd like you to feel the same.

Baby Steps

Every step forward is a good step. If you can manage to declutter the "junk drawer" in the kitchen and that's it for now, that's fine. If you can only manage 20-30 minutes of decluttering in a day, that's also fine. It's something to build on.

The sum of each home's clutter can be a lot to deal with, but there are strategies to break up the job into manageable parts. Dr. Jessica Rasmussen, an instructor in psychology at Harvard Medical School, suggests sorting items into three categories: things that will definitely be tossed, things that will definitely be kept, and an "I'm not sure" category. Get the discard pile into the

trash ASAP, then move to the "keep" and "I don't know" piles. Ask yourself these four questions:

Do I really need this?

Am I going to use this?

How often have I used this?

Could I get something like this again if I need it?

Now that you have a system, you should feel less overwhelmed by the prospect of decluttering.

Watch For Shredder Truck and/or E-Waste Events Near You

Many local governments and financial institutions host "shredder truck" events, especially in the spring, where residents and customers can safely

and securely dispose of paperwork they no longer need, and which could contain personally identifiable information.

Some local disposal events allow residents to get rid of "e-waste" - for example, your old tube television, and that big box of cables you haven't used in 15 years.

“EMPOWERED CAREGIVER SERIES” AT OFA THIS SPRING

Are you the caregiver of a Dutchess County resident living with dementia? The Dutchess County Office for the Aging is partnering with the Alzheimer’s Association Hudson Valley Chapter to host the “Empowered Caregiver Series” in May and June at OFA headquarters, 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie.

Each session takes place on a Tuesday at 3:00pm. Seating is limited, so reservations are required. Call the Office for the Aging to save your seat at any

session(s) you can attend, at 845-486-2555 during business hours. We cannot accept reservation requests made via voice mail or email.

Topics in the program include:

May 6 - Building foundations of caregiving

May 13 - Supporting independence

May 20 - Communicating effectively

May 27 - Responding to dementia-related behaviors

June 3 - Exploring care and support services

This free program is open to caregivers of all ages and is supported in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Health.

“PANCAKES IN THE PARK” – STILL SPACE LEFT IN RHINEBECK (April 2)

The FREE annual OFA “Pancakes in the Park” events for Dutchess County older adults (60+), co-hosted by Dutchess County Parks, are filling up fast. One of the two events is already full, but there’s still room left at the other.

There is still room – while it lasts - to sign up for the second “Pancakes” event at the Pavilion at Brookmeade, 34 Brookmeade Dr. in Rhinebeck, on Wednesday, April 2nd.

The first “Pancakes in the Park” event, at Bowdoin Park on Thursday, March 27th, is at capacity.

Both events begin at 10:30 am. Guests must be Dutchess County residents age 60+.

Call OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours to register. We cannot accept reservations left on voice mail or by email.

Each participant gets a pancake breakfast accompanied by a splash of maple syrup tapped from Dutchess County maple trees. A limited amount of syrup will be available for purchase.

CENTRAL HUDSON OLDER ADULTS’ FORUM (Thu 4/3)

(Seating limited; reservations required)

If you’re a Dutchess County older adult (60+) and Central Hudson utility customer looking to make your energy budget last, Central Hudson outreach

personnel will be at the OFA Friendship Center in Poughkeepsie (114 Delafield St.) on Thursday, April 3rd at 2:30, to help older adults understand the available assistance programs, along with valuable energy usage and safety information.

Seating is limited, and required reservations can be made by calling OFA during business hours (weekdays, 9a-5p) at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept reservations made by voice mail or email.

The event is geared toward savings rather than complaints about the cost of utilities. That said, we recognize the importance of advocating for oneself in successful aging, and the importance of being able to reach the right people when raising one's concerns, no matter what they are.

It's recommended that you speak with your utility company's customer service division first; then, if you have contacted your utility to express your concerns but are not satisfied with the result, [use this link to find out more about filing complaints](#) with the New York State Department of Public Service.

AARP SHREDDER TRUCK / POUGHKEEPSIE (May 2)

Help protect yourself and your family from identity theft, deed theft, and other scams by joining AARP New York for a free paper shredding event!

On **Friday, May 2, 2025**, AARP New York will host its annual free paper shredding event with an on-site mobile shred truck in Poughkeepsie, NY from **10:00AM ET to 12:30PM ET**. The event will be held at St John's Evangelical Lutheran, 55 Wilbur Blvd, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. [Click here to register](#). Registration closes March 25th.

Paper only. **Please remove paper clips and metal binder clips in advance.** There is a three bag or three box limit per participant. Boxes will be emptied and returned to participants. Event ends at scheduled time or when the truck is full, whichever comes first.

Check with your local authorities and financial institutions to locate shredder truck events in your area.

Other news:

Are diet and exercise the keys to longevity? Seems like a simple enough question to answer...[but maybe not?](#)

[More scam prevention tips](#), this time from the New York State Division of Consumer Protection. Click, read, share, print one out for your offline friends – and since much of the info in the link discusses scams related to real estate, homeowners in Dutchess County can sign up for the [Dutchess Deed Watch](#) service courtesy of County Clerk Brad Kendall.

[The annual statewide ban on open burning](#) goes into effect on March 16th; however, dry winter conditions, especially downstate, led to the ban being imposed a week earlier for Dutchess County and lower New York State.

[Details here](#) in a proclamation from the governor's office.

Early spring is traditionally brush fire season in our region, and lower-than-normal precipitation over the winter has made the outdoors even drier than usual. Dutchess County authorities report responding to over 10 brush fires (and counting) in the past week.

What's still allowed fire-wise under the annual March 16-May 14 ban?

Backyard fire pits and contained campfires less than three feet in height and four feet in length, width, or diameter are allowed, as are small, contained cooking fires.

(We are expecting some rain this weekend, but it won't be enough to catch up to where we should be this time of year, precipitation-wise. [Here's a local map of drought conditions.](#))

[Multigenerational living](#): making a comeback?

While we might or might not have been looking, [ninetysomethings](#) have been revolutionizing strength training.

Need [a brain-boost](#)?

[Art Schallock](#), a former Yankees pitcher (1951-55) and World War II veteran who had been the oldest living MLB player, passed away earlier this month

just shy of his 101st birthday. The current oldest living MLB (and Negro Leagues) player is 100-year-old [Rev. Bill Greason](#) of the St. Louis Cardinals and Birmingham Black Barons.

[A happy 114th birthday to Marita Camacho Quirós](#), who may be the oldest living person known for something in addition to living an extremely long life. She is a former first lady of Costa Rica.

This week's birthdays:

3/13: Singer/songwriter [Neil Sedaka](#) (86)

3/14: Actor/comedian/director/screenwriter [Billy Crystal](#) (77)

3/15: Actor [Judd Hirsch](#) (90)

3/16: Singer-songwriter/guitarist [Nancy Wilson](#) (Heart) (71)

3/17: Singer/songwriter/Hudson Valley resident [John Sebastian](#) (81)

3/18: Pianist/composer [John Kander](#) (98)

3/19: Football coach [Andy Reid](#) (67)

You're the kind of person who reads the Bad Joke part of the newsletter first, aren't you?

Why did the frog take the bus to work? His car got toad.