

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of March 23

Many people find friendships and even love online, but they can also go looking for companionship and find themselves being scammed instead. That's why it's essential to stay on the lookout for warning signs that a new online "friend" may not be what they claim to be.

Here's a couple of sample phrases from a scammer "working" their victim, from the Australian National Anti-Scam Centre:

You brighten my day, and even though we just met I feel like you're really the one.

Are you here babe? I miss talking to you.

We can tell ourselves we're savvy enough not to be fooled like that; but when it comes to relationships, it's all too human to believe what we want to believe and ignore the red flags.

Romance Scammers Bide Their Time

In a romance scam, the criminal won't go for the victim's money right away. They'll claim to be lonely, and claim to be employed in a field that keeps them "on the road" and starved for companionship.

The prospect of an in-person meetup is dangled in front of the victim, but it never happens. The scammer continues pretending to be affectionate and caring, then asks the victim if conversations can be moved to a private messaging service. It's harder to detect scammers on those platforms.

Then Comes the "Sales Pitch"

Requests for money often start small and escalate over time. The scammer typically asks for money for emergencies, investments, travel, gifts, cryptocurrency, or gift cards. The requests grow in size. Maybe the initial

"investment" seems to work out, and now the victim wants more. The scammer is all too willing to oblige.

If requests for money don't work, the scammer escalates to threats and extortion. By this point, the scammer has isolated their victim from friends and family who might point out the scam.

Some romance scam victims have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in life savings before their online friend disappears into the wind.

Take a "Tactical Pause" Before It Gets Bad

Scammers of all kinds will create a false sense of urgency to pressure you into acting quickly. Don't rush to make decisions about money or sharing personal details. Instead:

Say no, hang up, or delete suspicious messages;

Don't let anyone pressure you into immediate action; and

Trust your instincts if something feels wrong.

OFA Can Help Stop Romance Scams

A person who's connected to the wider community is less likely to be successfully targeted by romance scammers. OFA's "Friendly Calls" program connects screened volunteer callers and older adults in Dutchess County, especially those at risk of loneliness or social isolation, for a series of eight once-a-week phone calls. It's 20 to 30 minutes, just "shooting the breeze."

Some people may think of it as idle small talk, but there's nothing idle about keeping people connected and safe.

Visit **dutchessny.gov/friendlycalls** for more information, or call "Friendly Calls" coordinator Linda Edgar at **845-486-2548**.

OFA Volunteer and NYSOFA Honoree Michael Manning, 1952-2026

Michael Manning, an eight-year volunteer with OFA's Home Delivered Meals program, died at his home this week. He was 73.

Mike was honored last year for his service to Dutchess County's homebound older adults, at the 2025 Older New Yorkers Day observances in Albany. [Mike's obituary is available in the New Pine Plains Herald](#), where he served as a volunteer writer.

New Day/Time For "Navigating Medicare" Classes in Rhinebeck

OFA's monthly "Navigating Medicare" classes at Rhinebeck's Starr Library have been rescheduled to the second Wednesday of every month at 4:00pm.

The monthly "Navigating Medicare" classes held at the Poughkeepsie Galleria community room remain on the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00am, which means the next Rhinebeck class is taking place on Wednesday, April 8th.

To sign up for these regular “Navigating Medicare” classes, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

We also have a “Navigating Medicare” class scheduled for Friday, April 10th at 9:30am, at Adriance Memorial Library in Poughkeepsie (93 Market St., parking on Noxon St.). To sign up for this class specifically, call 845-485-3445 extension 3380.

“Pancakes in the Park” Returns (One Picnic At Capacity)

The “Pancakes in the Park” event scheduled for March 26th is now at full capacity - but there are still seats available, as of 9:00 am Friday morning, for the second “Pancakes” event at the Pavilion at Brookmeade in Rhinebeck (34 Brookmeade Rd., just off Route 308), scheduled for 10:30am on Tuesday, April 7th.

To reserve a seat, contact OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text message.

Scam Prevention with SilverShield Also At Capacity

The Tuesday, March 24th scam prevention event with OFA featuring the SilverShield scam prevention and reporting website is at full capacity. We're working on scheduling other similar events.

Tech Support Day at OFA (Tuesday 3/31)

Keeping up with technology can be hard for all of us, but a chance to get some help with the tricky parts is on the way. We at Office for the Aging are excited to work with New York State Senator Rob Rolison's office to host a Tech Support Day for Older Adults at OFA's Poughkeepsie Friendship Center at 114 Delafield St., 2:30-4:30pm on Tuesday, March 31st.

Sign up by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

“CarFit” for Mature Drivers, at Marist (Saturday 4/11)

The Marist University Doctor of Physical Therapy program and Helen Hayes Rehabilitation Hospital present the CarFit Program. It's a free, interactive educational program designed to improve older driver safety.

Trained volunteers provide information ensuring the safest “fit” for older drivers and their vehicles.

The event takes place on Saturday, April 11th, from 9am to 2:30pm, at the Marist University Allied Health Building, Parking Lot 18, Beck Place, Poughkeepsie.

Appointments are required. To make an appointment, contact Lynn Matthes at 845-786-4155 or lynn.matthes@helenhayeshosp.org.

OFA Nutrition Volunteers Wanted (Poughkeepsie, East Fishkill)

OFA’s Nutrition Services division is looking for dedicated volunteers who can assist our Home Delivered Meals program:

- At our central kitchen at OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie; and
- As drivers for our Home Delivered Meals program’s East Fishkill hub, which operates out of the East Fishkill Community Center in Hopewell Junction.

See www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer for more information including a printable volunteering form. Mileage reimbursement is available for Home Delivered Meals volunteers who make deliveries using their own vehicle.

OFA March/April Mobile Office Hours

OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy is hosting by-appointment OFA Mobile Office Hours around Dutchess County. It's a chance to get your age-related questions answered in person, with considerably less travel on your part.

Here's the schedule:

Monday, March 23rd – Town of Poughkeepsie Senior Center

14 Abe's Way, Poughkeepsie

Tuesday, March 31st, 10a-1p – Beekman Town Hall

4 Main St., Poughquag

Tuesday, April 21st, 1p-4p – Wappingers Town Recreation Center

Schlathaus Park, 126 All Angels Hill Rd., Wappinger

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.

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.

At OFA, we're also available for presentations to groups on OFA Services, successful aging, scam prevention, home safety, caregiving, and much more. Contact us to find out more.

3/24 Vaccination Event Postponed

OFA's March 24th vaccination event has been postponed. Participants have been notified.

Other news:

[How scammers use voice cloning](#) to impersonate everyone from celebrities to family members.

Think you'd never fall for an online scam? [Think again.](#)

[What the federal government gets right and wrong](#) in battling fraud.

AARP's steps to [fight age discrimination.](#)

This week's birthdays:

3/20: Actor/director [Hal Linden](#) (95)

3/21: Soul singer Russell Thompkins Jr. ([The Stylistics](#)) (75)

3/22: Actor/singer/starship captain [William Shatner](#) (95)

3/23: Singer-songwriter [Chaka Khan](#) (73)

3/24: Fashion designer [Bob Mackie](#) (87)

3/25: Film critic [Gene Shalit](#) (100)

3/26: Singer/songwriter [Diana Ross](#) (82)

3/27: Keyboardist/songwriter [Tony Banks](#) (Genesis) (76)

Let's celebrate the beginning of spring with a Bad Joke:

Why do hummingbirds hum? Because they don't know the words.