

# Senior Scope

A newspaper serving the communities of **Acushnet ■ Dartmouth ■ Fairhaven ■ Gosnold ■ Marion ■ Mattapoisett ■ New Bedford ■ Rochester**

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## Start fresh in 2023 by clearing out cluttered spaces

**H**ave you looked around your home recently and thought to yourself, ‘How have I collected so much stuff?’

Is your basement or garage full? Have whole rooms been turned into storage spaces, or pathways narrowed so that you have to side-step to avoid hitting things?

If so, you’re not alone.

New years are all about doing things differently, and this year, as 2023 gets going, consider reducing the clutter that has built up over the years.

To get started, pause and take a slow look around your space, says Brittany Botelho, executive director of the adult day health care center, Project Independence in New Bedford. Note without judgment which spaces have become too cluttered, she advises.

“Check all the unused spaces for too much stuff, including the (former) children’s rooms, garages, and basements,” said Botelho. “As the nest has cleared out, we often make storage rooms when rooms lose their intended purpose. It’s very easy for those rooms to become unbearable and unmanageable for us.”

“Chances are,” she added, “if we’re squirreling the items away, we don’t actually need them.”

Botelho, who has a master’s in health care administration and is a former home care manager for Coastline Elderly Services, leads a support group for people who struggle with hoarding.

While not all clutter issues lead to hoarding, she said, it’s an important issue to address. “People start to self-isolate and it’s a snowball effect,” she



The start of a new year is a great time to tackle those life-changing goals like clearing out old stuff you no longer need.

**“If looking at those piles of clothes makes you feel bad about yourself, get rid of them. You don’t need to be surrounded by negativity. Let it go.”**

—**Brittany Botelho,**  
*Project Independence Adult Day Care*

said. “You have too much stuff, then you isolate, and when you feel bad, you gather more stuff.”

If you’re feeling ready to reduce your clutter, here are seven tips to get started.

### 1. Use item goals to motivate you, not time limits

Botelho recommends not saying you’ll spend 15 minutes a day clearing the garage out. When you do that, she said, much of your time ends up being

spent in figuring out what to keep and what to throw or give away. For example, she said, if you say you’ll work for 15 minutes as much as 10 minutes can be spent just thinking about what you’ll get rid of.

Instead, she suggests setting a goal for a specific number of objects to remove. “If you make it task-oriented and say today I’m going to pull five items out of this (space), then it doesn’t matter how much time it will take,” she said.

### 2. Start small

A quick way to kill your enthusiasm for clearing room is to try to clean out an entire space at once.

Don’t do that, says Botelho. Instead, focus on small tasks that collectively lead up to big results. Choose a cate-

*Continued on page 3*

## Legislative efforts in 2023 will focus on independent living

Staying independent and being able to choose what one’s life looks like after retirement is one of life’s top priorities for many older adults. It’s also the focus of ongoing legislative efforts - some of which were left unresolved in 2022 - to support older adults in Massachusetts.

If you’re looking to stay-up-to-date, here are a few key areas to pay attention to in 2023.

### Caregiver Tax Credit

One proposed legislation that AARP Massachusetts has been supporting would provide qualified family caregivers, including those caring for older family members, a tax credit to reimburse them for expenses up to \$1,500 incurred

in the care of their loved one.

The legislation recognizes that caregivers are not only working for family members, often without receiving compensation, but in many cases also offering financial support for expenses such as medical equipment, safety-related home modifications, or the hiring of personal care aides.

Speaking at a Coastline Elderly Service program in December, AARP Massachusetts Director Mike Festa said by supporting caregivers, the state helps keep older adults in their homes.

“There are 800,000 to 850,000 caregivers that are taking care of loved ones of all ages and not getting any pay or bene-

fits,” he said.

Festa noted that recent legislation on the tax credits did not make it through the Joint Committee on Ways and Means but that AARP has been fighting and will continue to fight for it.

“As a state we should support family caregivers as they take on the costs and responsibilities associated with caregiving,” AARP Massachusetts said in an online statement. “Family caregivers spend about \$7,000 each year on out-of-pocket costs. As such, we’re backing a bill to provide a state tax credit of up to \$1,500 to eligible caregivers to help

*Continued on page 12*



General enrollment for Medicare Part B is coming up, running from Jan. 1-March 31 this year.

## General enrollment for Medicare Part B

By Delia De Mello  
*Social Security*

If you did not apply for Medicare Part B (medical insurance) within three months before or after turning age 65, you have another chance each year during the General Enrollment Period.

The period runs from January 1 to March 31 every year.

If you don't enroll in Part B when you're first eligible for it, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Your monthly premium will increase 10 percent for each 12-month period that you were eligible for Part B but did not sign up for it.

Your coverage starts the first day of the month after you sign up.

To learn more about Medicare, please visit our Medicare Benefits page at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare).

You may also read our publication at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf).

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it – and share it on social media.



Delia DeMello

## From the Editor

As this issue comes out, 2022 is officially in our rearview mirrors, making room for a much more peaceful and less troublesome 2023. We hope.

There have been some anxiety-producing moments in the past few years and many of us have been feeling the strain and stress of repeated change. I won't list all of the ways we might have felt out-of-control this past year, because I think we're all well aware.

The beauty of a new year, though, is the opportunity to clear the slate and start fresh.

It's a chance for each of us to look back gently on our life experiences over the past 12 months and decide what worked and what we are ready to let go of.

This issue is dedicated to those reflective moments.

Several of the people I spoke to or learned from offered ways to make positive changes in our lives.

I especially enjoyed speaking to Brittany Botelho about cleaning up clutter in our lives (page one).

Brittany not only has practical tips for getting rid of items we no longer need; she also recognizes the emotional weight of clutter on us and suggests we are kind to ourselves about it, taking things slowly and

offering ourselves compassion and understanding as we begin to clear long-standing piles.

On another subject, a fun Dartmouth COA group that meets regularly to talk about weight loss, tackled a subject that I personally appreciated (page 12).

Coastline registered dietitian Stephanie Boulay led the discussion about how to find the best prices when grocery shopping. The meeting had a nutritional component, but with food prices rising so much, there was a lot of interest about how to keep those weekly shopping trips from blowing up your budget.

Finally, don't miss our look at a few of the legislative issues (page one) that are expected to come up again in 2023. These are topics important to older adults who want to be able to live independently as we age.

Connect with Beth Perdue at [bperdue@coastlinenb.org](mailto:bperdue@coastlinenb.org) or by mail to Senior Scope, 863 Belleville Ave., New Bedford, MA 02745.



Beth Perdue



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**Decluttering continued...**

gory – like food containers – and work on that until you can see progress. “Start where you’re at and go slow,” she said.

**3. Notice which items you collect and consider why**

Some people have specific items that they over-collect, said Botelho. Typically, those items can also be harder to let go of.

The most common clutter-producing category she sees among people is food containers, Botelho said, often because people feel they can use them again.

People think, “I can reuse this to store items, for food storage, to eat out of or to organize food,” said Botelho.

But often the containers pile up and become part of the home’s disorganized state.

Instead, Botelho said, “See how many containers you’re keeping to use sometime in the future and if you can’t use them within two weeks, throw them away or recycle them.”

**4. Shred paperwork a little at a time**

Paperwork is one of those things that is easy to collect and difficult to let go of for many people. To deal with the overflow, Botelho recommends getting a simple shredder and shredding paper as soon as you’re done with it.

Never let it become a pile, she said. “People hold onto paperwork because they’re afraid of someone stealing their identity,” said Botelho. But so much of it is unnecessary.

“Don’t let it grow into unmanageable



piles,” she said.

**5. Don’t bring trash into your home**

Botelho is firm about this tip which she refers to as “raccooning.”

“Don’t bring any trash into your home, thinking that it’s a treasure and you’re going to fix it up,” she said. “No raccooning. That’s my number one rule. People do it a lot because they want to fix it, but those things never get fixed.”

**6. Let go of clothes that no longer fit**

It’s tough to let go of clothing you once loved but that no longer fits you. Resist the desire, says Botelho, for space reasons and because it holds an emotional message.

“If looking at those piles of clothes makes you feel bad about yourself, get rid of them,” she said. “You don’t need to be surrounded by negativity. Let it go. If you’re able to lose the

weight and get down to a smaller size again, then treat yourself to a new wardrobe.”

Asked if she gets rid of clothing that she hasn’t worn in a year – a favorite tip of organizers - Botelho said she doesn’t wait that long.

“I have a box in the basement to put anything I don’t want. That’s the donation box and once it’s filled, we move it along,” she said, adding that the entire box is brought to a donation site.

And Botelho’s favorite clothing-related tip is to organize your clothes in ways that help you enjoy them more. “My closet is organized by color and sleeve-length and it makes getting dressed in the morning a breeze,” she said. “I knew I wanted a white shirt this morning and I can find it easily.”

**7. Don’t shop as much**

In our consumer-oriented world,

Join a free support group to learn to live a life less cluttered!

- Learn techniques to help change behaviors related to hoarding.
- Form bonds with others who share the same experiences.
- Be in a safe space, free from judgment.

Call Brittany Botelho at 508-961-3136 or email [bdejesus88@yahoo.com](mailto:bdejesus88@yahoo.com).

this is a difficult one. But, “don’t feel the need to compete with other people,” says Botelho.

“Purchase items that resonate with you and not because someone else has them,” she said. “It’s okay to change with the styles and seasons, just be realistic about it.”

Finally, don’t go out and buy items to help you clear out your space.

“You shouldn’t have to buy an item to organize your home,” Botelho said. “That’s the exact opposite of what we’re supposed to be doing.”

If you need help or just want to connect with others struggling with clutter, Botelho leads a free support group that addresses clutter and hoarding. As you get started, remember to take it one step at a time and keep in mind Botelho’s most important message for people with clutter in their lives.

“It’s okay to be who you are,” she said. “Even if you have a lot of stuff. You are okay just as you are.”



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# Update

## Year-round volunteer opportunities at Coastline

Coastline offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. Give back to your community! Foster Grandparent Program: Work with students in classrooms across the South Coast. For those 55 and older and who meet certain requirements. Call 508-742-9198 for details. Money Management Program: Help older adults manage their finances. Call 508-742-9113. Nursing Home Ombudsman Program: Advocate for those living in a nursing home setting. Call 508-742-9178.

## Local program can help with consumer problems

The New Bedford Regional Local Consumer Program wants people to know that gift cards are for gifts and not for payments. If someone calls you and asks you to buy a gift card to pay bail or ransom; keep your social security benefits; pay an IRS debt; pay for computer tech support; pay for a family member in trouble; keep your utilities on; or, pay for a lottery prize, beware. Hang up because it's a scam. The consumer program made the announcement working in cooperation with the Office of the MA Attorney General. Contact them at 508-979-1693 or [consumer@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:consumer@newbedford-ma.gov) if you have a consumer problem or question.

## Yoga series for seniors

The Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum is partnering with the School of Yoga New Bedford to present a four-part series 'Yoga and Breathwork for Seniors,' beginning Jan. 19. The classes will run on Thursdays at the RJD from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Jan. 19 and running through Feb. 9. The series is curated for people who are in a later stage of life and are curious about how yoga can contribute vitality to their daily movement. Each class includes a discussion on joint care and breathing; adaptive methods for standing, seated, and supine yoga poses; and overall conversation about movement and stillness in relation to yoga and aging. Instructor Juliet Loranger of SYNBD is an expert in the field of yoga and is able to share a broad range of information based on evidence and research. She takes an educational approach to yoga so that students can develop a practice that feels appropriate to their abilities and enriching to their lives. The class is open to people who are new to yoga or have some familiarity with it. The fee for the four-week series is \$95. Call RJD at (508) 997-1401 to register.

## Acushnet's Hamlin Street Bridge to close

MAS Building and Bridge, Inc. has begun work to replace the Hamlin Street Bridge as of December, according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. At press time, Hamlin Street was expected to be closed to all through traffic until work is completed. The building company was hired by the Massachusetts DOT for the project which is expected to finish in December 2025. Signs about the closure were being posted in late December.

## LGBTQ+ Christian Spirituality

All adults interested in gathering together as believers in God to read, discuss, pray, listen to music, and to just socialize with other LGBTQ Christians are welcome! This is an informal, but structured gathering where we usually listen to a song and read a short passage about a spiritual topic, then have a discussion together, sharing what's going on in our lives and in our hearts in relation to the topic. Participate in group activities with the church for fellowship. No commitment - come once; come each meeting; come whenever you can. All are welcome - Protestant or Catholic, whether your faith is new or old, whether you belong to a church or not - all are welcome. This group meets twice a month at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 351 Elm St., Dartmouth. Next meetings are Jan. 9 and 23 and Feb. 6 and 23. Visit [stpetersdartmouth.org](http://stpetersdartmouth.org) for more information.

## Farmers Market winter hours

The New Bedford Winter Farmers Market will be held at the Buttonwood Park Warming House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays until May. The farmers market accepts SNAP/HIP/EBT. You can shop for local products online through Coastal Foodshed's Virtual Market from Saturday at 8 a.m. to Monday at midnight. Deliveries occur on Wednesday from noon to 5 p.m. Credit/Debit accepted for online purchase only. SNAP/EBT/HIP accepted for pre-order online only; payments upon pickup. Pick-up happens on Wednesdays from 2 to 5 p.m. at Coastal Foodshed's Food Hub, 38 Blackmer St, New Bedford. Delivery Area: Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester. More information at [coastalfoodshed.org](http://coastalfoodshed.org).

## Food waste drop-off

New Bedford residents can drop off food waste at the city of New Bedford's Recycling Center at 1103 Shawmut Ave. During business hours from noon to 5 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday. The recycling center accepts all unpackaged food, fruits, vegetables, peels, meat, bones, shells, eggshells, dairy, breads, grains, baked goods, coffee grounds, coffee filters, tea bags that tear, napkins, and paper towels. This can be loose, in paper bags or in compostable bags. The Recycling Center is also distributing free starter kits to New Bedford residents while supplies last. Each kit includes a kitchen counter bin, roll of compostable bags, and a 5-gallon bucket for transporting the accepted waste to the Recycling Center. Starter kits are available at the Department of Facilities and Fleet Management, 294 Liberty St., Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. About 21 percent of what residents place in their trash carts is food waste. This program will help residents reduce waste at home and keep food waste out of the Crapo Hill Landfill. The less that is added to the landfill, the longer it will last. When the landfill reaches capacity, new options will need to be found for managing our waste. These options will very likely be more expensive than the current costs at our local landfill. Another option for diverting food waste is to compost at home. Backyard compost bins are sold to New Bedford residents at a discounted price. For more information, call the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District at (508) 979-1493, or email [Marissa@gnbrm-district.org](mailto:Marissa@gnbrm-district.org).

## Christmas Tree pick-up for New Bedford residents

New Bedford residents can put their Christmas trees out by 7 a.m. on their scheduled trash day during the week of Jan. 9-13. Those whose trash day is Friday should put their trees out for Monday, Jan. 9. Trees must be without lights, tinsel, ornaments or stands. The city also has drop-off locations for trees including East Rodney French Boulevard Parking Lot, between Hudson and Seymour Street, from Dec. 26 until Jan. 13. Or, between those dates, at Brooklawn Park, near Pony League field; enter at Irvington Street. Trees can also be brought to the Recycling Center, 1103 Shawmut Ave.. For details, call 508-961-3008 or email [trashandrecycling@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:trashandrecycling@newbedford-ma.gov).



## Holiday Celebrations

Councils in Aging and senior housing complexes in the South Coast had many holiday celebrations in December including two shown here: Above, holiday singing with (l-r) John Vaughn and Rick LeBlanc at the Marion COA (two top photos) and below, holiday lunch at the Anderson Way housing complex in Dartmouth (two lower photos).

# Your Health

## Tips for the active aging adult in the new year

By Dr. Tom Bozzo

Most of us understand that exercise is an important part of wellness with a myriad of benefits. However, how to get started, what to do, and where to do it can all be roadblocks to unlocking the benefits of exercise.

This month, I'd like to speak about activities that can promote physical health and wellness. Look for more tips on nutrition and mental health in a future Wellness column.

### Broadly, what type of exercise should people focus on as they age?

I would say that if someone already has physical activities they enjoy, they should absolutely stick with them. It is a heck of a lot easier to remain active if you enjoy it. So if you are a walker, runner, cyclist, swimmer, or pickleball player, then keep it up. If you used to enjoy any of those activities, then that is a good place to begin - just start easy and ramp up your time and intensity at the activities slowly. Remember to listen to your body.

Along those lines, I think you should exercise wherever you enjoy it most or wherever you feel most motivated. For me that's being outside - ideally in a park or in the woods. Some people love the energy of being in a gym and still others like the comfort of their home.

Find your spot - but don't let travel or membership fees be an unnecessary barrier. Keep it simple.

If you have not been overly active



Dr. Tom Bozzo

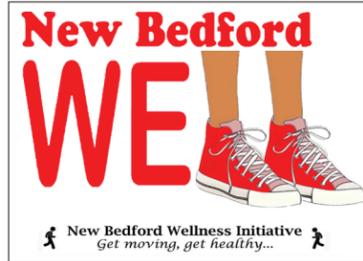
in the past, walking is a great first step (no pun intended). Walking regularly has huge health benefits. It is free and can be done anywhere. If nothing else, you can take steps in place or walk around your home. Find a routine and make it a part of your life.

When I think of exercise and young athletes, my brain goes first to cardiovascular exercise, meaning exercise that makes your heart and lungs work harder. However, as we age exercises that promote strength and balance are likely even more important.

### Why strength and balance?

Frailty and falls can be debilitating as we age. Muscles atrophy far more quickly when we are older. If a teenage runner takes a week or two off, they can jump right back in where they left off without missing a beat. If a 70-year-old runner was laid low with the flu for a week, it could take weeks to regain the muscle that was lost.

Which means if we don't use it, we'll lose it. Inactivity leads to frailty. Frailty makes it harder to be active (because it becomes difficult or starts



to hurt) and the frailty/inactivity cycle can snowball out of control.

Falls often result from balance issues. Balance is a function of muscle, nerve signals and vision - all of which tend to be impacted by age. Muscles atrophy, nerve signals can slow down from a host of medical problems, and vision can be affected by cataracts and common conditions that affect the retina.

Don't despair! In addition to managing medical conditions with your doctors, there are excellent exercises to build muscle and improve balance.

### What types of exercise are good for strength and balance?

Anything that gets you moving or keeps you moving is good. Getting out for a regular walk will build muscle in your legs. Weight bearing exercises are another great tool as we age and can take building muscle to the next level. This can be done using machines at the gym or small free weights at home.

Using the weight of your body works wonderfully (and also builds core muscle and improves balance). You can build up your thigh muscles by

holding a squatting position for 10-20 seconds. You can build calf muscles by doing toe raises. Use a wall or chair for balance if needed in the beginning. Repeat exercises several times; hold for longer periods as you get stronger and/or hold a half full milk jug in each hand to increase intensity.

For balance, there are several things to consider. Walking builds muscle, however, walking on level ground does not give us much balance training. If you are already active and steady on your feet, then walking on uneven ground (the beach, rocky paths, or hiking trails) maintains and improves balance.

If that is too challenging, there are simple balance exercises you can do at home. An internet search on "balance exercises for seniors" will give you plenty of starting points. Find 4 or 5 you like and build them into a 10-minute morning routine. Finally, tai chi is an outstanding way to improve balance. It evolved from martial arts and is a series of slow movements and postures. Learn tai chi by taking local classes or search for tai chi on YouTube to find beginner instructional videos.

*Tom Bozzo decided to go to medical school at age 30. After completing his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle, he relocated to the Southcoast where he has worked in primary care and addiction medicine since 2008.*

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## La fecha límite de cumplimiento para obtener la credencial REAL ID se extiende

El Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de EE.UU. (DHS, por sus siglas en inglés) ha extendido la fecha de pleno cumplimiento de la REAL ID del 3 de mayo de 2023 al 7 de mayo de 2025, según anunció en diciembre el Registro de Vehículos Motorizados (RMV, por sus siglas en inglés) de Massachusetts.

A partir del 7 de mayo de 2025, todos los pasajeros aéreos mayores de 18 años necesitarán una licencia de conducir o tarjeta de identificación que cumpla

con la norma REAL ID, u otra forma de identificación aceptable por la Administración de Seguridad en el Transporte (TSA, por sus siglas en inglés) para los viajes aéreos nacionales y para ingresar a ciertas instalaciones federales. Estas credenciales pueden incluir una licencia de conducir REAL ID emitida por el RMV o documento de identidad (ID), o un pasaporte estadounidense válido.

Los documentos requeridos para esta transacción incluyen dos pruebas de

residencia en Massachusetts, prueba de número de seguro social completo y prueba de presencia legal. Estos documentos requeridos deben ser originales o versiones certificadas. El RMV recomienda a los clientes que comprueben estos documentos con antelación, así como que soliciten reemplazos antes de que caduque la licencia/el documento de identidad (ID).

Los clientes pueden renovar en línea hasta un año antes de la fecha de cadu-

cidad de su licencia o documento de identidad (ID), y hasta dos años después de la fecha de caducidad. La tarifa para renovar una licencia estándar o REAL ID no comercial es de \$50, mientras que la tarifa para actualizar una tarjeta estándar o REAL ID es \$25.

Los residentes de Massachusetts pueden obtener información en línea sobre la REAL ID y sobre la elegibilidad para la renovación en línea en <https://www.mass.gov/ID>.

## Data-limite para as credenciais da REAL ID prolongadas até 2025

O U.S. Department of Homeland Security estendeu a data para aplicação total da REAL ID de 3 de maio, 2023 a 7 de maio, 2025, foi anunciado em Dezembro pelo Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Iniciando a 7 de maio, 2025 cada viajante aéreo de 18 anos de idade ou mais velhos necessitarão de uma carteira de motorista compatível ou cartão de identificação, ou outra

forma de identificação aceitável pela TSA, para viagens aéreas domésticas e para entrarem em certas facilidades federais. Essas credenciais podem incluir uma carteira de motorista de REAL ID emitida para RMV ou ID, ou um passaporte dos E.U válido.

Os documentos requeridos para esta transação incluem duas provas de residência em Massachusetts, comprovação do Número de

Segurança Social e prova de presença legal. Estes documentos requeridos devem ser o original ou versões certificadas. O RMV recomenda que os clientes verifiquem estes documentos cedo, assim como solicitar a sua substituição antes da licença/ID expirar.

Os clientes são elegíveis para renovar online até um ano de avanço da data de expiração da sua licença

ou ID, e até dois anos após a data de expiração. A custa para renovar uma carteira regular não-comercial ou REAL ID é de \$50, enquanto a custa para atualizar para uma regular ou cartão de REAL ID é de \$25.

Os residentes de Massachusetts podem ir online para informação sobre a REAL ID e elegibilidade de renovação online no <https://www.mass.gov/ID>.

## REAL ID credential deadline extended to 2025

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has extended the REAL ID full enforcement date from May 3, 2023 to May 7, 2025, the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles announced in December.

Beginning May 7, 2025, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID compliant driver's license or identification card, or another TSA-acceptable form of

identification, for domestic air travel and to enter certain federal facilities. These credentials can include an RMV-issued REAL ID driving license or ID, or a valid U.S. passport.

Documents required for this transaction include two proofs of Massachusetts residency, proof of a full Social Security Number, and proof of lawful presence. These required documents must be original

or certified versions. The RMV recommends customers to check these documents early, as well as to order replacements before license/ID expiration.

Customers are eligible to renew online up to one year in advance of the expiration date on their license or ID, and up to two years after the expiration date. The fee for renewing a non-commercial standard or REAL

ID license is \$50, while the fee for upgrading to a standard or REAL ID card is \$25.

Massachusetts residents may go online for information about the REAL ID and about online renewal eligibility at <https://www.mass.gov/ID>.

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- Have a family member or loved one who can be available as a study partner during the entire study
- Be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or have had a previous COVID-19 infection

Other criteria will apply. There is no cost to the patient to participate in the RethinkALZ trial or for any of the study-related procedures. No hospitalization will be required. You may be compensated for your time and travel for each clinical study appointment.

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The Senior Medicare Patrol Program in Massachusetts is a program of AgeSpan (formerly Elder Services) of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore, 280 Merrimack Street, Lawrence, MA 01843 800-892-0890, [www.MASMP.org](http://www.MASMP.org).

This project is supported by grant number 90MPPG0051 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

# Why sleep is good for you and strategies for making it better

By Nanci Winterhalter, MSPT

I admit it... I have a deep and long-lasting love affair with sleep. Why? Because sleep is critical to our survival.

Consider this incomplete list of the consequences of both good and bad sleep:

- During sleep the brain stores new information.
- During sleep the body tissues repair themselves (even our muscles), protein synthesis occurs and our energy is restored.
- Sleep positively enhances learning, memory, problem-solving, focus, concentration and creativity.
- It has been well established that even modestly reduced sleep (six to seven hours per night) is associated with an increased risk of coronary artery calcification which is a predictor of future heart attack and death due to heart disease. According to Harvard Medical School, lack of adequate sleep over time has been associated with a shortened life span.
- During sleep, our immune system releases proteins, some of which are “protective” cytokines which help us fight infection. Sleep deprivation can make us more likely to “catch” a virus when exposed and can affect how quickly or completely we recover.
- Sleep may protect us against insulin resistance and controls hunger hormones thereby helping us maintain a healthy weight.
- Research tells us that, during sleep, activity increases in brain areas which regulate emotion. In fact, sleep and mental health are intertwined!

There are different types of sleep disorders, many of which are treatable. Talk to your doctor about referral to a sleep specialist (doctors and clinics that specialize in the diagnosis, study and management of these problems) as needed.

Meanwhile, here are a few simple “lifestyle



strategies” which can enhance your sleep quality:

- Exercise daily, generally at least three hours before going to bed or even earlier in the day.
  - Develop a regular bedtime so that your circadian rhythm becomes steady. For most people, going to bed before 10 p.m. and rising with the sun may be your best shot at feeling refreshed. Set the body’s “internal clock” by awakening at the same time each day...even on weekends.
  - Avoid large meals before bed and eat healthy meals during the day to sleep better at night.
  - Balance your fluid intake so you are not drinking close to bedtime.
  - Avoid alcohol or caffeine after 5 p.m.
- Consider these sleep “rituals” for additional sleep support:
- Turn off all electronics and televisions and listen to relaxing music instead. When we stare

at a bright screen, melatonin (natural chemical required to induce sleep) production is delayed and we fall off our sleep schedule. Try to shut off technology at least 90 minutes or so before sleep.

- Take a nice warm shower before bed.
  - Lower your bedroom thermostat to around 60 degrees one hour before you crawl into bed. We sleep better in cool conditions, and you warm up under your covers in no time!
- Also, create a healthy sleep environment:
- Declutter your bedroom.
  - Reduce excess noise.
  - Invest in a comfortable mattress and bedding as you are able.
  - Utilize dim lighting and motion activated night lights, both are a good safety idea!
- Sweet Dreams!

Columnist Nanci Winterhalter, MSPT, is a certified yoga teacher and therapist.

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## Here's why Estate Planning is important

By Daniel M. Surprenant,  
Managing Partner, CELA

Estate planning is the process of determining who will receive your hard-earned assets. Estate planning is important because it also determines how your life savings, home and personal items will be spent or saved during your lifetime, and then passed along (or not) at your death. Good estate planning can be the difference between leaving your hard-earned assets to your children versus to others. That may include the state, the federal government, a nursing home, home care costs, probate costs and lawyers, or maybe your child's divorcing spouse.

Here are some of the more common areas in which good estate planning can make a real difference:

**Saving Estate Tax:** Did you know that your life insurance and IRA are part of your taxable estate? Including those assets and everything else you own, if your estate is over \$1,000,000 then you will owe Massachusetts estate tax. This tax starts at roughly \$33,000 and is often \$100,000 or more. Good estate planning can minimize or even eliminate both Massachusetts and federal estate tax.

**Saving from Probate Cost, Delay and Publicity:** If you're not careful, your assets may pass through the probate court system when you die. The probate process in Massachusetts typically takes at least one year (often longer) and costs several thousand dollars to complete. The costs and delay increase if anyone objects or the family is fighting. In most cases, avoiding the cost and delay of the probate court process is desirable and achievable.

**Protect from LTC Costs:** The cost of nursing home care in Massachusetts averages around \$12,000/month (or \$144,000/year). Home care costs can be less, or even more if 24/7 care is required. Planning for this issue varies from case to case, but often clients can protect assets from these high costs through strategies and/or products.

**Avoid (or minimize) Family Fighting:** Family harmony is important to clients. Good, clear guidance to the children, including earmarking certain items for certain

beneficiaries, can reduce or eliminate uncertainty and argument over who gets what.

**Save the Family Business:** Without proper planning, a family business can be jeopardized when the business is valuable but there is not enough liquidity to pay the estate tax at death. Also, children may have different ideas about whether they will have the benefit of a family business after you pass. Clarity in planning can help keep the business, and the family, running.

**Save from Divorce and Creditors:** With the high divorce rate in the United States, inheritances can be lost to your child's ex-spouse, who was never intended to have your hard-earned assets. Good planning can prevent your child's inheritance from being gobbled up in divorce.

**Protect Special Needs Children:** Your special needs child or grandchild may need assets more than your other beneficiaries. However, leaving assets directly to a person with special needs may lead to mismanagement of the funds or loss of important needs-based government benefits like SSI or Medicaid. A special needs trust can allow for a non-countable pool of funds to pay for things that government benefits do not.

**Provide Peace of Mind:** Lastly, estate planning can provide peace of mind. To say that differently, it can greatly relieve the stress and anxiety that is often associated with a death, divorce, the need for long-term care, or the sale of a home. Many times, clients have expressed great relief and gratitude that we have been able to guide them through complex situations. We are happy to practice in an area of law that provides this valuable service.

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## Trivia

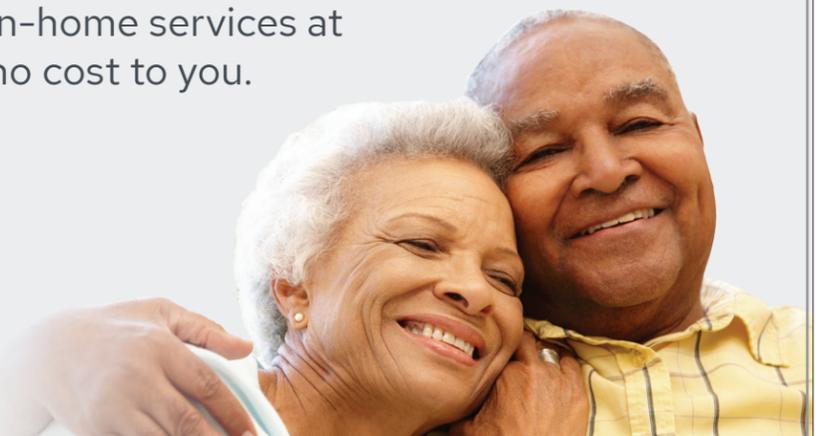
### FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT – KIM CAMARA

- 1.) What is the name of the gland that produces tears?  
A.) Adrenal B.) Lacrimal  
C.) Pituitary D.) Thyroid
- 2.) Chianti is a red wine produced in what Italian region?  
A.) Veneto B.) Lombardi C.) Tuscany D.) Puglia
- 3.) What Christmas song has appeared in the most movies?  
A.) White Christmas B.) Silent Night  
C.) Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer D.) Jingle Bells
- 4.) What time does the Grinch schedule dinner for himself?  
A.) 5:30 B.) 6:30  
C.) 7:15 D.) 8:20
- 5.) What is the longest running Broadway musical?  
A.) Phantom of the Opera B.) Lion King  
C.) Cats D.) The Music Man
- 6.) The Venus Flytrap is a symbol of what state?  
A.) California B.) Arizona  
C.) New Mexico D.) North Carolina
- 7.) The world's fair was held in what United States city in 1962?  
A.) Seattle B.) New York C.) Chicago D.) Los Angeles
- 8.) Which "O" word is the study of birds?  
A.) Ontology B.) Oology  
C.) Osteology D.) Ornithology
- 9.) How many humans have walked on the moon?  
A.) 2 B.) 6 C.) 9 D.) 12
- 10.) How long did Lincoln take to recite the Gettysburg address?  
A.) 22 minutes B.) 2 minutes  
C.) 2 hours D.) 2 hours and 22 minutes

[Answers listed on page 11]

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# Vigilance is key to stopping harm from identity theft

The possibility that someone could steal your personal information and use that to open bank accounts, apply for credit cards, or file tax returns can be pretty frightening, especially when it is done in ways you may not notice until damage has been done.

It's very hard to prosecute those who use the identities of others for financial gain, Bristol County DA Thomas M. Quinn III and Assistant District Attorney Michael Scott told seniors at the Dartmouth COA last month during a workshop on the subject. So the best ways to protect yourself is through preventive measures and learning how to recognize identity theft when it happens, they said.

Identity theft can happen when thieves go through trash cans or dumpsters looking for sensitive information they can use, or when information is stolen from a business or medical organization through what is called a data breach.

In 2021, there were more reports filed about identity theft than any other type of fraud complaint, according to the Federal Trade Commission. That means of a total of 5.7 million complaints filed that year, 25 percent, or 1.4 million, involved some type of identity theft.

It's a concerning number and an increase from the year before. The

biggest type of identity theft, the FTC said, was related to government documents or benefits fraud. In 2021, the FTC said it received 395,948 reports from people who said their information was misused to apply for a government document or benefit, such as unemployment insurance.

To prevent fraud, it's important to regularly check your accounts for potential errors that may be the work of thieves. Scott said his identity had been stolen many years ago and used to file tax returns in his name. He worked with the IRS to resolve the situation, he said.

Signs to pay attention to include mistakes on your credit card or bank statements or medical benefits from your health plan; noticing when your bills or account statements don't arrive on time; bills or collection notices for products or services you never received; calls about debts that don't belong to you; a written notice from the IRS that someone used your social security number; mail, email or calls about accounts or jobs in your minor child's name; or, you are turned down unexpectedly for a loan or job.

"It's hard to know how to defend yourself," said Scott. "But be vigilant, especially about your name, date of birth or social security number."



Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III speaks to seniors about fraud and identity theft at the Connor Center for Active Living in Dartmouth.

## How to Protect Your Information

- **Read your credit reports. Access your three free credit reports each year by ordering them all at once or one every four months. Go to [annualcreditreport.com](https://annualcreditreport.com) or call 1-877-322-8228.**
- **Regularly read your bank, credit card, and account statements. If you spot an error, call the account company.**
- **Shred all documents that contain personal, financial, and medical information, such as your social security number, and birthdate, before throwing them away.**
- **Don't respond to email, phone or text messages asking for personal information.**
- **Use complex passwords. Don't use the same password for more than one account.**

Source: FTC



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# Councils on Aging

## Acushnet COA

For more information, call the Acushnet Council on Aging at 508-998-0280. The center is located at 59 1/2 South Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743.

**Free manicures:** Jan. 12, 9:30 - 11 a.m. at the Acushnet COA with the 10th grade Old Colony Cosmetology students. Basic manicures and a hand and arm massage will be available by appointment at no cost. This will help the cosmetology students practice and perfect the student's manicuring skills while interacting with the older adults. Call 508-998-0280 to schedule an appointment.

**Tranquility Zone time change:** The Tranquility Zone will meet on Monday, Jan. 30 at 12:15 p.m. There will be no meeting in February. For the remainder of 2023, the group will meet on the first Monday of the month at 12:15 p.m..

**Left, Right, Center:** This dice game is back. Wednesday, Jan. 18 and Wednesday, Feb. 15, 12:30 p.m. at the Acushnet COA. Pre-registration required. Call 508-998-0280. New players always welcome!

**Resistance Bands:** Thursdays, 10:15 a.m., Free. Resistance bands use oppositional force to train your muscles instead of weight, and you can alter how intense of a workout you get. Bring your bands or use ours.

**Chair Yoga:** Fridays, 1 p.m., \$3/class. A gentle practice in which postures are performed while seated and/or with the aid of a chair.

**Cribbage League:** Mondays, 11 a.m. 10-week league. Drop-in games Fridays, noon.

**Needle Arts:** Every Thursday, 1 p.m. grab your own project and join this social group.

**Tai-Yo-Ba:** Mondays, 10:30 a.m. Free. Gentle movements inspired from elements of tai chi, yoga and physical therapy. Can be done seated or standing up.

**Learn to Crochet:** Thursdays at 1 p.m. with Cindy Francis. Bring your own supplies or use ours. Free.

## Dartmouth COA

For more information, call the Dartmouth Council on Aging at 508-999-4717. The center is located at 628 Dartmouth St., South Dartmouth, MA 02748. Read the current newsletter or previous newsletters online at: [www.town.dartmouth.ma.us/council-aging/pages/coa-newsletters](http://www.town.dartmouth.ma.us/council-aging/pages/coa-newsletters).

**Technology Classes:** All about the iPhone: Friday, Jan. 13, 9-11 a.m. and All about the Android phone: Friday, Jan. 20, 9-11 a.m. Preregistration is required. Cost is \$5 per session.

**Systems of Balance with Baystate Physical Therapy:** Wednesday, Jan. 19 at 1 p.m. Learn important info about balance Disorders, presentations and symptoms, role of rehab and what do to at home to help. Pre registration required.

**Estate Planning for Everyone with Atty Brandon Walecka:** 1 p.m., Jan. 23. Estate planning documents, avoiding probate, long term care planning, tax planning and more. Pre-registration required.

**Popcorn and Movie:** 1 p.m. Jan. 25. "Where the Crawdads Sing" Preregistration required. Free.

**New Open Studio Art Class:** Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. - noon, beginning Jan. 17. Work on projects with other artists and get instruction on an as-need basis. Cost is \$10. Walk-ins welcome.

**NEW Parkinson's Support Group:** Second Tuesday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. Begins Jan. 12. Walk-ins welcome.

**New Gentle Yoga with Vicki Smith:** Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$5.

**Line Dancing with Christina:** No experience necessary. Instruction/Variety of genres of music. Fridays at 1 p.m. Cost is \$3. Walk-ins welcome.

**Music with Friends:** Do you love music, play an instrument, love to sing? Join this informal group on Tuesdays at 1:00 to share songs and sounds. Free. Walk ins welcome.

**Meditation with Lynda:** Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m. Walk-ins welcome. Free.

**Visiting Dental Hygienists Clinic:** Call 508-827-6725 for more information and to schedule an appointment.

**Blood Pressure Clinic:** The last Tuesday of the month from 10-11 a.m. Walk-ins welcome.

**Hearing Evaluations & Hearing Aid Checks:** Hearing Clinic with At Home Healthcare. Third Thursday of the month from 10 a.m. - noon. Call the Center to schedule an appointment.

**Coffee Hour:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:15-10:15 a.m.

**Free Pain Consultations:** Baystate Physical Therapy. By appt., 3rd Thursday at 1 p.m.

**Pound by Pound:** Weight loss support. Wednesdays, 10:15-11. Walk-ins welcome.

**YWCA Widow Person Program:** At the Center -1st and 3rd Thursday. Two sessions from 8:30-10 a.m. and 10:30-noon. Walk-ins are welcome.

**Elder Law consultations:** With Atty. Brandon Walecka. Second Thursday of the month from 10-11 by appointment.

**Free Legal consultation:** With Justice Bridge through UMass Law the last Wednesday of the month from 2-3 p.m. by appointment.

**Osteo Exercise:** Mondays 10:15 a.m., Fridays 10 a.m. Free weights provided. Much of class is seated. Walk-ins welcome. Free.

**Zumba Gold:** Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. \$7.

**Cam's Body Awareness & Adaptability:** Wednesdays 9:30-10:15 a.m., Fridays 11:15 a.m. - noon. Eliminate the risk of falls. Learn proper body mechanics and movements through exercise. \$2. Walk-ins welcome.

## Fairhaven COA

For more information, call the Fairhaven Council on Aging at 508-979-4029, located at 229 Huttleston Ave., Fairhaven, MA 02719. Visit the Fairhaven COA website at: [fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging](http://fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging). Open to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, beginning in September.

**January Trips:** Twin River Casino, Feb. 1; Warwick Mall, Feb. 8; South Shore Plaza, Feb. 15; and Hyannis Mall, Christmas Tree Shops, Trader Joe's & Whole Foods, Feb. 22; \$6. Reservations required. Van leaves the center at 9 a.m.

**Alzheimer's Association:** 1-2 p.m. Jan. 5. First Thursday of each month. Email Donna Leary at [MimiDonna29@gmail.com](mailto:MimiDonna29@gmail.com) to register.

**South Coastal Counties Legal Services:** 1 p.m. Jan. 9. Please come join to learn how South Coastal Counties Legal Services can help you.

**AARP Tax Aide Program:** Appointments are on Tuesdays beginning in February, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Call the COA for an appointment.

**Technology Classes:** Jan. 9 and 11. Advanced skills Smartphone and Phone photos. Must have a SanDisk iXpand Flash Drive that connects to your personal smartphone. Call or stop in for sign-up information.

**All About Reverse Mortgages:** 10:30 a.m., Jan. 23. A free seminar for homeowners, 62 years or older with East Coast Capital. Call if you plan to stay for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

**Moving with Moxie:** Balance and Circuit Training Group. Starting Jan. 11 at 1 p.m. Second and last Wednesday of the month in the Rec Center. Cost is \$5. Class size is limited to 10. Call 508-979-4029 to sign up.

**Memory Café:** Jan. 26, noon to 2 p.m. Reservations required.

**Walking Trip to Colt State Park:** Departs COA at 9 a.m. sharp, Jan. 19. Join Patsy as your guide. Dress for cold weather and bring a bag lunch. Cost is \$10. Spaces are limited; call to sign up.

**Reiki/Alphasonic:** 9-noon, Jan. 16, Reiki is a subtle yet powerful form of energy medicine that is an effective modality for a wide range of issues in the body, mind and spirit. Alphasonic can be used to help improve health and performance, aiding the body to heal and recover faster. \$20 per session. Sign-ups required. Call the COA.

**Chair Yoga:** Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:15 a.m. -12:15 p.m. Cost is \$3.

**Wellness Clinic:** 11:15-1:15 every Wednesday. Call the Board of Health for information at 508-979-4023, ext. 125.

**Mobile Dental Hygienist:** Call Teresa or Andrea at 508-827-6725 or email them a [smile@mobiledentalhygiene.com](mailto:smile@mobiledentalhygiene.com).

## Marion COA

Call the Center at 508-748-3570. The center is located at the Benjamin D. Cushing Community Center, 465 Mill St., Marion, MA 02738. Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/marioncoa](https://www.facebook.com/marioncoa). COA hours of operation are: Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Marion Board of Health: 508-748-3530. **Art For Your Mind Mary Cassat, A New Woman:** Jan. 9 at 1 p.m. Experience the creativity of one of America's most prominent 19th century artists. Learn how Cassat's accomplishments encouraged an openmindedness about what art could be and what a woman could do. Class is an engaging, educational, art observation experience designed to broaden the minds of participants. In just one hour you'll discover ways to get more out of looking at art.

*Continued on Page 11*



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\*Income guidelines may apply. Please inquire in advance for reasonable accommodations. Info contained herein subject to change w/o notice.

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**REAL ID Workshop:** By The Registry of Motor Vehicles, Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. A representative will cover these topics: What is the difference between “Standard ID” and “Real ID” driver’s licenses and ID cards; how to renew a Massachusetts Driver’s License or Massachusetts Identification Card; and what are the new federal and state requirements for renewing a Driver’s License or ID card. Bring your documents with you for a free review, to make sure they are all in order.

**Singo Bingo:** Jan. 20, 1 p.m. Bingo with a beat. Replace the numbers with your favorite songs. Test your musical knowledge, win some prizes and have some fun!

**The Importance of Bees:** Jan. 23, 1 p.m. Join Mark Wintringham, passionate nature enthusiast, to learn more about bees, pollinator plants, garden tips and more. Spring will be here before we know it, now is the time to gather information. Sample some local honey, too.

**Chocolate Tasting:** Jan. 27, 1 p.m. Did you know that chocolate releases endorphins that make you happy? Come and sample an array of gourmet chocolate delights from around the globe to stimulate your pallet. Learn about the ingredients, processing and where cocoa pods are grown.

**Lunchtime Cooking Demonstration:** Jan. 10, noon. Join Linda Medeiros and learn how to prepare a quick and nutritious lunch and learn tips to save money and time while preparing delicious meals. Call the COA for a reservation. Suggested \$5 donation.

**LGBTQ+ Supper Club:** The LGBTQ+ Senior Supper Club will meet Wednesday, Jan. 11 from 5-7 p.m. at the Marion COA. Join us for food, drink & great conversation! Please call 508-748-3570 so we know to expect you.

### Mattapoissett COA

For more information, call the Mattapoissett Council on Aging at 508-758-4110 or go to [mattapoissett.net/council-aging](http://mattapoissett.net/council-aging). The center is located at 17 Barstow St., Mattapoissett, MA 02739.

**Downsizing 360:** Jan. 19, 9:30 a.m. brunch (\$3) and 10 a.m. talk (free). How to declutter your stuff now, so your kids don’t have to later. Julie Brooks, a certified professional organizer and owner of Peaceful Place Home Organizers, has helped more than 600 clients go from overwhelm to peace. Downsizing, whether it’s for a move or not, is an essential and joyful part of later life. Julie will share her successful processes and strategies during this presentation. Space is limited. Call the COA to register.

**Walking Group:** Meets every Wednesday at 9 a.m. May move indoors (mall walks) for inclement weather. Call the COA for details.

**AARP Foundation Tax-Aide:** Provides in-person tax assistance, free of charge, to those 60+ who are low to moderate income. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year to make sure they know about and understand the latest changes and additions to the tax code. Mattapoissett COA tax services will begin the first week of February and continue until April 15. Day of the week is not yet confirmed. Call to register and the COA will contact you when the day/time is established. Spots fill up fast each year, so don’t delay!

**Painting instruction:** Step by step painting instruction every Friday at 10 a.m. \$10 per canvas. Drop-ins welcome.

**Pottery Clay Sculpting:** On hiatus for January and February. Restarts March 9.

**Art for your Mind:** American Art Explored at 12:30 p.m. Jan. 4 and African American Artists We Should Know, at 12:30 p.m. Feb. 1. Call 508-758-4110 for details.

**Free manicures:** Jan. 5 by appointment. Time slots are 10, 10:30 and 11 a.m. Offered through the Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School. Call the COA to sign up.

**Movie & Pizza:** 12:15 p.m. Jan. 25. *Ticket to Paradise*. A divorced couple teams up and travels to Bali to stop their daughter from making the same mis-take they think they made 25 years ago. Pizza \$1/slice. Prepay and registration required.

**Boston Symphony Orchestra:** Experience a BSO concert in the making. Buy tickets online through the BSO or at the door. Ride with us and save on gas and parking. Rehearsal dates are: Jan. 19, Feb. 16 and April 13, 2023. Cost: \$10 van ride for each date. Sign up for one or more. Leave Park & Ride at 6:30 a.m., stop for breakfast then walk to Symphony Hall. Contact the COA to reserve your seat on the van.

**Chair Yoga:** Thursdays at 9 a.m.

### New Bedford COA

For updates and assistance, contact the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250. All are welcome.

**Adult Social Day:** Operates at two locations: Social Day South (at the Rosemary S. Tierney Community Center) and Social Day North (at the former Brooklawn site). Contact the New Bedford COA for more information at 508-991-6250.

**Oil Painting:** 9:30-11:30 a.m. Thursdays.

**Coffee Social/Cards:** 10 -11:30 a.m. Wednesday and Friday.

**Monthly Blood Pressure Screening:** From GNBCHC on the second Monday of each month. 11 a.m. - noon.

**Tai Chi:** Mondays, 2-3 p.m. 8-week program. Participants can join any time.

**Bingo:** Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Noon-1:30 p.m.

**Zumba Gold:** Mondays 10-11 a.m.

**Creative Writing:** Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 p.m.

**Strength and Conditioning:** 2-3 p.m. Fridays.

**Pool:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-2:30 p.m.

**Knitting:** Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

### Rochester COA

For more information, call 508-763-8723. The Rochester Council on Aging is located at 67 Dexter Lane, Rochester, MA 02770. Visit the website at [townofrochester.mass.com/council-aging](http://townofrochester.mass.com/council-aging). Facebook: [facebook.com/Rochester, Mass.](https://www.facebook.com/Rochester,Mass)

**The Allure of Watercolor:** Jan. 4, 10-11 a.m. A presentation by Art for Your Mind with Jill Sanford.

**January Trips:** Jan. 18: Foxwoods. Depart at 6:45 a.m. and return at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 25: Harvard Museum of Natural History. Lunch at Cambridgeside Galleria. Depart at 8:30 a.m. and return at 3:30 p.m. Sign up with Carol at the front desk or call 508-763-8723.

**Chicken Dinner for Four:** Feb. 5, a Sunday, pick-up a chicken dinner for four for only \$25 between noon and 2 p.m. Sign up with Carol at the front desk or call 508-763-8723.

**AARP Tax Preparation:** This free tax service is offered to all low/moderate income persons with special attention given to those age 60 and over. Taxpayers need persons with special attention given to those 60 and over. Taxpayers need not be retired or a member of AARP. Will be held every Wednesday from Feb. 8 through April 12. Please contact Ann Soares at the COA at 508-763-8723, Ext. 201 or e-mail her at [ASoares@townofrochester.com](mailto:ASoares@townofrochester.com) to schedule an appointment. Appointments can be made after Jan. 15.

**Mobile Hygiene Dental Services:** March 3 at the COA. Call 508-867-6725 to make an appointment.

**Essential Oils:** Join Erica Benoit on Feb. 3 at 1 p.m. and see what essential oils can do for you. Class is free but items that you make may cost \$5-\$10 to purchase. \$10 to purchase. \$10 to purchase. No class in January.

### Dementia Directory

[www.alzconnected.org](http://www.alzconnected.org)

#### In-Person Groups

**Alzheimer’s Support Group:** Every other Tuesday, 2:45 to 4 p.m. Held at the Dartmouth COA. Group is for caregivers and their care partners. Please contact Carolyn Greany at 508-304-4587.

**Caregivers Support Group:** First Thursday of the month from 1 to 2 p.m. Held at Fairhaven COA at 508-979-4029.

**Caregiver Group:** First and Third Tuesdays 10 a.m. at the Rochester COA. Come join us and find out more. Register with Carol at 508-763-8723.

**Memory Loss Support Group:** Every other Thursday from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Held at the Marion Council on Aging. To register, call the Marion COA at 508-748-3570 or call Community Nurse at 508-992-6278 ext. 2805.

**Family Caregiver Support Group:** Every first Thursday of the month from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Meets at the Dartmouth Council on Aging. Open to any caregiver, regardless of illness of person cared for. Call Stephanie Gibson at Coastline at 774-510-5209.

#### Virtual Support Groups

**Family Caregiver Support Group:** Virtual Meetings are held every third Thursday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Call Stephanie Gibson at Coastline at 774-510-5209.

**Additional Options:** Call the Alzheimer’s Association at 800-272-3900 or visit [www.alzconnected.org](http://www.alzconnected.org).

**LGBTQIA+ Bereavement Support Group:** An 8-week free online support group for LGBTQIA+ meets via Zoom from Nov. 1 to January 3 on Tuesdays from 6-7:30 p.m. Email Lisa Krinsky at [lkrinsky@fenwayhealth.org](mailto:lkrinsky@fenwayhealth.org) if interested.

### January 2023 Trivia Quiz Answers

1. B | 2. C | 3. D | 4. B | 5. A  
6. D | 7. A | 8. D | 9. D | 10. B

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# Community

## Dartmouth seniors share strategies for checking rising food prices

If grocery store prices have you reeling, you are not alone.

When a group of older adults were asked recently how they save money on groceries, one participant summed up many feelings in the room, blurting out, “Don’t go grocery shopping.”

Her reference is to the unavoidable rising food prices that are cutting into many monthly budgets, especially older adults who live on a fixed income.

These are the kind of increases that have not been seen for about 40 years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In a recent report, the BLS said prices for food purchased in grocery stores increased 13.5 percent over the 12-month period from August 2021 to August 2022 — the largest 12-month jump since 1979. Even take-out or restaurant bought food costs didn’t increase that much — rising 8 percent over the same time period, it’s biggest increase since 1981.

While there are many reasons

behind the increases, the lively group of seniors at the Dartmouth COA instead focused on ways to lower their food bills. They learned new tips from Coastline registered dietitian Stephanie Boulay and shared some of their own during the presentation.

Boulay shared a list of suggestions for saving money and online resources like the FoodKeeper app from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a YouTube channel by Matt Granite, the Deal Guy. The YouTube channel offers a broad range of consumer tips including grocery shopping. The FoodKeeper app, available for smart phones, tells people how long food stays fresh, helping them use more of it before it goes bad.

One of the suggestions, to buy in bulk, can be both a money-saver or a waste, Boulay said, depending on how diligent you are in repackaging and freezing the extra supply.

In her remarks, Boulay stressed the need to compare unit prices on food brands and amounts.

The largest option is not always the cheapest, she said, noting that comparing prices by the unit cost, for example, .95 cents per pound, can help you make the best choice.

The conversation got a little heated when the group discussed coupon use, as at least one favorite grocery store now only accepts digital coupons.

“Not everyone has an iPhone, so they don’t get the deal,” said one participant. “It’s not right. Everyone should get the coupons.”

Wednesday was the agreed-upon best day to grocery shop, according to the group. New sales circulars usually come out that day and reduced pricing on earlier deals can be found as stores try to create more shelf space.

Boulay also recommended going straight to the items you need and not wandering around the store.

“Studies have actually shown that the longer you stay in the store, the more you buy,” she said.

### Smart shopping tips

- Don’t shop on an empty stomach.
- Plan a few meals for the week before shopping.
- Bring a grocery list and stick to it.
- Shop the sales and clip coupons.
- Select fresh produce in season.
- Buy in bulk if you have storage space.
- Go for frozen vegetables if it makes sense for your household.
- Compare unit prices.
- Stock your pantry.

### Legislative priorities continued...

cover expenses such as transportation and home health care aides.”

#### Better Retirement Savings

One way to support older adults in staying financially secure is to expand retirement planning and saving.

“Too many people are hitting retirement without adequate resources,” said Festa. “We need to rethink only living on social security.”

To change this, AARP is putting its support behind legislation that would expand the state’s Defined Contribution CORE Plan, a tax-deferred and post-tax 401(k) savings plan now open to small nonprofits that choose to participate.

Currently, nonprofits must have fewer than 20 employees to be eligible for the CORE plan.

AARP is pushing to extend that limit and make the plan available to larger nonprofits, Festa said, in hopes of supporting better retirement planning for a larger group of people.

#### Accessory Dwelling Units

The housing shortage is having an impact on many communities, including here in the SouthCoast. One potential solution that has been resisted by many cities and towns to date is the creation of accessory dwelling units, sometimes called in-law apartments.

For older adults, these units can house younger family members who might provide assistance

around the house, doing lawn care for example, in exchange for housing. They could also serve as living spaces for caregivers, or be an accessory dwelling that an older adult lives in at an adult child’s home.

In his comments, Festa said that AARP has supported recent changes to voting requirements in local municipalities — reducing 2/3 majority vote requirements to simple majority — in the 2020 Housing Choice legislation.

That change is expected to help support advocacy efforts and decisions around accessory dwellings, he said.

“Beyond that, the fight is in communities and local-based advocacy,” said Festa, adding that AARP will “look to create a volunteer corps of folks who can support that work.”

#### Comprehensive Nursing Home Reform

The pandemic and devastation wrought by the COVID-19 virus taught us many things, including spotlighting much-needed changes at Massachusetts nursing homes to keep older adults safe and ensure a positive quality of life experience.

While reform hasn’t been enacted yet, there is hope moving forward in a few key areas, according to Festa, who said, “We want very much not to learn those lessons again and not to lose our memory of the lessons learned from COVID.”

The proposed bill — put forth

## The Way Things Were



**Celebrating the New Year, 1987:** At the front of the New Year’s Eve parade in New Bedford are the Hills Mills Comedy Clown band having a grand time as part of First Night activities.

The band and city celebrated the arrival of the new year in style.

“The Way Things Were” is a collaboration between Senior Scope and Spinner Publications. To share your photos and memories, email Senior Scope editor, Beth Perdue, at [bperdue@coastlinenb.org](mailto:bperdue@coastlinenb.org) or mail to her at Senior Scope, 863 Belleville Ave., New Bedford, MA 02745.

by Sen. Patricia D. Jehlen, D-Somerville, and Rep. Thomas M. Stanley, D-Waltham — is one AARP plans to continue to support.

“The main points are to be sure that nursing homes are adequately staffed, prepared for future viruses, and maintain quality of life,” Festa said.

AARP worked with Jehlen, who with Stanley co-chairs the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs, and Rep. Ruth Balsler, D-Newton, to develop the strategies included in

the proposed legislation.

In it they addressed the need for adequate staffing of nursing homes, mandated planning for future viruses, and ensuring quality of life issues such as limits to the number of people in nursing home rooms.

Specifically, proposed legislation stated that staffing levels must include “a minimum number of hours of care per resident per day of 4.1 hours, of which at least 0.75 hours must be care provided per resident by a registered nurse.”