

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of March 2

LESSONS ON AGING WELL FROM A 193-YEAR-OLD TORTOISE

Jonathan, a Seychelles giant tortoise who was born in 1832, is the world's oldest living land animal, going by the best available conservative estimates.

Jonathan lives a leisurely life on the British Overseas Territories island of St.

Helena in the South Atlantic. His caretakers say he's doing remarkably well for his age, although he does contend with age-related conditions like cataracts.

When Jonathan hatched is unknown, but he was brought from the Seychelles to St. Helena in 1882 as a gift to the island's governor. At the time he had already reached maturity, which for tortoises of his species is around age 50.

Their typical lifespan is closer to 150.

What's his secret? He's not telling us directly, but there are plenty of signs he's living his best, and most extended life:

Good nutrition, and make it local. Jonathan's diet consists largely of cabbage, carrots, and lettuce — and his personal favorites are the island's own bananas and guavas.

Resilience and adaptation. A few years ago, caretakers noticed that Jonathan was eating a lot of grass, leaves, and twigs, but only because he was having trouble seeing other suitable food sources. As a result, he was losing weight and growing weaker. Adjusting Jonathan's diet to his reduced eyesight has enable him to maintain a healthy weight.

We humans can likewise adjust our diets to improve our chances of successful aging. As clients of the OFA Home Delivered Meals and/or Friendship Center program, you receive monthly issues of OFA's *Nutrition News*, and Nutrition Services Coordinator Nimesh Bhargava gives regular

presentations at Friendship Centers on the science behind good nutrition.

Find out more at dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition.

Stay physically and socially active.

Jonathan lives with two slightly younger tortoises, Emma and Fred. Before their arrival, handlers say he was exhibiting signs of loneliness, like breaking out of his paddock and interrupting nearby croquet games.

His veterinarian tells the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) that Jonathan enjoys leisurely strolls and time with visitors, especially when the sun is out, and still has a healthy libido. We won't presume to pry into Jonathan's social life beyond that.

A Low-Stress Life

We can be more like Jonathan. "Slow down and smell the roses" is great all-purpose advice. Jonathan lives likewise, at tortoise speed. Caretaker Teeny Lucy of the local SPCA tells the CBC, "Tortoises, they don't move fast, and they contemplate everything. When I go up [to visit], it definitely reduces the anxiety that you might be feeling."

OFA AT ENERGY SAVINGS EVENT IN WAPPINGERS (Wed, 3/4)

Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County and the Mid-Hudson Regional Clean Energy Hub are partnering with Central Hudson to host a Community Energy Application Assistance and Program Enrollment Event on Wednesday, March 4 in Wappingers Falls. OFA will have staff and information onsite also.

Event Details:

- Wednesday, March 4th - 4:00pm to 8:00pm

[Brexel-Schlathaus Park Community Center](#)

[126 All Angels Road](#)

[Wappingers Falls](#)

(link goes to Google map of site)

Walk-ins are welcome, but RSVPs are appreciated (link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EnergySavingsSimplified>)

The event will offer residents one on one support from the Hub's Energy Advisors to complete EmPower+ enrollment onsite, enroll in EAP (Energy Assistance Program), and learn about the new Enhanced Energy Assistance Program, which may be available to customers who previously did not qualify for traditional income-based assistance like the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

SUBSTITUTE OFA BUS DRIVERS WANTED

The Dutchess County Office for the Aging is seeking compassionate and responsible substitute Bus Drivers to transport older adults safely to and from OFA Friendship Centers, scheduled outings, and other destinations.

An ideal candidate will prioritize passenger safety, and create a comfortable, friendly atmosphere for our senior community.

Key Responsibilities:

- Safely operate a passenger bus or van, adhering to all traffic laws and safety regulations.
- Assist older adults with boarding and exiting vehicles, including those using walkers or wheelchairs.
- Follow scheduled pick-up and drop-off times.
- Maintain a clean and well-kept vehicle, reporting any maintenance issues as needed.
- Engage with passengers in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Monitor passengers for signs of distress or medical concerns, and respond appropriately.

Qualifications & Requirements:

- Valid New York State driver's license. Both CDL and non-CDL applicants welcomed.
- Clean driving record and background check.
- Previous experience driving older adults and/or individuals with mobility challenges is preferred.

- Ability to assist passengers with mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.).
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Patience, reliability, and a friendly demeanor.

[Click here for a full description of requirements and qualifications.](#)

To begin the application process, call **845-486-2555** during business hours, or email jnuccilli@dutchessny.gov.

SENIOR PARK PALETTE CLASSES – ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT!

OFA and Dutchess County Parks are presenting the 2026 series of “Senior Park Palette” classes for Dutchess County older adults (age 60+). Dutchess County residents over 60 can sign up for the remaining available free class:

- Tuesday, March 10th, 2:00-3:15 pm – Red Hook Friendship Center,
59 Fisk St. (Red Hook Community Center)

All other classes have either passed or are at capacity. Only a few seats remain for this class, so make reservations ASAP by calling OFA during

business hours at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text message.

All supplies are provided. Each class size is limited to 12.

OFA MOBILE OFFICE HOURS – MARCH

If you have questions about aging services that would be best served by an in-person meeting, but travel to and from Poughkeepsie is a challenge, OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy is hosting by-appointment OFA Mobile Office Hours around Dutchess County.

Appointments are 30 minutes long at each Mobile Office Hours event. Appointments can be made by calling 845-486-2555 during business hours. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text.

Here's the schedule:

Monday, March 9th, 10a-2p, South Amenia Friendship Center

229 South Amenia Rd., Wassaic

Tuesday, March 10th, 10a-2p – Pawling Friendship Center

154 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling

Thursday, March 12th, 10a-2p – Tri-Town Friendship Center

1576 Main St. (US 44), Pleasant Valley

Monday, March 23rd – Town of Poughkeepsie Senior Center

14 Abe's Way, Poughkeepsie

Tuesday, March 31st, noon-3p – Beekman Town Hall

4 Main St., Poughquag

If your Dutchess County civic organization wants to host a Mobile Office Hours event, email ofa@dutchessny.gov or call 845-486-2555 during business hours. We're also available for presentations to groups on OFA Services, successful aging, scam prevention, home safety, caregiving, and much more.

SCAM PREVENTION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (Tue 3/17)

OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones will give a presentation on scam and fraud protection for members of the hearing loss community and their caregivers on Tuesday, March 17th at 5:15 pm, at the Pleasant Valley Library at 1584 Main St (US 44) in Pleasant Valley, for the Hearing Loss Association of

America's Mid-Hudson chapter.

The presentation is open to the public and recommended for people with hearing loss and/or family members with hearing loss. To register, visit **hearingloss-midhudson.org**, email

hearingloss.midhudson@gmail.com, or call

845-489-7008. Can't make it to the presentation, but want some close-at-hand scam prevention resources? Visit **dutchessny.gov/ofaprintable** for important strategies and contact information.

VOLUNTEER OFA EXERCISE INSTRUCTORS WANTED

We've been getting a lot of inquiries lately about exercise classes for older adults in Dutchess County, but have you ever thought about teaching an exercise class?

No experience is necessary. We provide all training. And our exercise classes are decidedly not a "go for the burn" type of experience.

To learn more about the classes, visit

www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise.

OFA AT ALZHEIMER'S MINI-CONFERENCE IN MILLERTON (Wed 3/18)

Join the Alzheimer's Association, the Office for the Aging, Sun River Health and community partners for a mini-conference and listening session on Alzheimer's disease, dementia and memory loss:

Wednesday, March 18th, 9:30-11:30am

Millerton-NorthEast Library Annex (OFA Friendship Center)

28 Century Blvd., Millerton

It's essential learning for older adults and caregivers of all ages. Sign up by calling OFA at 845-486-2555 or emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov.

Light refreshments will be provided. The event is supported in part by grants from the New York State Department of Health.

GET CAUGHT UP ON VACCINATIONS (Tue 3/24)

If you've been meaning to get caught up on necessary vaccinations and are available on Tuesday, March 24th between 10am and 2pm, OFA and Walgreens are offering a chance to get up-to-date for Dutchess County older

adults (60+) at the main OFA office at 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie.

Available vaccines: COVID-19, RSV, Influenza, Tetanus, Shingles, and
Pneumonia

For more information and to set up an appointment, call OFA during
business hours at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept reservation requests
made by voice mail, email or text message.

Have your Medicare/insurance card handy when you arrive for your
appointment.

Other news:

Is there a link between [brain activity in the cerebellum](#) and heightened risk for
falls?

Interested in aging in place? Here's [a room-by-room way to look over your
own home](#) to find out more about its suitability.

Caregiver [burnout-prevention](#) tips.

There's a variety of scam-prevention-related legislation currently making its way through Congress. [AARP has the roundup.](#)

This week's birthdays:

2/27: Actor [Timothy Spall](#) (69)

2/28: Actress/singer [Bernadette Peters](#) (78)

[2/29: U.S. astronaut [Jack Lousma](#) (Skylab 3) (90)]

3/1: Actor/director/producer [Ron Howard](#) (72)

3/2: Singer/songwriter [Jon Bon Jovi](#) (64)

3/3: Singer/songwriter [Jennifer Warnes](#) (79)

3/4: Author/illustrator [Dav Pilkey](#) (60)

3/5: Football player/actor [Fred Williamson](#) (88)

It's Bad Joke time again!

What word can you make shorter by adding two letters?

Short.