

Senior Scope

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

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Memory Cafés ease burden of living with dementia

Caregivers and people living with dementia find camaraderie, friendship and joy in these spaces.

Memory cafés weren't something Alice Shire knew much about in the earliest days of her husband Tom's dementia diagnosis. The Marion resident knew one existed in town, somewhere in the waterfront area, and that it was connected to the Council on Aging, but not much more.

But when Tom's health began to decline more seriously, Shire knew they needed support.

"I started asking questions and it hit me that he needs — we need — a group that understands," she recalled. "So, we started coming."

What she found was a place where Tom could be himself without judgment and she could enjoy time with people who understood her experiences.

Shire and her husband are among many regular Waterfront Memory



Photo by Yakobchuk Olena/Adobe Creative Suite

Memory Cafés are stigma-free spaces where people with cognitive challenges and their care partners can find friendship and camaraderie.

Café participants which began at the Marion Music Hall in 2016 and is now held every Wednesday at the COA's location in the Benjamin D. Cushing Community Center on Mill Street.

Everyone who comes is given the gift of acceptance, said Karen Gregory, Council on Aging director.

No one is asked for a diagnosis or

questioned why they are there. And they're free to participate in the day's activity or not, fall asleep at the table, or even in one cupcake-decorating case, eat the activity.

"There's no stigma here," said Gregory. "That's the whole point. We

Continued on page 12



Dartmouth Police form a Color Guard (above) and (right above) Ed Pimental is recognized for his decades of service to the town.



Dartmouth thanks town veterans for their service

In one of the largest veterans' events in the South Coast, close to 200 people came together in Dartmouth in November, to thank, or be thanked, for their service.

The Nov. 1 event brought together veterans and their spouses, town officials and elected officials in recognition of Veterans

Day on Nov. 11.

The majority of attendees were veterans, said Maria Connor, president of the Friends of the Elderly, who with Rep. Chris Markey (D-Dartmouth) sponsors the annual event.

In preparing for the event, Connor was surprised to see how

many veterans are living in town.

"I didn't realize that we had so many vets in Dartmouth," she said. "I had an updated list (of veterans) and there's a lot of young folks in Dartmouth and to me those are the ones that we should be doing

Continued on page 9

Easy ways to access Social Security online

By Delia De Mello

Social Security Administration

We hope your holidays are filled with joy and warmth. During this and every season, we want you to know that we are here to serve you.

Did you know that our online services are available to help you do business with us in an easy, convenient, and secure way?

You can create a personal my Social Security account online to:

- Apply for retirement, spouse, or disability benefits.
- Request a replacement Social Security card.
- Check your application or appeal status.
- Request a name change (in some cases you may have to visit your local office).

If you receive benefits, you can use your personal my Social Security account to:

- Change your address. (Social Security benefits only)
- Change your direct deposit infor-



Delia DeMello

“Have a safe, happy holiday season and know that we are here for you.”

—**Delia De Mello,**
Social Security Administration

mation. (Social Security benefits only)

- Instantly get proof of benefits.
- Print your SSA-1099.

If you do not receive Social Security benefits, you can use a personal my Social Security account to:

- Get personalized retirement, spouse, or disability benefit estimates.
- Get your Social Security Statement.
- Get instant proof that you do not receive benefits.

You can use these services on the go or from the comfort of your home.

Please visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount to view the services available to you.

If you cannot use our online services, you may be able to use our automated telephone services by calling 1-800-772-1213. Automated services are always available.

Have a safe, happy holiday season and know that we are here for you.

From the Editor

Dementia and joy.

The words don't seem to go together well, but this month's article on Memory Cafés made me a believer that it can and does happen.

I had the chance to hear from a lot of people about how these social cafés help people living with a form of dementia - most notably Alzheimer's Disease - and their care partners.

Everyone was so generous, I'd like to thank them here.

In particular, I wish to thank Christine Voss for her advocacy in getting this story started and to everyone, including Christine, at the Waterfront Memory Café who graciously shared their knowledge and experiences with me. I also want to thank those I observed or met, but didn't have the time to connect with. I hope I represent you all well.

It was an honor to meet and learn from Beth Soltzberg who is a true advocate for those living with dementia or affected by it. I highly recommend watching her TED Talk on Memory Cafés: Making Space for

Dementia and Joy here - www.ted.com/talks/beth_soltzberg_memory_cafes_making_space_for_dementia_and_joy - and following the effort she and others are working on to increase the number of memory cafés in the U.S. to 9,000. See <https://emc2project.org>.

We're lucky to have a good selection of memory cafés in the South Coast but there are vast areas of this country without any. As the number of people living with dementia continues to grow, it is vital that we increase access to shared safe spaces.

Memory cafés clearly add a beneficial social element to what is a difficult disease. I'm impressed with everyone who organizes or runs them, participates, or supports them. With all that in mind, though, I believe the Waterfront Memory Café has something special about it. See for yourself with our page one article.

In it, Alice Shire expressed it so well when she explained what stood out for her and her husband when they began participating in Marion's Waterfront Memory Café.

“The best thing is the people,” she said.

Connect with Beth at bperdue@coastlinenb.org or call her at 774-438-2729.



Beth Perdue



Coastline
508-999-6400

Mass Options 844-422-6277
massoptions.org 844-422-MASS



SHINE Counselors
in the Greater New Bedford Area

Acushnet Council on Aging 59 1/2 S. Main St. Acushnet	508-998-0280	Jennifer Ledo
Dartmouth Council on Aging 628 Dartmouth St., Dartmouth	508-999-4717	Virginia Walega Matthew Dansereau
Fairhaven Council on Aging 229 Huttleston Ave, Fairhaven	508-979-4029	Dianne Perkins Carolyn Dantoni Jean Silver
GNB Community Health Center 874 Purchase Street, New Bedford	508-992-6553 x147	Derek Mendes
Immigrants' Assistance Center 58 Crapo St., New Bedford	508-996-8113	Lucy Oliveira Delia Moreira
Marion Council on Aging 465 Mill Street, Marion	508-748-3570	Connie Heacox
Mattapoisett Council on Aging 17 Barstow Street, Mattapoisett	508-758-4110	Connie Heacox
New Bedford Council on Aging 181 Hillman St., Monday-Friday (for New Bedford residents only)	508-991-6250 508-991-6250	Nora Rose Patricia Foster
PACE, Inc. 166 William St., New Bedford	508-999-9920	Freda St. Marie-Johnson
Rochester Council on Aging 67 Dexter Lane, Rochester	508-763-8723	Jan Cote
Southcoast Health 200 Mill Road, Suite 109, Fairhaven	508-965-1047	Denise Dupuis

Donations for December 2024

Our donors help *Senior Scope* carry out its mission, and we cannot thank you enough for your support. Voluntary donations can be mailed to Coastline, 863 Belleville Ave., New Bedford, MA 02745. Checks can be paid to the order of: *Coastline*. We cannot process checks made out to “*Senior Scope*.” You can also call Coastline's Payment Department at 508-742-9114 to donate with a credit card or use the QR code below to donate online.

In Memoriam

In memory of Ed Camara. Thank you Kim Camara for continuing your brother's Trivia.

\$30

— Anonymous

In memory of husband, Tony, and deceased loved ones.

\$20

— Ethel Souza

Holiday Wishes

Happy Holidays to all.

\$20

— Anonymous

Year-to-Date: \$320

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PayPal here:**



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In memory of For prayers answered In thanks

100-year-old Dartmouth resident votes for the first time

This year has been an unforgettable one for Gracinda Oliveira.

In April, the Portuguese immigrant and Dartmouth resident celebrated her 100th birthday. She followed that up in September by becoming a U.S. citizen.

And, on Nov. 1, Oliveira cast her first vote in an election — ever.

For the Portugal native who grew up under the country's four decades of dictatorship, voting was worth the wait.

Oliveira, who lives in the Sol-e-Mar residential community, lived in Portugal for the first 50 years of her life, most of it under a dictatorship, according to Helena DaSilva-Huges, president of the Immigrants Assistance Center in New Bedford.

She was still a child — not yet 10 years old — when Portugal's four decades of dictatorship, Estado Novo (New State) began.

She was determined to vote and contribute to the U.S. election process.

At the polls for early voting, Oliveira said she understands how important voting is.

"It's for the country," she said in Portuguese.

DaSilva Hughes brought Oliveira to the polls early to help create a positive, less chaotic experience for her. She was also



present to help her understand the ballot, but, she said, the 100-year-old was way ahead of her.

"She had already done her homework, so she gets it. She watches the news all the time," she said.

"She says that she always wanted to vote before she died," added DaSilva-Huges, translating Oliveira's words from the Portuguese. "And she feels like she doesn't have much time."

Oliveira exited the polls wearing her 'I Voted' sticker and a big smile.

"I feel like Queen Elizabeth," she told DaSilva-Huges, leaving



Gracinda Oliveira heads toward the polls at the Dartmouth Town Hall (above). (Top left) She sports her 'I voted' sticker proudly. (Top right) Gracinda and Helena DaSilva-Huges chat on camera with a New Bedford Light reporter.

the polling site after photographs and congratulations.



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Updates

Fishing Heritage seeks women in fishing industry to interview

The New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center is looking for women over the age of 65 with ties to the fishing industry to share their stories. Do you come from a fishing family? Did you ever work in the fishing industry (in a settlement house, seafood processing plant or other business)? If so, consider sharing your story with them for Herstory, an intergenerational oral history project pairing students in high school and college with older women who have ties to New Bedford's fishing community. Once complete, these oral histories will be shared through a digital exhibit on the center's website. The digital exhibit, co-curated by the students, features excerpts from interviews and family photographs shared by the women who are interviewed. To learn more, contact Laura Campbell at 508-654-1666 or herstory@fishingheritagecenter.org. To view the Herstory digital exhibit, go to: <https://exhibits.fishingheritagecenter.org/exhibits/herstory/>

Holiday Stroll is Dec. 6

The 45th annual Holiday Stroll in Padanaram will take place from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6 in the village. This holiday tradition is sponsored by the Padanaram Business Association. Stop by for holiday festivities as well as to shop local, meet Santa, and enjoy live entertainment, carolers, and food trucks. There will also be face painting, giveaways for kids and the 4th annual Buoy Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m.

Know how to report elder abuse

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs' Adult Protective Services program investigates cases of abuse where the individual is age 60 or older, resides in Massachusetts, and lives in the community, as opposed to a long-term care setting. Anyone who has a concern about possible abuse can file a report with the state either through an online portal or by calling 800-922-2275. EOEAs asks people to call first if it is an emergency, if they do not know the name and address of the person they are calling about, or if they wish to remain anonymous -- the online system requires that people submit their name. EOEAs requests people have the victim's name, address, date(s), and other relevant information ready so they can explain the situation. This helps Adult Protective Services acquire enough information to follow up on the situation. To file a report online, go to www.mass.gov/info-details/report-abuse-of-adults-aged-60 and click the online reporting link.

Fuel assistance is available for Tri-town residents

Coastline Elderly Services, Inc. is providing assistance to people age 60 or older in the communities of Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester who need help with paying the heat or electric bills. The funds, up to \$300 per household in fuel assistance, will pay for gas, electric, propane, wood, or other heating needs, to help reduce the financial burden for many elders who have difficulty with these purchases. Funding for this project was made possible by the George E. Curtis Charitable Trust. Income eligibility limits are based on pre-taxed monthly income and are set at \$2,510 for a household of one person; \$3,407 for a household of two people; \$4,303 for a three-person household; and \$5,200 for a four-person household. Please contact the Council on Aging in each town to complete a simple application to request fuel assistance. For the Council on Aging in Marion, please call 508-748-3570; in Mattapoisett, 508-758-4110, and in Rochester, 508-763-8723.

Support for too much clutter

Do you find it difficult to stop acquiring, sort or discard your items? Have you worried that you struggle with Hoarding Disorder, or someone has called you a hoarder? Come learn about hoarding and related mental health disorders and issues in a safe environment including topics like anxiety, depression, trauma, eating disorders & obsessive-compulsive disorder. The Buried in Treasures Support Group will meet from 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. on Saturdays Dec. 7 for Chair Yoga; Dec. 21 for What is OCD; Jan. 4, Zen Tangling; Jan. 18, Eating Disorders; Feb. 1, Scrapbook Cards; and, Feb. 15, What is Grief?, all at the Fairhaven Senior Center, 229 Huttleston Ave. All are welcome to attend. For information or to pre-register, contact Brittany Botelho, MHA, LSW, CDP at 508-961-3136 or bdejesus88@yahoo.com. You are welcome to also just drop in.

Military Museum lecture upcoming

The Winter History Lecture Series at the Fort Taber Military Museum presents a lecture by Joe Yukna, president of the Cape Cod Military Museum at 2 p.m. on Jan. 12. Yukna will discuss the history of the famed "Rainbow Division" in World War II, particularly their fight at the Battle of the Bulge, during the Ardennes Offensive. He will also have with him, the famous canine, Sgt. Stubby.

Holiday events at RJD House

The Rotch-Jones-Duff House is holding two special holiday events this December. First, at 11 a.m. on Dec. 7, there will be a half-hour guided tour of the festively decorated whaling mansion with special attention to the holiday customs of the original residents. Visitors can purchase wreaths, greens and seasonal decorations at the Garden Club of Buzzards Bay Holiday Greens Market, held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Museum's Coach House. The tour is included in museum admission or with proof of purchase from the Holiday Greens Market. Next, Christmas on County will be from 4-6 p.m., Dec. 12. As part of AHA! Night, no admission fee is required. Visitors are invited to enjoy the festively decked halls of the historic mansion and hear docents describe holiday customs of old. Participants can also taste-test home-baked holiday cookies and vote for their favorite in the Fifth Annual Cookie Challenge which features seasonal sweets from local bakers. Ugly holiday sweaters and seasonal accessories encouraged. For information, contact 508-997-1401 or visit www.rjdmuseum.org.

Volunteer year-round with Coastline

Coastline offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. Give back to your community! Volunteer in our Money Management Program helping older adults manage their finances. Call 508-742-9113 to learn more. Or be an advocate in our Nursing Home Ombudsman Program, helping those living in a nursing home setting. Call 508-742-9178 to learn more.

Operas broadcast at movie theater

The AMC theater in Dartmouth is participating in the Metropolitan Opera's live movie theater transmissions for the 2024-2025 season. Five live operas and one rebroadcast one remain on the schedule. Next up is the 2006 rebroadcast of 2006 The Magic Flute at 1 p.m. on Dec. 7. All others on the scheduled, Aida, at 12:30 p.m. on Jan. 25; Fidelio at 1 p.m. on March 15; Le Nozze di Figaro at 1 p.m. on April 26; Salome at 1 p.m. on May 17; and Il Barbiere di Siviglia at 1 p.m. on May 31 are all live broadcasts. Tickets can be purchased through AMC Dartmouth Theater at www.AMCtheatres.com or at www.Fandango.com.



Fairhaven honors its veterans

Fairhaven residents enjoyed a beautiful Veterans Day, enthusiastically cheering for local veterans who marched along Main Street in the town's Veterans Day Parade.



Your Health

Do you want more of what you're feeling?

'We often check in on others, yet how often do we check in on ourselves?' asks writer Peter Mis

By Peter Mis

Living Half Full: Lessons from a Life Unfolding

Do you want more of what you're feeling?

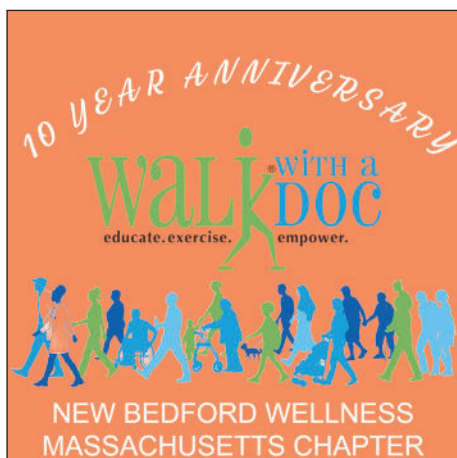
It's one of those things you wish you knew about earlier. At least that's how it was for me.

I had always heard about mindfulness, but it was something I just never took the time to fully understand. With family and work commitments life was far too busy as it already was for me to dive into something new.

Mindfulness entered my life after I had gotten to the point where I was too busy to notice the life I had been living. There was always something else to do and somewhere else to be and that endless pace was costing me a great deal of peace.

Mindfulness is about noticing the world within you and around you. It's pausing to intentionally notice what you're seeing, feeling, experiencing, and doing. To be fully present in the space you're in right now, without the need for judging or critiquing whatever is found in the present moment.

Awareness was an important step in me regaining my sense of peace. It was a way of slowing things



down and regaining an emotional footing of sorts. Awareness allows me the opportunity to check in with me and simply notice what I am experiencing in that particular point in time.

At times I would find myself highly stressed or overwhelmed with the demands life often places upon us. Pausing to simply notice what I was feeling helped me to better understand why I may be feeling that way, without judging myself harshly in the process. Awareness opens a door of compassion toward the self, and gives us a safe space to be with whatever we may find in that particular moment of self discovery.

I can often get too busy living to notice the life I am actually living. To help me remind me to be more mindful and present, I set daily reminders for myself. Twice each day an alarm on my iPhone will ring, prompting me with a simple question; "Do you want more of



"Pausing to simply notice what I was feeling helped me to better understand why I may be feeling that way, without judging myself harshly in the process."

what you're feeling?". By intentionally interrupting my day, I purposefully step back from that moment and check in with me.

How am I doing? Am I happy? Tired? Stressed? Overwhelmed? It's a mini conversation I have with myself about myself. Most times the answer to that question is "yes", but when the answer is

"no" I allow myself the opportunity to safely feel the way that I do and move forward from there. Maybe I just need a break, or to go for a walk, or talk to a friend, or do some deep breathing exercises in order to clear my head and get myself re-centered.

I've also used reminders on post-it notes around my home or on my desk at my office. I've even stuck those notes on the bathroom mirror.

We often check in on others, yet how often do we check in on ourselves?

"Do you want more of what you're feeling?"

Peter Mis is the author and creator at LivingHalfFull.com and a regular contributor to New Bedford Wellness.

AGING INFORMED

SNAP increase and HIP refund cut will affect low-income families and older adults

Local families relying on food support may see a drop in their benefits as 2024 ends, despite a small cost-of-living increase in SNAP benefits.

The state announced the SNAP increase in October and followed it with news of unexpected cuts to the Healthy Incentive Program in November.

HIP is the program where individuals and families who receive SNAP benefits can access refunds when they use their SNAP dollars to buy healthy, local fruits and vegetables from participating farm vendors.

As of Dec. 1, Massachusetts has decreased available Healthy Incentives Program funding for families of all sizes to \$20 per month, down from \$40, \$60 or more.

Matt Dansereau, Outreach Coordinator at the Dartmouth Council on Aging and a board member for the Department of Transitional Assistance in New Bedford, said he heard about the HIP reductions through his

DTA role. He believes the state didn't quite expect just how much people would use the HIP program.

"So many people are enjoying the program. The state didn't anticipate how popular it would be," Dansereau said. "They had a choice to either cut it completely or cut it in half and hope to push for more funding."

They chose to cut it in half, he said.

Dansereau expects the cut to have a big impact on people, even with the increase to SNAP dollars.

"It's those clients that get that low SNAP and instead of getting \$26 in SNAP dollars (every month) and \$40 back (from HIP), now they're only getting \$20 back," he said. "It's like cutting it in half."

It may only be a small amount of dollars, but for some people it makes a huge difference, he said.

The state explained the cuts on their website, by saying the

"The state didn't anticipate how popular it would be. They had a choice to either cut it completely or cut it in half and hope to push for more funding."

—Matt Dansereau,
Dartmouth Outreach Coordinator

governor requested \$25 million for the fiscal year '25 budget but the final budget only provided \$15 million.

"The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) worked with our partners at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to evaluate options to meet the \$15 million budget that would cause the least disruption to clients and farmers," the website reads. "Reducing the monthly HIP incentive to \$20 was the only viable option to ensure the program could continue to operate year-round."

Some HIP participants who use their refunds to participate in local Community Supported Agriculture programs, had to decide to continue with them or end their participation by a state-set date of Nov. 20.

"If you wish to continue participating in your Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, starting in December, you will be charged the amount you signed up for and will get up to \$20 back in HIP instead of the \$40, \$60, or \$80 you used to get," the state's website reads.

There is some hope that higher refunds may be brought back, according to Dansereau, who said the DTA loves the program and is pushing to find additional funding.

For more information on SNAP increases, see www.mass.gov/info-details/snap-cost-of-living-adjustments-cola. For information on HIP reductions, go to www.mass.gov/info-details/healthy-incentives-program-hip-benefit-change.

Lifeline is an option for affordable internet access

The Internet is increasingly important for individuals and families to be able to access information like healthcare and job openings, educational resources, or opportunities and conversations happening in their communities.

Lifeline is a discount program that can help make accessing the internet at home more affordable.

The FCC program offers up to a \$9.25 monthly discount on qualifying

monthly telephone service, broadband (i.e. faster) Internet service, or bundled voice-broadband packages to eligible low-income subscribers and up to \$34.25 per month for eligible subscribers on Tribal lands. Internet and phone services are purchased from participating wireline or wireless providers who offer the program.

The program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative

Company, which is responsible for helping consumers apply for Lifeline, understand requirements, and keep their benefit current through an annual recertification process.

To participate, consumers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or participate in certain federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assis-

tance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal Programs.

To see if you are eligible, or to find out which nearby providers offer Lifeline, go to lifelinesupport.org. If you have questions or would like an application mailed to you, contact Lifeline at (800) 234-9473 or LifelineSupport@usac.org.

Lifeline es una opción más económica de acceso a la internet

La internet es cada vez más importante para que las personas y las familias puedan acceder a información sobre atención médica, empleos, recursos educativos, y para conocer las oportunidades y acontecimientos en sus comunidades.

Lifeline es un programa de descuento que puede ayudar a hacer el acceso a la internet del hogar más accesible.

El programa FCC ofrece un descuento mensual de hasta \$9.25 en el servicio telefónico mensual, servicio de inter-

net de banda ancha (más rápido) o los paquetes de voz e internet de banda ancha para los suscriptores de bajos ingresos elegibles y de hasta \$34.25 por mes para los suscriptores elegibles de tierras Tribales. La internet y los servicios telefónicos se adquieren a través de los proveedores participantes de servicios de línea fija o inalámbrico que ofrecen el programa Lifeline.

El programa está administrado por Universal Service Administrative Company, la cual es responsable de

ayudar a los consumidores a presentar las solicitudes para el programa, entender cuáles son los requisitos, y mantener sus beneficios actualizados mediante el proceso anual de certificación.

Para participar, los consumidores deben tener un ingreso que sea menor o igual al 135% de las pautas federales de pobreza o participar en ciertos programas federales de asistencia, como el Programa de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria (SNAP, por sus siglas en inglés), Medicaid, Asistencia Federal de

Vivienda Pública, Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI, por sus siglas en inglés), el beneficio de Pensión para Veteranos y Sobrevivientes, o determinados programas Tribales.

Para averiguar si es elegible, o qué proveedores se encuentran cerca y ofrecen Lifeline, vaya a lifelinesupport.org. Si tiene preguntas o desea recibir por correo un formulario de solicitud, contáctese con Lifeline llamando al (800) 234-9473 o enviando un correo electrónico a LifelineSupport@usac.org.

O Lifeline é uma opção de acesso à Internet acessível

A Internet é cada vez mais importante para que os indivíduos e as famílias possam aceder a informações como cuidados de saúde e vagas de emprego, recursos educativos ou oportunidades e conversas que acontecem nas suas comunidades.

O Lifeline é um programa de descontos que pode ajudar a tornar o acesso à Internet em casa mais acessível.

O programa FCC oferece um desconto mensal de até 9,25 US\$ em serviço telefónico mensal qualificado,

serviço de Internet de banda larga (ou seja, mais rápido) ou pacotes de banda larga de voz para assinantes elegíveis com baixos rendimentos e até 34,25 US\$ por mês para assinantes qualificados em terras tribais.

Os serviços de Internet e telefone são adquiridos aos fornecedores de telefone fixo ou sem fios participantes que oferecem o programa Lifeline.

O programa é gerido pela Universal Service Administrative Company, responsável por ajudar os

consumidores a subscrever o Lifeline, a compreender os requisitos e a manter os seus benefícios atualizados através de um processo anual de recertificação.

Para participar, os consumidores devem ter um rendimento igual ou inferior a 135% das diretrizes federais de pobreza ou participar em determinados programas federais de assistência, como o Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental

Security Income, o Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit ou determinados Programas Tribais.

Para ver se é elegível ou para saber quais os fornecedores próximos que oferecem o Lifeline, aceda a lifelinesupport.org. Se tiver dúvidas ou quiser que lhe seja enviada uma candidatura, contacte o Lifeline pelo telefone (800) 234-9473 ou LifelineSupport@usac.org.

Translations provided by:

 Southcoast Health

Older voters focused on jobs, inflation and Social Security in election decisions

Data from a poll of voters from the 43 most competitive congressional districts this election season shows voters age 50 and older made up 55% of the electorate and their voting decisions were largely driven by economic issues, immigration, and threats to democracy.

The poll was commissioned by AARP and conducted by a bipartisan polling team of Fabrizio Ward (R) & Impact Research (D) between Nov. 6 and 10. It included interviews with 2,348 likely voters with a core representative sample of 1200 likely voters and an oversample of 540 likely voters age 50+ up to 1200 total likely voters 50+ older.

The surveys found House Republicans won voters 50+ by a 50% - 47% margin while these districts were a dead heat among voters overall, allowing Republicans to maintain a narrow advantage in the House of Representatives.

“Our polling showed that older voters were the most motivated to cast their ballots, and they showed up in an outsized way on election day,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer. “A majority of older

voters said a personal economic issue – inflation, jobs and the economy, or Social Security – was top of mind as the most important issue in determining their vote this year.”

Key takeaways from the poll among voters age 50 and older showed voters were focused on core issues of immigration/border security, jobs and the economy, and threats to democracy. Among Hispanic and Black voters, economic issues including jobs, inflation, and Social Security, stood out as motivating factors.

A majority (55%) of older voters said that Social Security is or will be a major source of their income, and 80% said it was an extremely or very important issue in determining their vote.

Thirty-one percent of older voters self-identified as a family caregiver. These voters narrowly preferred Kamala Harris and their Democratic candidate for Congress and prioritized Social Security and threats to democracy as their top issues for how they decided to cast their ballots.

The full survey results and methodology can be seen at www.aarp.org/pri/topics/voter-research/politics/2024-june-congressional-district-election-voter-survey/

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You can have a one year subscription (12 issues) of the print edition of Senior Scope delivered to your door for \$18.

Senior Scope is available for free at Senior Centers, grocery stores, medical offices and more in the South Coast.

If you'd prefer to have the newspaper mailed directly to your home, you can subscribe for a full year, by mailing an \$18 check made payable to “Coastline” (not “Senior Scope”) to 863 Belleville Ave., New Bedford, MA 02745, Att. Senior Scope. Please include your full name, and mailing address.

If you have questions, call or email Beth Perdue at 774-438-2729 or bperdue@coastlinenb.org.

Saulnier Square rededicated in honor of fallen WWII soldier

The city of New Bedford honored fallen World War II soldier 2nd Lt. Roland G. Saulnier in October with a rededication ceremony at the South End square named for him.

Mayor Jon Mitchell, elected officials, and members of the Saulnier family gathered on Oct. 27 in Saulnier Square to unveil a new plaque recognizing the city native who died while serving in the Pacific during the war. Saulnier Square is located by the South End Public Safety Center at the corner of Ruth Street and Brock Avenue.

“Roland Saulnier’s legacy is that of undaunted courage under unimaginably dire circumstances,” Mitchell said. “He fought with distinction in the defense of the Philippines after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and endured the horrors of the Bataan Death March, two years of captivity, and the depravity of a Japanese ‘hell ship.’ His sacrifice is an example of service future generations must continue to take to heart.”

Saulnier was born in New Bedford on Oct. 27, 1918, and grew up in the South End. He attended St. Ann’s School and Continuation School and got his first job at Kilburn Mill.

Nicknamed “Frenchy” because of his strong French-Canadian accent, he enlisted in July 1940 in San Francisco and was sent to the Philippines two months later. He was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant in 1942 and commanded the Third Battalion, 1st Regular



At right, (l-r) Robert Bromley, Al Saulnier, Mayor Jon Mitchell, Nancy (Saulnier) Pimental and Ward 6 City Councilor Ryan Pereira unveil the new stone and plaque to rededicate Saulnier Square in honor of fallen WWII soldier Roland G. Saulnier. Above, the new stone and plaque honors city native and WWII soldier Roland G. Saulnier.



Infantry of the Philippine Army during an invasion from Japanese soldiers.

Saulnier’s courage was captured in old newspaper articles from February of 1942, in which one hailed his leadership of Filipino troops by stating “he won their respect through his own courage and they would follow him anywhere” and another said “whenever they face problems, his troops call for Frenchy. Whenever fighting starts, he’s in the middle of it.”

“New Bedford is proud of Lieutenant Saulnier, both for his

individual courage and because he exemplifies our ideal of a fighting American,” an old Standard-Times article from Feb. 26, 1942, states.

Saulnier was one of 75,000 prisoners of war captured by Japanese forces after the Battle of Bataan in the Philippines in the spring of 1942. He survived the Bataan Death March, a trek roughly 65 miles in which many of those POWs were tortured or killed while being transferred to a Japanese military camp.

Saulnier was killed on Oct. 24, 1944 aboard the Arisan Maru, a

Japanese freighter carrying more than 1,700 POWs out of the Philippines, when it was attacked while en route to Japan.

Saulnier Square was dedicated in his honor on July 4, 1946.

The site has been at the center of considerable construction over the years with the building of the new South End Public Safety Center. With work on the site complete, the city chose to rededicate Saulnier Square with a brief ceremony and new plaque on what would have been Saulnier’s 106th birthday.

State lays out benefits for disabled veterans through August's HERO Act

Eligible disabled veterans exempt from automobile excise tax, receiving fee waivers for vehicle registration, driver’s licenses and license renewals due to legislation signed in August 2024

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles and Executive Office of Veterans Services reminded veterans last month that they are eligible for fee waivers for various transactions at the RMV. The waivers are available through legislation, called the HERO Act, that was signed into law in August 2024.

The HERO Act, an Act Honoring, Empowering, and Recognizing our Service members and Veterans), includes over 30 provisions benefitting veterans, including specific transactions veterans may conduct at the RMV.

“The expansion of the HERO Act enables us to show additional gratitude toward veterans who served and sacrificed for our country,” said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt. “While these benefits are just a small token, we hope all qualifying individuals will make full use of them in their dealings with the Registry. On behalf of all our MassDOT employees, we say ‘thank you’ to veterans for your service.”

Every motor vehicle registered in Massachusetts is subject to the annual excise tax, unless exempted. Under the HERO Act expansion, all

Massachusetts residents who qualify as a disabled veteran are now eligible to receive the excise tax exemption. To qualify, they must present a letter from the U.S. Veterans Affairs Office to the city or town where their vehicle is garaged.

In addition, disabled veterans are no longer required to pay a vehicle registration fee for any vehicle registered in their name. Previously, this benefit could only be applied to one vehicle registered in their name. Also, all of these veterans are no longer required to pay a transaction fee for a passenger driver’s license or for a passenger driver’s license renewal.

A disabled veteran is determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to either have a combined service-connected disability rating of 100 percent or be individually unemployable due to their service-connected disability.

In addition to provisions impacting veterans who drive, the legislation expands access to behavioral health treatment, supports businesses that hire veterans, updates the definition of a veteran, expands the Veterans Equality Review Board’s scope, and codifies medical and dental benefits.

RMV information for military service members, veterans, and their families can be found at mass.gov/military-and-veteran-rmv-information.



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Have you checked your beneficiary names lately?

By **Brandon C. Walecka, Esq.**
Walecka Law, P.C.

You may regularly monitor the balances of your retirement, bank, and investment accounts, but have you recently reviewed the beneficiary designations tied to these accounts?

These often-overlooked details are critical to ensuring your money goes to the intended person or entity after your death.

It might have been years since you opened a retirement account, purchased life insurance, or set up a brokerage account. At that time, you likely named a beneficiary—often your spouse or another loved one. But life changes, such as marriage, divorce, remarriage, births, or deaths in the family, could render those original designations outdated and/or inexecutable.

Beneficiary designations are not only an integral part of estate planning but also a way to bypass probate. However, it is important to note that they take precedence over instructions in your will or trust, making it essential to regularly review and update them.

Accounts That Allow Beneficiary Designations

Many financial accounts and instruments allow you to name a beneficiary, ensuring a smoother transfer of assets. These include:

- Retirement accounts: 401(k), 403(b), IRAs, Roth IRAs, and pension plans;
- Insurance policies: life insurance and annuities;
- Banking accounts: checking, savings, and certificates of deposit (CDs);
- Health and education savings plans: HSAs and 529 college savings plans
- Investment accounts: brokerage accounts, mutual funds, and US savings bonds; and,
- Employer benefits: group life insurance and employee stock plans.

Why Designations Matter

The person or entity named as a beneficiary on an account will automatically inherit the funds, often bypassing the probate process. Beneficiaries can include:

- Individuals (e.g., spouse, children, friends);
- Trusts;
- Charities; and,
- Your estate.

You can also designate multiple beneficiaries, dividing assets in specified proportions. However, if no beneficiary or contingent beneficiary is named, or if both predecease you, the account may go through probate, delaying distribution and potentially increasing costs.

When to Review and Update

Beneficiary designations should be reviewed regularly and after major life

events, such as:

- Marriage, divorce, or remarriage;
- Birth or adoption of children or grandchildren;
- Death of a spouse, child, or other beneficiary;
- Changes in estate planning goals or laws; and,
- Transferring assets to new accounts or plans.

Even without significant changes, it's wise to check designations every three to five years. Overlooking this step can lead to unintended outcomes, such as leaving assets to someone no longer in your life or to a loved one unprepared to manage them.

How to Update Beneficiaries

Updating beneficiary designations is typically straightforward but varies by account type:

1. Online updates: Many financial institutions offer online tools to update designations.

2. Paperwork: Some accounts require physical forms.

3. Spousal consent: In certain cases, particularly with retirement accounts, a spouse must consent to alternative designations.

4. Verification: Always confirm changes with the account administrator and retain proof for your records.

Details matter when completing these forms. Provide full legal names, relationships, and additional information like Social Security numbers or birthdates to avoid ambiguity.

Consequences of Neglect

Failing to update beneficiary designations can cause assets to be distributed according to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts rather than your wishes. This could lead to disputes, delays, and unintended distributions.

For example, an outdated designation might leave assets to an ex-spouse or overlook new family members. Without a beneficiary, assets could go to probate, subjecting them to additional costs and delays.

Plan Ahead

Beneficiary designations highlight how even small estate planning details can significantly impact your loved ones. These designations cannot be changed after your death, so it's crucial to keep them aligned with your estate plan.

Consulting an estate planning attorney ensures your accounts and property are distributed according to your wishes, protecting your legacy, and providing peace of mind for your loved ones.

This article does not constitute legal advice. Reach Walecka Law, P.C., at 774-203-9003 or Brandon@Walecka-Law.com.

Trivia

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT – KIM CAMARA

- 1.) What lives in a “FORMACARIUM”?
A.) Butterflies B.) Apes C.) Ants D.) Turtles
- 2.) Which country is the world's most visited?
A.) France B.) Japan C.) United States D.) Egypt
- 3.) What liquid is found in most cigarette lighters?
A.) Propane B.) Butane C.) Naptha D.) Kerosene
- 4.) Who was the first black artist to sing at the White House?
A.) Sammy Davis Jr. B.) Marie Selika William
C.) Keontyne Price D.) Aretha Franklin
- 5.) Which of these primates is the fastest?
A.) Lemur B.) Orangutan
C.) Eastern gorilla D.) Patas monkey
- 6.) Which U.S. state cast the last vote to end prohibition?
A.) Massachusetts B.) Utah
C.) Virginia D.) Delaware
- 7.) What nut is used in the making of dynamite?
A.) Peanut B.) Almond C.) Cashew D.) Walnut
- 8.) Who was the 36th president of the United States?
A.) Bill Clinton B.) Gerald Ford
C.) Barak Obama D.) Lyndon B. Johnson
- 9.) A “NEMATODE” is what type of organism?
A.) Animal B.) Fungi C.) Bacteria D.) Plant
- 10.) What did the little mermaid trade to obtain legs?
A.) Her fins B.) Her voice
C.) Her powers D.) Her tail

[Answers listed on page 11]

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Veterans continued...

some outreach to.”

Connor said she understands the obstacles to attending a weekday event for veterans who work, unlike older veterans, many of whom are retired. But it’s important for them to be recognized too.

“Even if I have to get another place to put them all,” she said, referring to the full room at Rachel’s Lakeside this year.

“They’re at the top of everything as far as I’m concerned when it comes to saying thank yous over and over,” she said. “It never gets tired doing that.”

The list also revealed a few in town whose service was not known. Dr. Ouida Dowd, for example, has been connected to the event for years as the chairperson of the Dartmouth Council on Aging. She is a professor of nursing at UMass Dartmouth and was well known to Connor and the Friends of the Elderly group, but not as a veteran.

This year, when the FOE learned of Dowd’s service in the US Air Force as part of the Nurse Corps, they asked her to lead the event’s Pledge of Allegiance.

“I’ve been going to this forever and forever. They just didn’t know that I’d served,” Dowd said.

Special recognition was given to Edward Pimental this year recognizing his service to the country in Vietnam and his decades of continued service to the town when



Above left, Congressman Bill Keating addresses veterans. Above, Maria Connors thanks those who contributed to the event. Below, The audience stands for the Pledge of Allegiance.

“He is truly a guy that I look up to. I respect a lot. I respect his opinions and I see that he loves his community.”

—Chris Markey
Massachusetts State Representative

he returned home.

Pimental was the town’s emergency management director for 34 years before retiring in 2017. He was on several town boards including Public Works and still works, currently serving as the clerk at Fire District 1.

In presenting a citation to Pimental, Rep. Chris Markey called him a utility man for the town of Dartmouth.

“When I first came into politics



in 2010 multiple people would tell me ‘You’ve got to talk to Ed. ... He knows everyone and he can give you a sense of what’s going on,’ Markey

said, adding, “He is truly a guy that I look up to. I respect a lot. I respect his opinions and I see that he loves his community.”



Preventing Medicare Fraud

Medicare Open Enrollment 2025

October 15 – December 7

Starting October 1, 2024, you will receive in your mail:

MEDICARE & YOU 2025
the official U.S. Government Medicare Handbook.

We recommend you review the entire book to learn if your insurance plan is still available and what changes have been made to Medicare for 2025.

Make sure you read pages 105-106 on how you can protect yourself from fraud and medical identity theft.

LET’S FIGHT FRAUD TOGETHER!



THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Medicare will not call you to offer you a new Medicare card. It is likely to be a scam.
- Scam calls can increase during Medicare Open Enrollment. We recommend that you let calls go to voicemail.
- Do not give or confirm personal information with these callers.
- If you talk to scammers long enough they could mimic your voice and turn it into a recording of you agreeing to products and services you don’t need.
- If you do talk to a scammer and provide them with your Medicare number, contact the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program at 1-800-892-0890, and we can walk you through the process of protecting yourself.

Contact the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program: www.masmp.org or call 1-800-892-0890.

Councils on Aging

Acushnet COA

For Acushnet Council on Aging programs and activities, see the COA newsletter in the Senior Center or online at <https://mycommunityonline.com/organization/acushnet-council-on-aging>. For 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.

Veterans Coffee Social: With Brad Fish, Acushnet's Veterans Service Officer, will take place the first Tuesday of every month 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. First Session: Tuesday December 3rd.

Strong Women, Strong Bones: With Karen, Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. \$2/ suggested voluntary donation. Strength training, weight-bearing aerobic exercise, stretching, and balance.

Hey Moxie Caregiver Connection: By Moxie Mobility Training. First Monday of the Month at 12:30 p.m. or virtually on Facebook Live at Moxie Mobility Training LLC. Solutions and guidance for caregivers and their loved ones.

Education, training and info. on community resources to help you find strategies to overcome the struggles and obstacles in caregiving. Free.

Community Nurse: Hosting a Blood Pressure/Wellness Clinic the first Wednesday of every month from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Cribbage Players Wanted: The Cribbage League is looking to expand. It meets Mondays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Stop by the front desk to learn more.

Zumba: Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. \$6; Thursdays at 10:30 a.m., free; and Fridays at 9 a.m., \$6. A lower-intensity version of the typical Zumba class designed to meet the anatomical, physiological and psychological needs of those over the age of 50.

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.

MADOT-RMV Clinic: Last Friday of the month 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Assistance with applications, paperwork review and appointment setting for Real ID, Senior ID, and disability placard as well as other RMV related forms and questions will be available. Pre registration required.

NEW Thrive Dartmouth: The Center is hosting and presenting inter-generational on- and off-site events to promote community and healthy living. First Thursday of each month and seasonal Saturday mornings. Next Thrive Dartmouth is Dec. 5 THRIVE 5-6:30 p.m. Topic: Centering Hope, Optimism and Love in our Daily Life with Steve Banno, author and teacher. Also, You're in Good Hands, Jan. 2 5-6:30 p.m. Join us for an interactive session at the Center with Lynne A. Charbonneau, COTA specializing in treatment of the hands for the last 7 years of her 35 year career and Christine Cummings, Artist/Expressive Arts Certified. Explore the anatomy and function of your hands. Cultivate happy/healthy hands to maintain independence and connection. Experience a hand-centric creative project. Call the Dartmouth COA at 508-999-4717 to preregister.

Festival Chorus: Dec. 15 at 1 p.m. The Southeastern Massachusetts Festival Chorus presents a holiday concert titled "Holiday Treat". "Holiday Treat", will take you on a scrumptious journey of quintessential holiday pop favorites and more recent selections from stage and screen. The chorus is comprised of 100 singers from over 30 cities and towns. Concerts will be accompanied by a 30-piece orchestra. Transportation is provided. Cost: \$20. Preregistration is required.

Winter Fine Arts & Craft Fair: Saturday, December 7. We will leave Center at 9:30 & return at 2:30pm. We will be visiting the Plimoth Patuxet Museums Winter Fine Arts & Craft Fair on their opening day. The two-day fair is an extraordinary showcase and marketplace of fine arts and craft. The festive fair is held in the museum's Hornblower Visitor Center and other spaces around its campus. You will find over 60 independent artists and makers, as well as hands-on demonstrations as well as ample opportunities for food and drink. Cost: \$5 for transport. Preregistration is required.

Paper Snowflakes: Dec. 9, 1 p.m. Come and create beautiful jumbo snowflakes at the Center. Use them for decoration, share them with family and friends, or we will use them to decorate the Center for the Holidays!

We will provide the supplies, holiday music and refreshments. FREE, Preregistration required.

Senior Supper Club: First Tuesday of the month 4-6 p.m. Reservations required. Cost is \$5.

Nutrition Clinic: Private nutritional counseling with registered dietitian - Set goals, establish meal plans, monitor results. Last Thursday of each month at 9-11 a.m. Contact Nancy at the Center for more info and appointment.

RMV Clinic: Last Friday of each month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. MADOT-RMV Clinic. Help with applications, paperwork review and appointment setting for Real ID, Senior ID, and Disability Placard as well as other RMV related forms and questions. Pre-registration required.

Open Art Studio: Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. - noon. Beginners welcome. Bring your projects and art supplies. Art instruction and inspiration provided. Walk-ins welcome. Cost \$10.

Hand and Foot (Canasta): Mondays 9:30-11:30 a.m. Walk-ins welcome.

Wellness Walks: Last Wednesday of the month 9-10 a.m. Wellness Walks with Dartmouth Public Health Nurse. All levels of ability welcome. Free.

Blood Pressure Screenings: 2nd Thursday & last Tuesday from 9-11 a.m. Walk-ins welcome.

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

Fairhaven COA

For information on programs and activities, see Fairhaven Council on Aging Community Newsletter on the town's website at <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging/pages/calendars-menus-and-newsletters>. For more information, call the Fairhaven Council on Aging at 508-979-4029, located at 229 Huttleston Ave., Fairhaven, 02719. Open 7:30am-3:30 p.m. and until 8 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Are you safe on the internet?: Join Kraig Perry at the Fairhaven COA at 1 p.m., Dec. 12 to learn how to protect your information online. Call to sign up.

Tech Cafe: Every Thursday 3-4 p.m.

Single Senior Supper Club: Note time change for winter. Third Tuesday of the month, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Must sign up at the front desk or call a week before. \$3. Please do not arrive before 2:15 p.m.

La Salette trip: Join for a trip to La Salette on Dec. 4 for a dinner and to view the Festival of Lights 2024. Departs Fairhaven Senior Center between 3:15 and 3:30 p.m. \$25.

Mall Trips: Dec. 4 Tiverton Casino; Dec. 11, Hyannis Mall and Trader Joe's; and Dec. 18, Providence Place Mall. Closed Dec. 25, Christmas Day. Trips are \$6. Please bring exact change. Must call to sign up.

Memory Cafe: 11:30-1:30 p.m. Dec. 19 at the Council on Aging. Call to reserve a spot by Dec. 16. There will be musical entertainment following lunch and socializing. Space is limited.

Monday Movie Matinee: 12:15 p.m. Dec. 2. Movie is 'The Noel Diaries.' Dec. 23, Movie is 'Falling for Christmas.' and, Dec. 30, Movie is 'New Year's Eve.' Call to sign up.

Moxie Motion: 2nd and last Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. Free. Build strength and endurance safely through crucial fundamental movements that also enhance balance. Participants engage in exercise at their own pace, supported by the group.

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. Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/marioncoa](https://www.facebook.com/marioncoa). Marion Board of Health: 508-748-3530.

AARP Smart Driver Class: Thursday, December 5th 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Learn techniques for handling left turns, right-of-way and roundabouts. Understand how to reduce traffic violations, crashes and the risk of injury. Discover proven driving methods to help keep you and your loved ones safe on the road. Take the AARP Smart Driver classroom course and you may be eligible to receive an auto insurance discount, consult your agent for details. Register for the class by calling 508-748-3570. \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for nonmembers.

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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Ride Hailing Services: Thursday, December 12th 1:00 p.m. Have you ever thought about calling for an Uber ride but was not sure how to go about it? Lisa Long, current Uber driver, will be on hand to give you all of the ins and outs of the Uber and Lyft services. How to download the app on your phone, what to expect and what to be aware of to keep yourself safe. Bring your questions and concerns.

Winter Craft Party: Thursday, December 12th 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Spend the morning crafting with Lidia. During the class you will make two winter themed crafts. Make to give as gifts or keep for yourself. Cost is \$25 and covers the cost of instruction and all materials. Call 508-748-3570 to reserve your spot in the class.

Waterfront Memory Cafe: Wednesdays, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. An engaging gathering for individuals with memory loss and their care partner. Enjoy an afternoon of conversation with some new and old friends and take in some music, play a game or a different form of entertainment. To join for lunch beforehand, make lunch reservations 48 hours in advance by calling Linda at 508-748-3570.

Essential Oils & Natural Solutions: Friday, Dec. 13 1:00 p.m. There is nothing more important than staying healthy during the Winter months. At this lecture we will learn about natural solutions to boost your immune system or possibly help you to sleep. You will learn about old wives tales that our grandparents used to employ like castor oil and cod liver oil. Did you know that lavender is a natural antihistamine or that oregano is the number one plant based antibiotic? There will be an opportunity to purchase sugar scrubs, foot soaks, bath salts and facial scrubs. Class fee is \$10 which covers the cost for the take home sample that you will be making. Call 508-748-3570 to make your reservation.

Mattapoissett COA

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

Annual Holiday Party: By the Friends of the COA. Food, music, raffles, and more! Menu: chicken piccata, penne, green bean almondine & dessert. Thursday, Dec. 12th. Doors open: 11:30 a.m. Food: 12:00 noon Free. Location: Knights of Columbus. Registration Required. Bring non-perishables for local pantries (check expiration dates, please.)

Protect from Fraud & Identity Theft: Just when we think we know how to protect ourselves from scams, a new scam comes along that throws us off! Sometimes, we realize it's a scam before it "gets us". Sometimes, the scam is so clever that it thwarts our abilities to sense it's a scam. Join speaker, Dennis Hohengasser, AARP volunteer, who will share how to protect yourself from fraud and identity theft. Dec. 17 1 p.m. presentation. Register: 508-758-4110 or coadirector@mattapoissett.net

Readers' Theatre with Lunch: Enjoy a light lunch followed by an entertaining Readers' Theater. The readings consist of poetry, prose, and short plays/excerpts. There will be focus on the holidays. What is a Readers' Theatre? It is a style of theater in which the actors present dramatic readings of narrative material without costumes, scenery, or special lighting. Actors use only scripts and vocal expression to help the audience understand the story. Readers theater performances might be called "reading hours" or "play readings". Free. 12:30 Dec. 10. Register: 508-758-4110 or coadirector@mattapoissett.net

Art for your Mind: Dec. 4 at 12:30 p.m. Free. The featured topic, 'Celebrations and Holidays in Art' Enjoy this collection of lighthearted images from medieval times to present, offering a festive backdrop to a discussion about the creative and interesting choices artists make to enliven celebratory scenes. Renew your appreciation of the creative choices artists made as they approach this universal subject. Join local art historian Jill Sanford for an enjoyable hour of challenging yourself to see in new ways!

Drum Circle: Wednesdays at 1 p.m. on Dec. 18. Free. Did you know that drumming increases dopamine and serotonin levels, which help to help elevate our mood? In addition, it can help reduce stress, among other benefits Instructor, Sam Holmstock.

Cookie Swap: Dec.19 1 p.m. Free entry. Bring cookies. Registration required.

New Bedford COA

For assistance, contact the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250. Brooklawn Senior Center is at 1997 Acushnet Ave. and Rosemary S. Tierney Senior Center is at 553 Brock Ave. A SHINE Counselor is available Monday-Friday. Call 508-991-6250 to schedule an appointment.

Beginner's Spanish: Mondays, 9:00-10:00 a.m.
 Tai-Yo-Ba: Wednesdays, 8:30-9:1 a.m. with Cameron Bergeron.
 Tai Chi: Fridays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. with Joe Rebelo.

Adult Social Day: Now at Buttonwood Park. Contact the New Bedford COA for more information at 508-991-6250.

Strength & Conditioning with Larry: Mondays from 12:30-1:30 p.m. at Brooklawn. Fridays from 2-3 p.m. at Tierney.

Bingo: Tuesday & Thursday from noon-2 p.m. at Brooklawn and Monday, Wednesday & Friday from noon-2 p.m. at Tierney.

Zumba with Pati: Mondays from 10-11 a.m. and Thursdays from noon to 1 p.m., both at Tierney.

Chair Yoga with Sue: Mondays from 10-11 a.m. at Andrea McCoy Gymnasium, Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m. at Tierney, and Wednesdays from 10-11 a.m. at Brooklawn.

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 townofrochesterma.com/council-aging. Facebook: [facebook.com/Rochester, Mass.](https://www.facebook.com/Rochester,Mass)

Main Street Stroll: Dec. 12. Main Street in Falmouth offers a variety of specialty shops, restaurants & bakeries. Do some last minute holiday shopping or just treat yourself! Depart COA at 10 a.m. and return by 3 p.m. The van ride is \$5 round trip for Rochester residents and \$10 for non-residents.

Trips: Call 508-763-8723 or visit the front desk to sign up for a trip and please pay at the front desk.

Special Lunches: Saturday, Dec. 7, Saturday, Dec. 7th, Pancakes With Santa, two seatings: First is 8:30 -9:30 a.m. & the second is 10-11 a.m. Adults are \$3 and children under 12 are free. Register ASAP. Monday, Dec. 16 at 11:30 a.m. Holiday Party with singer Steve Anthony. Menu is: bruschetta, onion soup, garlic shrimp, stuffed cabbage, pork tenderloin, chicken yakitori & chocolate cake. Cost is \$20; Monday, Dec. 23rd at 11:30 a.m. - Quarterly birthday lunch—free lunch for Rochester residents 60 or older with a birthday in October, November or December. \$10 For Rochester residents without a birthday. Chicken noodle soup, chicken salad on a roll & birthday cake for dessert. Monday, Dec. 30th at 11:30 a.m. - Annual new year's eve party featuring the Squeezebox Stompers, a 6-piece New Orleans style jazz band! Our Chinese Buffet will feature: chow mein, pork fried rice, chicken wings, chicken fingers, chicken lo mein, crab rangoons, boneless ribs. Cost is \$20. Call now to register for Dec. 7th, 16th, 23rd or 30th. 508-763-8723.

Chair Yoga Is Back: Join us for classes every Tuesday at 3 p.m. Cost \$5.
Brain Builders' Classes: Brain Builders returns on Dec. 5 and 12, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Dementia Directory

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. Social Day options for person receiving care are available.

Caregivers Connection Group: Nov 29 at the Fairhaven COA from 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. With Moxie Mobility Training. Call the COA at 508-979-4029 for details.

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.

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 the 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.

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 if interested.

December 2024 Trivia Quiz Answers

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

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Community

Memory Cafes continued...

want people to still feel comfortable going out. We don't want them to feel isolated."

Carolyn Ziegler of Onset tried a monthly café environment before coming to Marion with her husband Gary. It didn't provide the same camaraderie she found in Marion, she said.

"At first it was nice, but it was once a month and I realized I didn't know anyone," Ziegler said. "They did more things but it never gelled, so we stopped going."

In Marion, she's made friends.

"Because it's weekly, we can develop relationships," she said.

Shire, Ziegler, and two other care partners, Ann Bruno, and Christine Voss became such good friends, they began meeting on their own as an informal support group on Thursday mornings.

The women understand her when she shares her experiences, Shire said about the connection. "When you're at home, you're thinking all of these thoughts and then I'll call Christine or I'll text her and I'll say I lost an entire day Sunday because I thought it was Saturday. And she just says yeah.... That's OK. It's OK," she said.

Those connections are not unusual, according to Alzheimer's Disease advocate Barbara Meehan, who lost her life partner to the disease in 2015 and has been supporting others ever since. There is a bond among the group and also an openness to accepting newcomers, she said.

"I think a lot has to do with the camaraderie, the friendships we've developed," Meehan said, pointing to the relationships she has made in the group. "Patty, who's 91, is without a doubt one of my dearest friends. She started coming here with her husband who passed away three years ago, and then she just said, 'Can I still keep coming?' And we said, 'Yeah.'"

Each café starts with lunch and then moves to an activity space. At a recent November meeting, Linda Jacknovy, COA program coordinator, lead the day's activity, which was decorating Hershey bars to look like snowmen.

Jacknovy started the group off with a list of announcements they call, Joys & Sorrows. It's a relatively new addition to the routine that came about when a beloved member passed, Gregory said.

Announcements can be about new grandbabies, the loss of a loved one, birthdays or anything that participants want to share. This meeting starts with an update about a caregiver who is recovering from surgery and whose daughter came in her place.

For all of its benefits, memory cafés are not well known nationally.

"Massachusetts is one of two national hubs for Memory Cafés," said Beth Soltzberg, a clinical social worker and director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service Alzheimer's/Related Dementias Family Support Program.

Massachusetts is lucky in that it has about 100 cafés, according to Soltzberg, who said the other hub is Wisconsin.



NEW BEDFORD HOLIDAYS IN COMMON PARK: Children enjoy a lifesize Christmas manger displayed in Common Park in this 1957 photograph from Spinner Publications. The displays were part of the city's annual Festival of Lights event, which, while changed, continues today. This year's lighting at the park is scheduled for Dec. 8, weather permitting, according to radio station WBSM.

Resources

- **Alzheimer's Facts and Figures** 2024 report. Visit www.alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf

- **MC Percolator** Tools for starting a memory café. Visit www.jfcsboston.org/our-services/services-for-older-adults/home-community-supports/alzheimers-related-dementias-family-support/percolator

- **EMC2 Project** Plan to expand memory cafés to 9,000 nationally. Visit <https://emc2project.org>.

- **TED Talk** www.ted.com/talks/beth_soltzberg_memory_cafes_making_space_for_dementia_and_joy

Cafés started in Holland with a clinical focus, but in the U.S., the emphasis has been on social benefits, Soltzberg said.

They've grown as a response to increasing numbers of people living with dementia, which, according to the Alzheimer's Association, is an estimated 6.9 million Americans age 65 and older for Alzheimer's dementia alone. And those numbers are growing.

Soltzberg has a number of advocacy goals around dementia that she'd like to make happen, but one of her top priorities is to increase the number of memory cafés. She is a lead advisor for a national strategic planning effort that is launching a new national Memory Café directory and other resources, to encourage the spread of cafés. The group wants to grow the current number of about 900 to 9,000.

She's also an advocate for living well with dementia and reducing the stigma around it. "Stigma really comes from



People engage in multiple activities at this Waterfront Memory Café meeting, held when the café was at the Marion Music Hall.

fear and it affects everything related to dementia," she said.

It can have a negative impact on how people live with dementia, including by creating isolation.

"Every care partner feels a huge sense of isolation when dealing 24/7 with a loved one who has cognitive difficulties like dementia/brain disease," said Voss. "Memory cafés offer a safe environment to share concerns (and) listen to ideas with others on the same path."

Sometimes the isolation comes from friends or family who separate out of fear or uncertainty about how to help.

Ziegler and her husband experienced this when friends pulled away from them. "All of a sudden it hit me, we're just not getting invited to places where we would have before," she said. "So your walls just start getting closer. They close in."

Others aren't ready to share their health status, said Voss, and memory cafés provide a place of confidentiality.

"This is so important as many don't

want or are not ready to share their private lives with the local community and neighbors," she said.

One of Soltzberg's many roles includes running Dementia Friends Massachusetts, a public awareness program where people can be trained to lead one-hour interactive workshops about dementia in their communities. It's one way to increase awareness about both the challenges and positive experiences that dementia brings.

Because joy can be present too, according to Soltzberg, who gave a TED Talk in 2019 on that topic.

"You don't just feel off a cliff," she said. "People still live lives of purpose and joy, but we don't hear about that."

Memory cafés can help balance the two sides of the equation around dementia as Bruno, Shire, Voss, and Ziegler have discovered.

"We have made such a connection here," Shire said. "I needed the support. I need to be with people that are going through ... a similar journey."

"The best thing here is the people."