

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of March 4th

If you're 60 or older and worried about falling or have fallen before and would rather not fall again, the Office for the Aging offers a program that'll help improve your odds of confidently preventing falls.

Falls are *not* an inevitable part of aging. They can be prevented.

OFA is looking for older adults in Dutchess County to participate in the award-winning, evidence-based fall prevention program, "A Matter of Balance." This series of eight, two-hour sessions will be held starting this month. Class space is available in Beekman, Poughkeepsie, and Millbrook.

Specific class locations and times will be provided to participants upon class registration. Classes typically meet once a week for eight weeks.

The classes have been popular with Dutchess County older adults since "A Matter of Balance" came to Dutchess in 2015, to the point where classes often reach capacity and those who could not be placed in a class were offered spots on

a waiting list. If you're already on a Matter of Balance waiting list, our program coordinators are in the process of contacting those on the waiting list about taking part. If this is the first you've heard about "A Matter of Balance" and you're interested in joining a class, contact OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours, or email ofa@dutchessny.gov. "A Matter of Balance" cannot accept walk-in participants, so registration is a must.

The classes are specifically designed to help seniors reduce the fear of falling and increase their activity levels. Participants will learn to:

- View falls and fear of falling as controllable;
- Set realistic goals for increasing activity;
- Change their environment to reduce fall risk factors;
- Promote exercise to increase strength and balance.

Ironically, restricting one's activities due to a fear of falling often increases the risk of falling instead. Staying balanced requires sufficient muscle strength to keep joints stable, but reducing activities leads to weakened muscles and thus a higher risk of fall.

THE FALL PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Whether or not you're taking "A Matter of Balance," you can prevent falls in other ways:

At future appointments with your health care provider, talk with them about your current and future fall risk; what medications and health conditions may affect your balance. Share what you know about any of your previous falls and/or loss of balance. If your provider recommends an assistive device like a cane or a walker, don't be too proud to use it. Part of aging gracefully includes accepting assistance gracefully.

Keep moving. Join an OFA Senior Exercise class. Besides "A Matter of Balance," we offer standard exercise classes, tai chi, Bingocize, and the "SAIL" (Staying Active and Independent for Life) remote-exercise option. More at www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise.

Wear sensible shoes. Floppy slippers, shoes with slick soles, and high heels are an invitation to a tumble, as can walking in stocking feet. Sensible shoes can also reduce joint pain.

Remove home hazards and give your lighting a checkup. There's a Fall Prevention Checklist under Printable Aging Resources at dutchessny.gov/aging.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114

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ofa@dutchessny.gov website: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

THE EBT SKIMMER SCAMMERS COME OUT EARLY EVERY MONTH

If you have an EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card, or know someone who uses one, there's a new security feature available aimed at reducing the risk of beneficiaries losing the balance on their EBT cards to "skimmer" scammers.

Skimmers are devices that criminals attach to point-of-sale (POS) machines/PIN pads to steal card numbers and other information from credit, debit, and EBT cards. Criminals make card skimmers look like a normal part of a POS machine/PIN pad. They are easy to place and hard to spot. Criminals can attach card skimmers in less than one minute. They often work in teams of two: one to distract a store's worker while the other installs the skimmer.

While EBT cards still don't have "chip" skimmer-protection security technology that's been in use on credit and debit cards, a new "lock/unlock" feature is now available for EBT cards – but users must know it's there and how to

use it, especially since a new month is getting underway. That's when benefits are typically replenished, and when scammers try to steal card balances.

[Click here to learn how to use the new EBT Card Lock feature](#), or call the EBT Helpline at 888-328-6399.

New York State this past week unveiled a new "ConnectEBT" app, which can be found on Google Play or the Apple App Store.

Look for lots more on EBT scams and how to prevent them in future newsletters.

STILL SOME SEATS LEFT AT "PANCAKES IN THE PARK" (Thursday 3/21)

March means it's time for the FREE annual OFA "Pancakes in the Park" event for older adults (60+), co-hosted by Dutchess County Parks, at the auditorium within the administration building at Bowdoin Park (85 Sheafe Rd., Wappingers Falls), starting at 10:30 am on Thursday, March 21st.

Seating is limited and advance registration with OFA is required. Call OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours to register, while seats remain available.

Guests must be Dutchess County residents age 60+.

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

"Pancakes in the Park" is part of Maple Weekend at Bowdoin, March 21-24.

For more information on the weekend, call 845-296-4600 or visit

dutchessny.gov/parks.

SAVE THE DATE – WEDNESDAY, MAY 8TH – CAREGIVER CONFERENCE IN HYDE PARK

Caregivers looking for help on being the best caregiver they can be while maintaining their own well-being will want to set aside Wednesday, May 8th for the annual "Caregiver Conference." It'll be held at a new venue this year: the Wallace Center, on the grounds of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park.

Registration is expected to get underway in the springtime; watch this newsletter for the specific date of registration opening – space is limited!

The event begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and continues until 2 p.m.

There will be plenty of time for your questions and concerns, and dozens of experts and vendors will be on hand with answers and solutions.

The conference is organized by the Office for the Aging, the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter; Hudson Valley Hospice; Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley; and community members Cathy Regan and FaLisia Cotten-Swain.

Other news:

[3 tips](#) on staying cognitively sharp.

There's a [falls prevention webinar](#) coming up on Wednesday, March 13th.

No, there's no fourth batch of federal stimulus checks for Social Security recipients – but there's been [a lot of false information](#) claiming there is. What's more, there are plenty of fake Social Security social media accounts – [here's how to spot them](#).

Speaking of Social Security and sketchy information, ssa.gov/scam is where you can report Social Security related scams and scam attempts.

[Talking faster](#) (you know, like a New Yorker) has been linked to improved brain health while aging.

This week's birthdays:

3/2: Musician/songwriter [John Cowsill](#) (68)

3/3: American heptathlete [Jackie Joyner-Kersey](#) (62)

3/4: World's oldest verified living person [Maria Branyas](#) (Spain) (117)

3/5: Magician/actor [Penn Jillette](#) (69)

3/6: Actor/director/producer [Rob Reiner](#) (77)

3/7: Soldier/explorer [Sir Ranulph Fiennes](#) (80)

3/8: Singer-songwriter [Micky Dolenz](#) (The Monkees) (79)

And the Bad Joke to wrap things up!

The farmer next door has an egg-laying goose that thinks it's male. She has delusions of gander.